

# VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE

Ranger Motivation & Challenges at  
Chu Yang Sin National Park



## ABOUT WILDACT

**WildAct** aims to protect endangered species and fragile ecosystems by empowering communities through education, sustainable practices and innovative conservation efforts. We strive to safeguard existing forest and wildlife, fostering a sustainable future for our planet.

[www.wildact-vn.org](http://www.wildact-vn.org)  
26, TT26, Khu Do Thi Van Phu  
Ha Dong, Hanoi,  
Vietnam.

Suggested citation:  
Y. Tran, T. Le., T, Nguyen. 2024. Voices from the frontline: Ranger Motivation & Challenges at Chu Yang Sin National Park. WildAct. Hanoi, Vietnam.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey was conducted among rangers and staff at Chu Yang Sin National Park in 2023 to understand their perspectives on job satisfaction, safety provisions, welfare benefits, and recognition programs. The survey included responses from 68 individuals, spanning a range of age groups primarily between 20 and 55 years, reflecting the diversity within the workforce. The aim was to gauge the adequacy of resources, recognition, and support available to rangers, alongside understanding their views on the proposed "Guardians of CYSNP" award as a tool for acknowledging efforts in forest protection and conservation.

Survey findings highlight a workforce committed to conservation but facing critical needs in safety provisions, wage sufficiency, and logistical support during patrols. While additional benefits and uniforms generally meet rangers' expectations, many expressed dissatisfaction with salaries and basic sustenance supplies. Recognition programs, such as the "Guardians of CYSNP" award, are seen as valuable, with nearly 90% favoring an annual award. Additionally, the importance of public awareness about forest conservation received overwhelming support, signaling a desire for broader community engagement. Addressing the needs identified in the survey could enhance ranger morale, improve retention, and strengthen the impact of Chu Yang Sin National Park's conservation efforts.



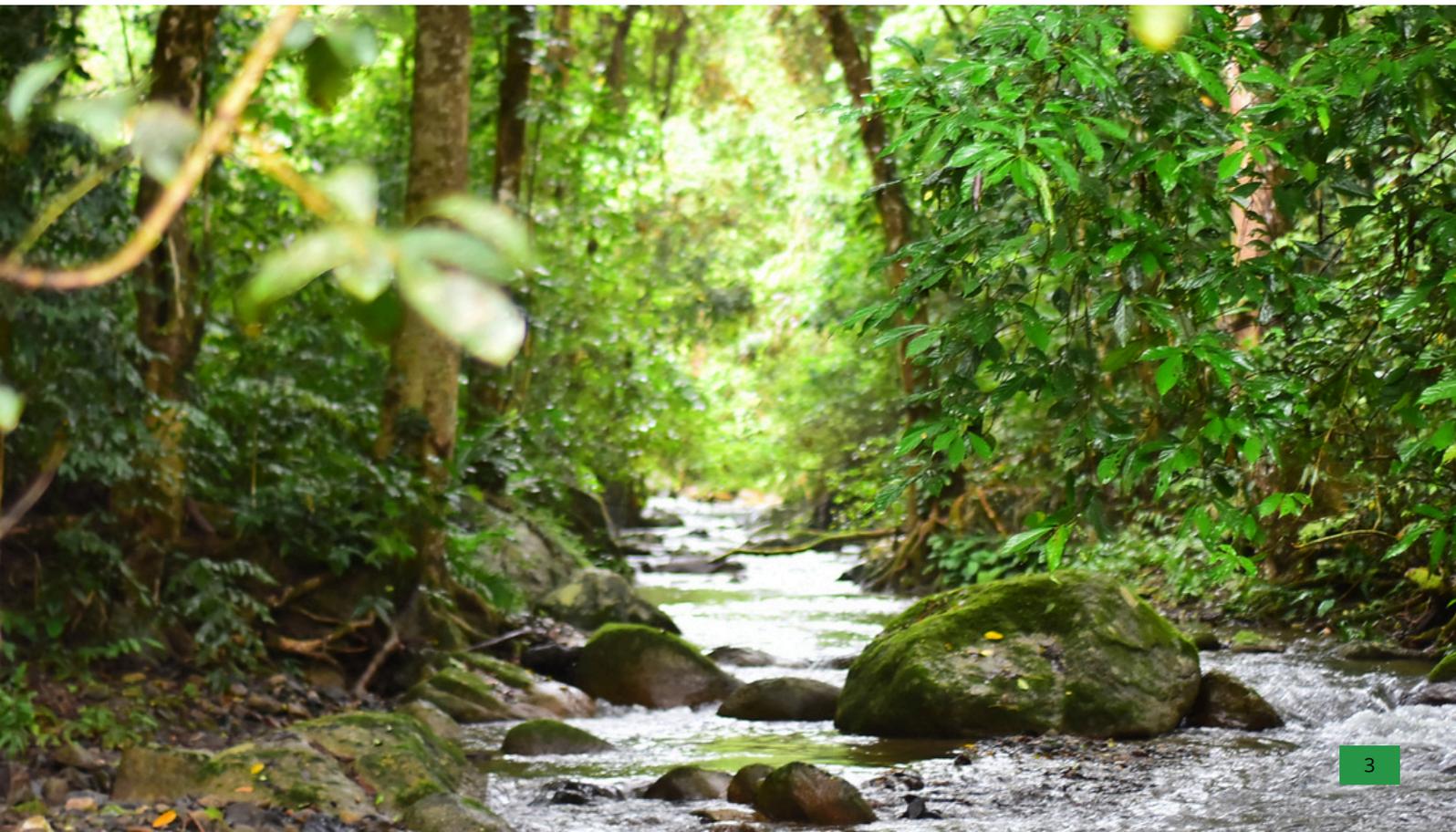
# INTRODUCTION

In Vietnam, each of the 11,786 forest rangers is tasked with patrolling an average of 966 hectares of forest—a workload intensified by the physical risks they face. Encounters with poachers often turn violent: in 2018, a Chu Yang Sin National Park (CYSNP) ranger was critically injured in a shooting, and in early 2022, seven rangers narrowly escaped harm when poachers pursued them with gunfire. Despite facing life-threatening situations, these rangers receive minimal compensation, lack essential safety gear and protective equipment, and have limited access to specialised training that could improve their safety and effectiveness.

