Dr. Graeme Cumming, Editor in Chief

Conservation Letters

I am writing to submit a manuscript entitled "Wildlife health perceptions and monitoring practices in globally distributed protected areas" for consideration in Conservation Letters. Having carefully reviewed the focus and scope of your esteemed journal, and after reading the paper titled “Essential planetary health workers: Positioning rangers within global policy” by Stolton et al.; we believe that our research aligns well with its commitment to advancing conservation and policy.

Our manuscript reveals that valuable syndromic wildlife health surveillance data from protected areas are being lost due to non-collection or inadequate management. Further, the usefulness of collected data can be limited by the unstandardized methods used for documentation.

In a world of continuous disease emergence, strengthening wildlife health surveillance in protected areas is critical to fostering protected area resilience, the conservation of biodiversity, and global health security. Rangers can detect obviously non-healthy and dead wildlife in protected areas and they have provided relevant information regarding diseases of global and conservation concern. Currently, there are approximately 280,000 rangers worldwide and it is estimated that 1.5 million will be needed by 2030 to adequately protect 30% of the planet. The present and projected number of rangers and their local contributions to a healthier planet reveal their unique potential as a worldwide distributed “One Health workforce” that could drastically strengthen wildlife health and One Health surveillance systems.

However, there is a lack of baseline information regarding the perceived relevance of wildlife, human, and livestock health for biodiversity conservation in protected areas, mandates to document findings of health interest, and current wildlife health monitoring practices in these areas worldwide.

We conducted a comprehensive survey of globally distributed protected area data managers to address this gap. We underscore and discuss the critical issues that must be addressed before the unique potential of rangers as a worldwide distributed “One Health workforce” can be realized.

We believe that our research adds a valuable perspective to the existing body of knowledge and aligns with Conservation Letters' mission to publish innovative and impactful studies. We hope that you find our manuscript suitable for publication, and we look forward to the opportunity for it to contribute to the ongoing discourse in wildlife health and conservation.

Thank you for considering our submission. We appreciate your time and attention to our work.

Sincerely,

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