Adding to these challenges, there is often a limited public understanding and

appreciation for biodiversity conservation, which impacts community support for rangers' critical work. Recognising these obstacles, it becomes essential to examine rangers' attitudes, behaviours, and working conditions to cultivate a workforce that is safe, motivated, and skilled in safeguarding CYSNP's biodiversity.

This internal survey of Chu Yang Sin National Park's rangers aims to bring these issues into focus. By assessing current working conditions and understanding what factors impact ranger motivation, this survey will inform the development of a capacity-building framework designed not only to enhance ranger skills but also to foster job satisfaction and commitment to conservation efforts.



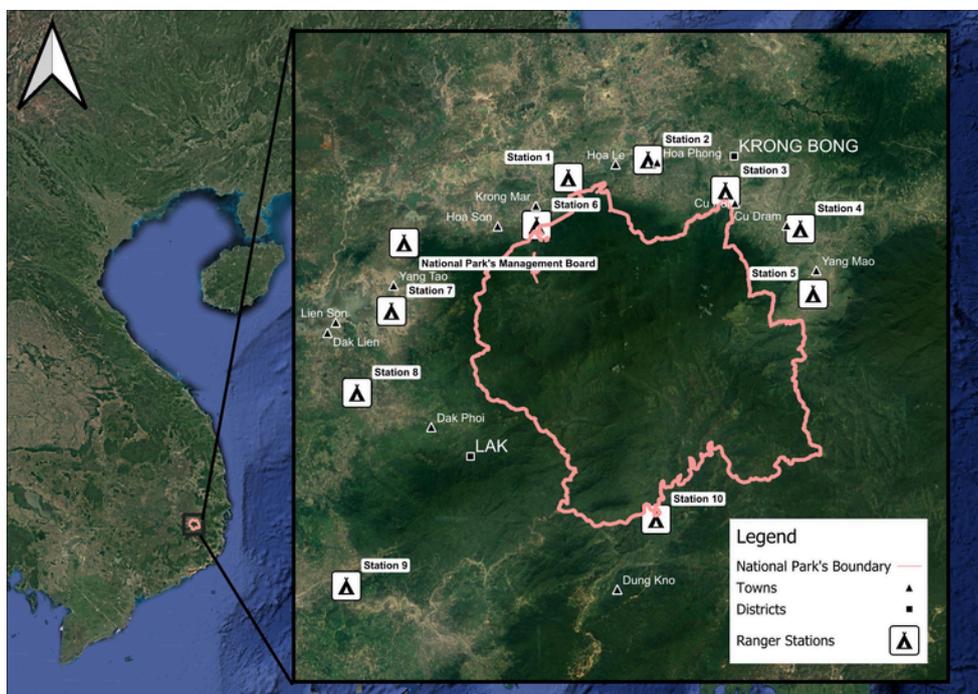
# METHODOLOGY

A structured online survey, hosted on the Google Forms platform, was conducted to gather insights on factors that influence ranger motivation and working conditions within Chu Yang Sin National Park (CYSNP). The survey consisted of 45 questions designed to address key areas impacting ranger morale, including facilities, equipment, training, infrastructure, working hours, and pay. Additional sections covered broader issues such as rangers' degree of authority, public perception, and threats from local communities.

A total of 68 rangers participated in the survey, representing 68% of the active ranger force at CYSNP. Respondents were stationed

across 10 different ranger stations, allowing for a comprehensive view of ranger experiences and challenges within the park. Data collection took place through online submissions to ensure consistency and ease of access for participants stationed in remote locations.

This survey represents a rapid assessment of ranger motivation and job satisfaction at CYSNP; however, findings are specific to the park and are not intended for extrapolation to other parks or regions in Vietnam or elsewhere in Asia.

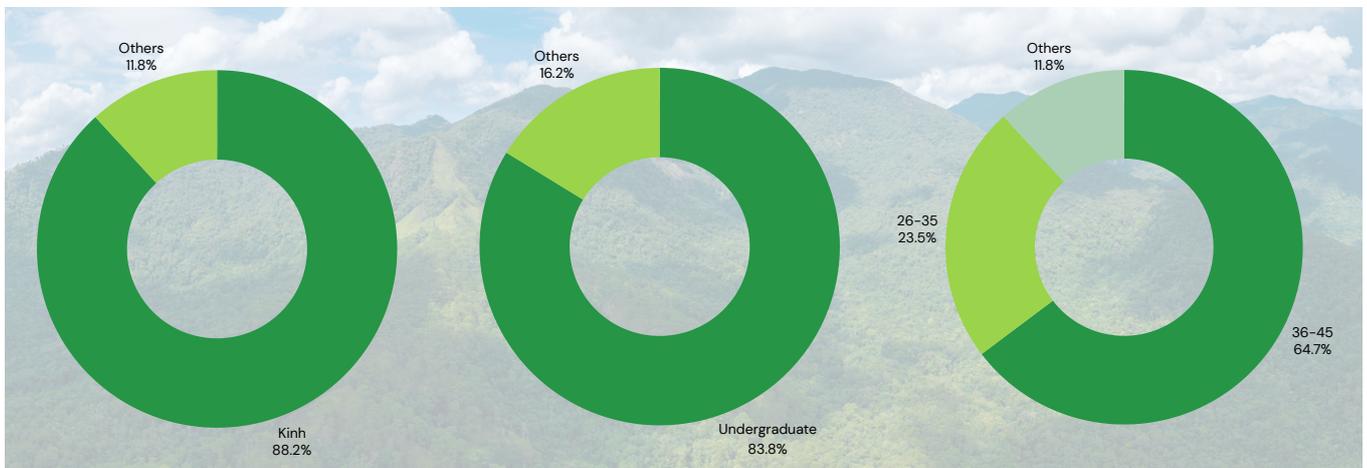


**Figure 1:** Map of Chu Yang Sin National park, with location of 10 ranger stations.

# DEMOGRAPHIC

# 68

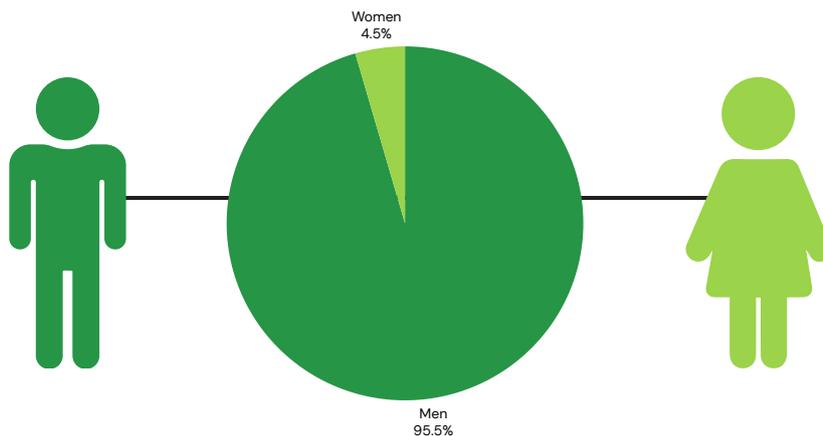
# TOTAL RESPONSES



Ethnic groups

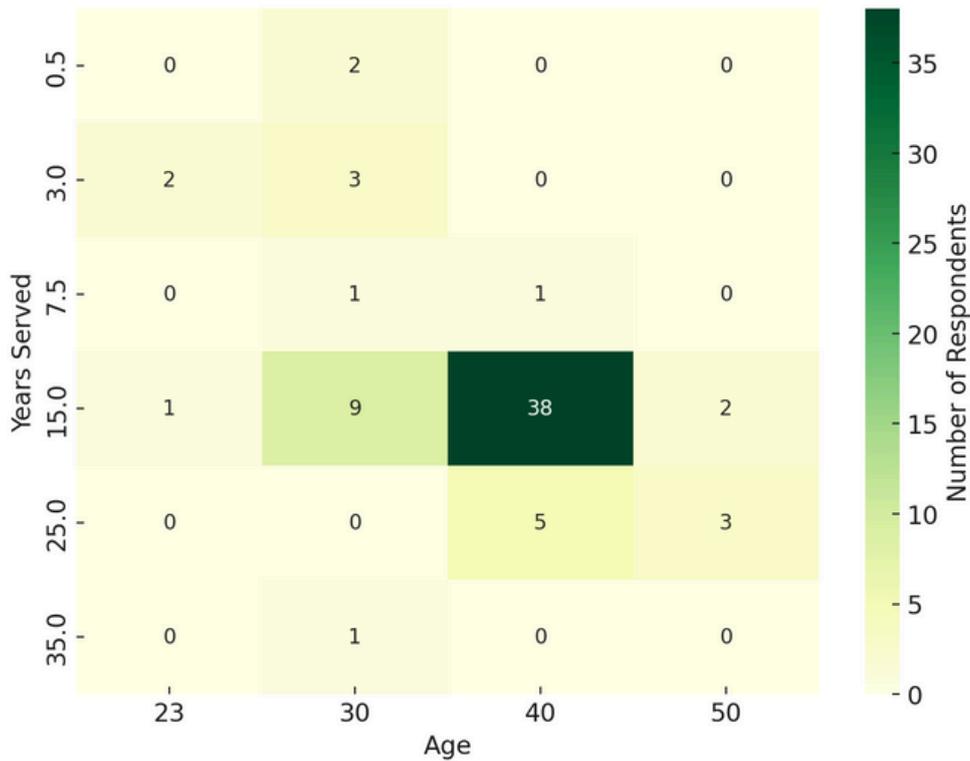
Education

Age groups



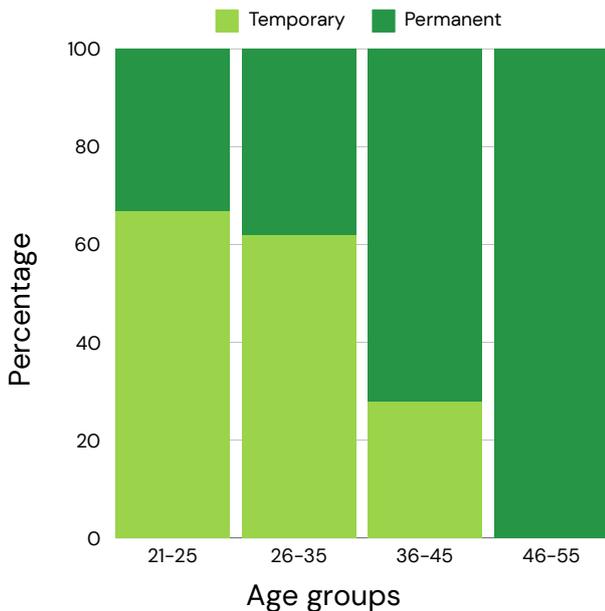
Of the 68 rangers who responded to the survey, only three (4.41%) were women, with the remaining respondents being men (n=65, 95.6%) . Despite the rich ethnic diversity within the buffer zone area, the majority of the rangers are Kinh (n= 60,

88.2%), rather than members of the local ethnic minority groups. Age demographics indicate that 64.7% (n=44) of rangers are between 36 and 45 years old, and an impressive 83.8% (n=57) have obtained an undergraduate degree.

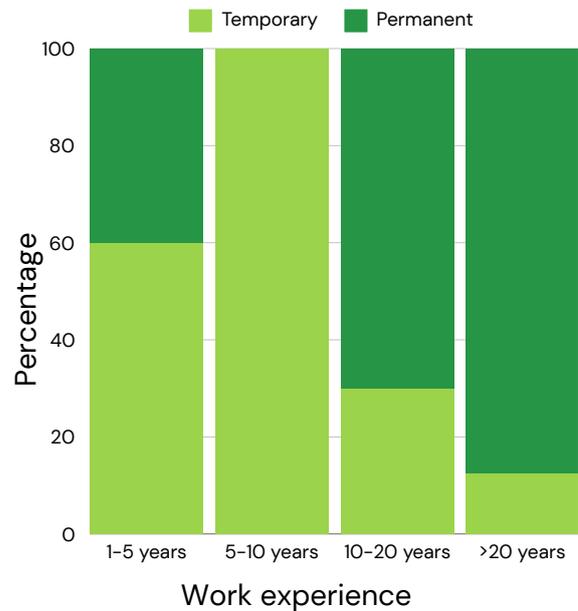


A heatmap representing the distribution of rangers by age and tenure. Darker colours indicate higher numbers of respondents within each age-tenure combination, providing a clear view of the most populated groups.

This chart reveals that most respondents are in the 36–45 age group with 10–20 years of service, followed by other concentrations in the 26–35 and 46–55 age ranges.



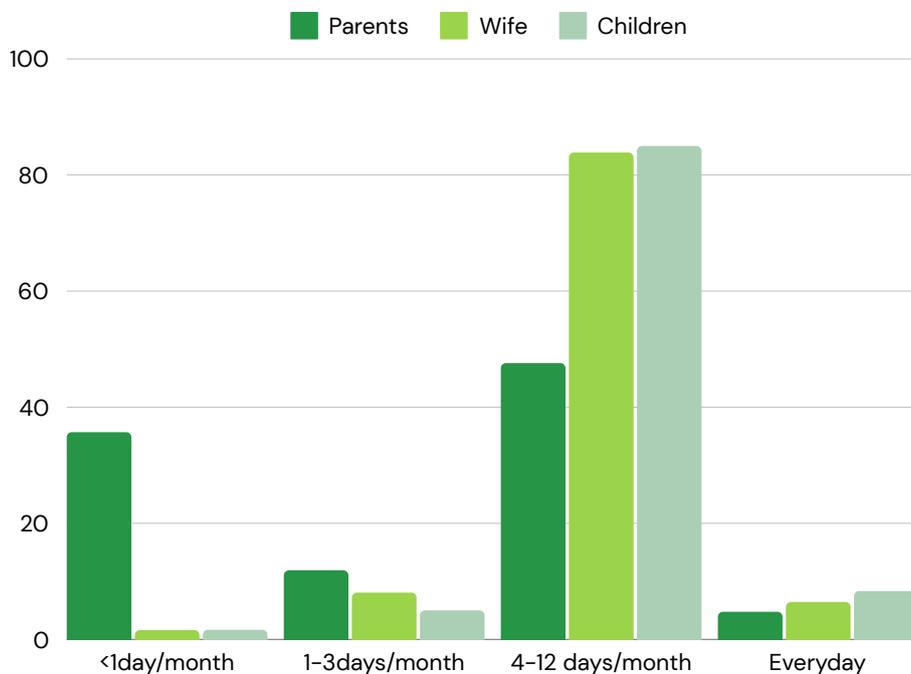
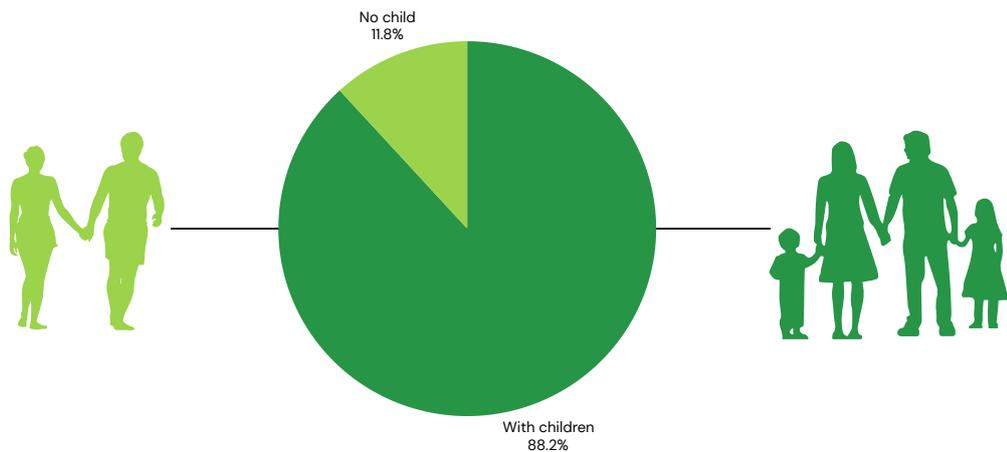
Older rangers are more likely to hold permanent contracts due to their extensive experience and invaluable knowledge, which enhance their effectiveness and reliability in conservation



roles. In this survey sample, only two respondents with 5–10 years of experience participated and both holding temporary contracts, as shown in the graph.

# FAMILY

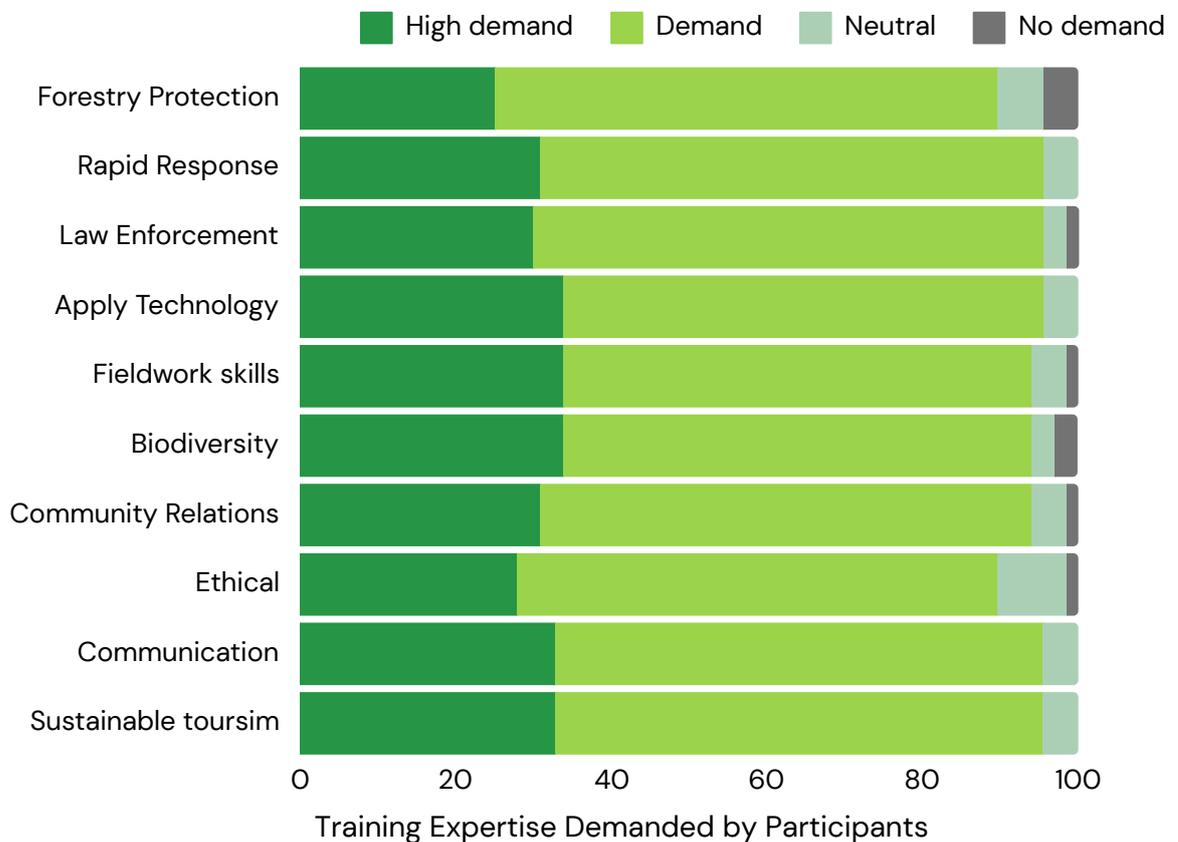
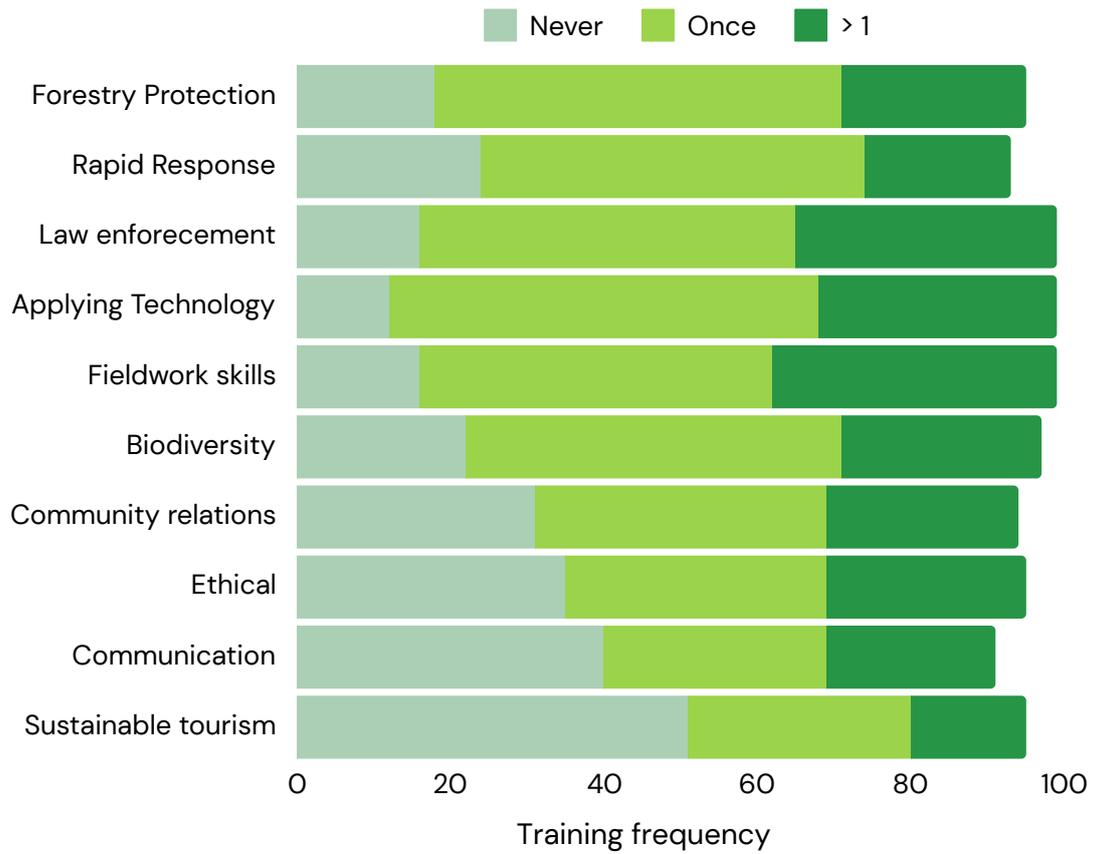
# 62 RESPONDENTS ARE MARRIED

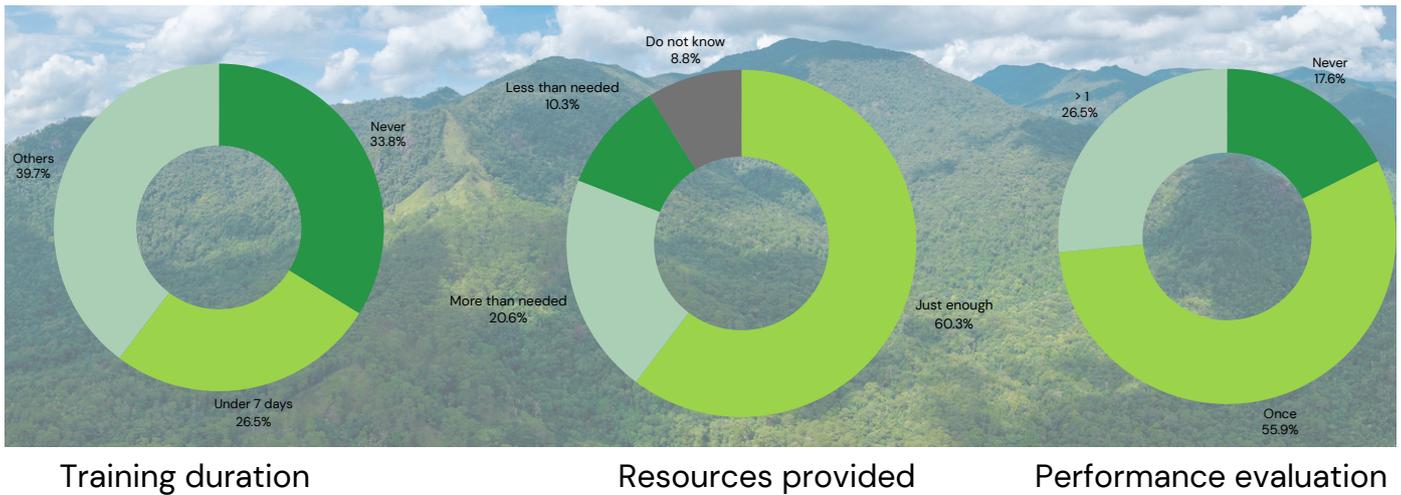


Most rangers in this survey report spending only 4-12 days per month with their families, with very few able to be with loved ones daily. This pattern underscores the demands of ranger work, which frequently requires

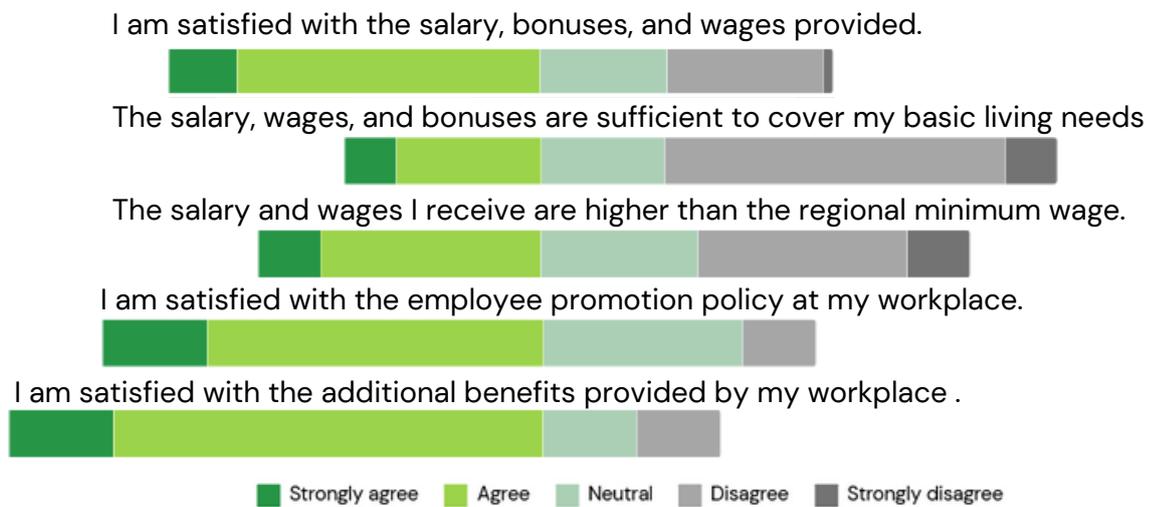
extended time away. While a moderate amount of time each month is possible for many, daily family interactions remain uncommon.

# CAPACITY



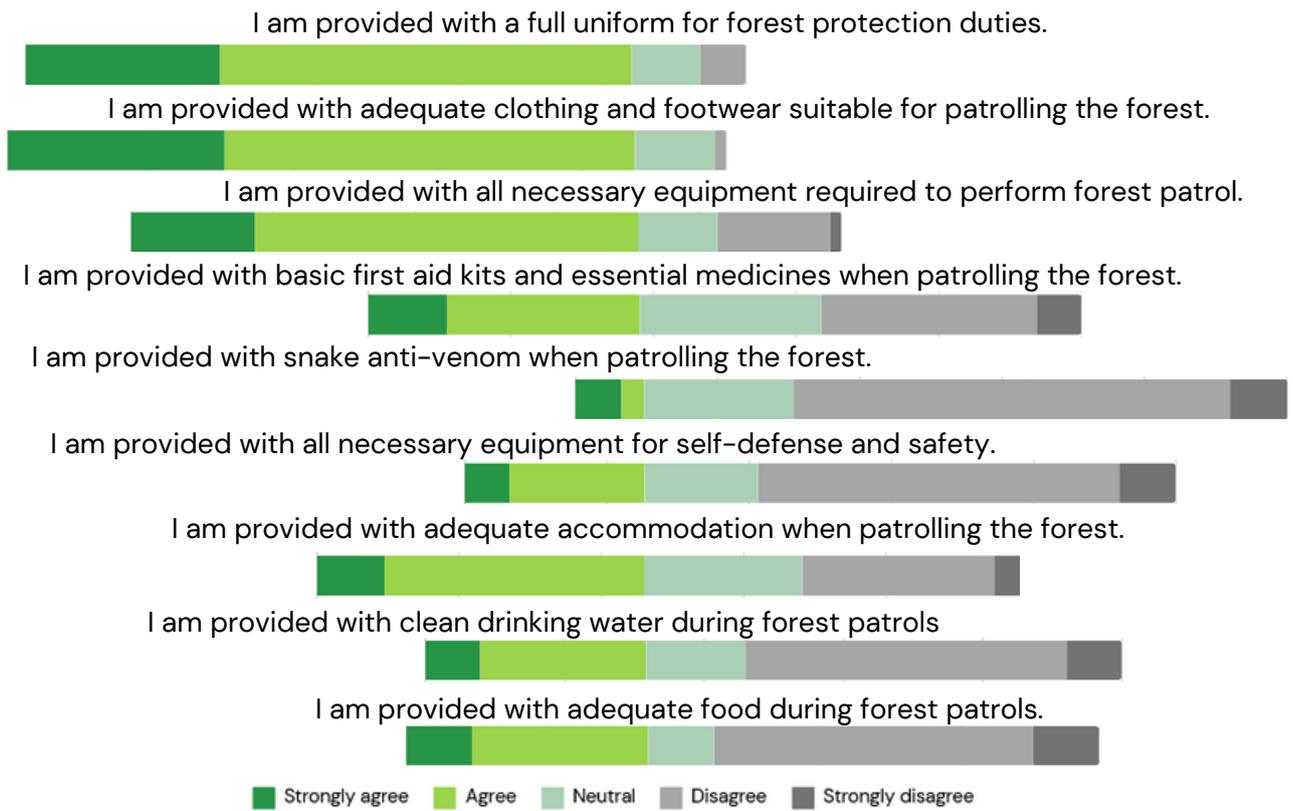


## WELFARE



The data highlights areas where rangers feel adequately supported, such as additional benefits, but also shows significant dissatisfaction with wage sufficiency relative to basic needs. This suggests that while benefits are valued, there is room for

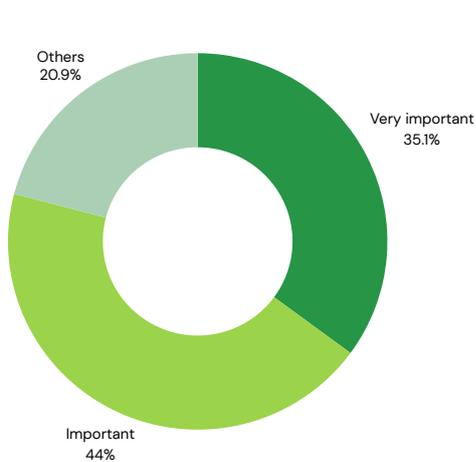
improvement in salary levels to ensure a more satisfied and financially secure workforce. Addressing wage sufficiency could potentially improve job satisfaction and retention among rangers at Chu Yang Sin National Park.



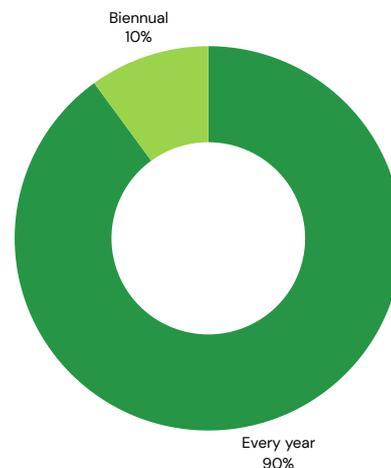
While foundational items like uniforms, clothing, and some necessary equipment are generally satisfactory, there are critical gaps in the provision of safety equipment (anti-venom, self-defense tools), as well as essential sustenance supplies (water and food). These

deficiencies could impact ranger morale and safety. Addressing these shortfalls, particularly in life-saving equipment and basic sustenance, would likely improve ranger satisfaction and ensure better support for forest patrols.

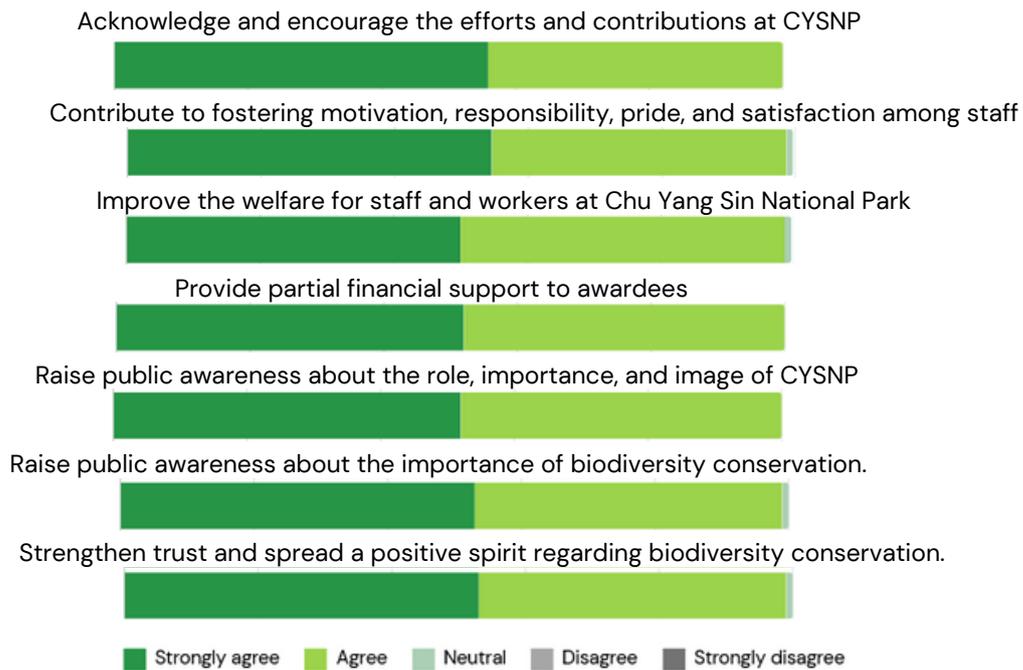
## MOTIVATION



Rangers' perception of the award



Preferred Award Frequency



The data highlights that rangers highly value recognition, motivation, welfare support, and public acknowledgment of their roles. These areas are viewed as crucial to job satisfaction, engagement, and the positive spirit needed to

protect and manage the forest effectively. Implementing strategies in these areas would likely foster greater morale and commitment within the team.

# RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis of ranger data from Chu Yang Sin National Park, several key recommendations are proposed to enhance ranger welfare, safety, and professional development.

## Recommendation 1: Improve Working Conditions and Work-Life Balance

The survey revealed significant challenges in terms of insufficient wages, inadequate food and water provisions, and limited access to safety equipment, such as bulletproof vests and anti-venom supplies. Furthermore, many rangers reported that their income does not cover basic living expenses, contributing to financial stress. Lack of contractual security and insufficient time with family also contribute to work-life imbalance. Addressing these issues requires improving the predictability of working conditions, wages, and family-friendly policies. Rangers, who face significant physical risks to protect the state's natural resources, should be given a status comparable to other essential civil servants, such as police and emergency responders, with similar rights, protections, and benefits. Ensuring such parity will help retain skilled personnel and enhance morale.

## Recommendation 2: Strengthen Safety Equipment and Training

Over half of the rangers indicated a lack of essential safety equipment, inadequate self-defense tools, and insufficient training, particularly in handling critical field scenarios. This gap in provisions not only reduces ranger effectiveness but also jeopardizes their safety. To address these concerns, a comprehensive strategy should include three components:

- **Ensure Safety Equipment Availability:** Rangers should be provided with sufficient personal protection gear, such as anti-venom kits, first aid supplies, and self-defense tools to safely perform their duties.
- **Increase Frequency and Quality of Training:** Institutionalize regular training programs focused on field skills, emergency response, and conservation techniques. Establish specialized training centers in Vietnam that can deliver best-practice curriculum and adapt to emerging conservation threats.
- **Provide Psychological and Welfare Support:** Given the physical and mental demands of ranger duties, well-being programs should be introduced. These can include mental health support, stress management workshops, and incentives to balance personal and professional lives.

## Recommendation 3: Enhance Rangers' Welfare, Motivation, and Pride in Their Work

To ensure long-term commitment and job satisfaction, improving the welfare of rangers is essential. Survey results show that while rangers are motivated by their dedication to conservation, there is a need for better welfare benefits and programs that boost their sense of pride and motivation. This can be achieved through three key measures:

1. **Strengthen Welfare Benefits:** Expand welfare support to include comprehensive health insurance, allowances for food and transport, and additional financial incentives linked to performance. These enhancements will not only reduce financial stress but also increase job satisfaction, making rangers feel more valued.

**2. Introduce Recognition Programs:** Programs like the "Guardians of CYSNP" award should be formalized and hosted annually. This kind of recognition fosters a sense of achievement and reinforces pride in their critical role in conservation. Awards and public ceremonies can also raise awareness and appreciation of rangers' work among local communities, helping to improve their public image.

**3. Foster Career Growth and Professional Development:** Provide clearer promotion pathways, professional development opportunities, and career counseling. These measures not only contribute to motivation and morale but also instill a sense of pride and ownership in their work, encouraging rangers to see their roles as lifelong, respected careers.

Implementing these welfare-focused initiatives will increase ranger retention, improve motivation, and reinforce their commitment to conservation at Chu Yang Sin National Park. It will also position rangers as respected custodians of biodiversity, a source of pride both personally and professionally.



OCTOBER 2024

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the public for their donation, and Conservation Vietnam for the financial supports of this project since May 2024.



**For general information**

**contact**

WildAct Vietnam  
26, TT26, Khu Do Thi Van Phu,  
Ha Dong, Hanoi

+84 334 509 868  
info@wildact-vn.org  
www.wildact-vn.org

Registered Charity: A-1357