



Tirweddau Cymru  
Landscapes Wales



Bryniau Clwyd a  
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy  
Tirwedd Cenedlaethol  
  
Clwydian Range  
and Dee Valley  
National Landscape

# 20th International Junior Ranger Camp

## Landscapes for the Future

Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape  
Bryniau Clwyd a Dyffryn Dyfrdwy Tirwedd Cenedlaethol



20 - 27 July 2024

Wales





The International Junior Ranger Camp is an opportunity for EUROPARC to highlight how nature connects us across boundaries, be it cultural or geographical. We are all part of nature, and as such should look after it for current and future generations.

Climbing up to Moel Famau, the highest point in the Clwydian Range





# 20th International Junior Ranger Camp

The International Junior Ranger Camp is a motivational and eye-opening experience for many young people across the continent. Here, they have the opportunity to make friends from across Europe who share a passion for nature and are involved in local Protected Areas. The camp's programme is full of exciting activities related to nature conservation, environmental issues, and cultural heritage. Furthermore, young people will discover a new Protected Area, be given responsibility to represent their park and their country, as well as contribute to the conservation of nature in a different part of Europe.

The camp is an opportunity for the EUROPARC Junior Ranger network to come together to share, learn, support and celebrate one another. It is a highlight for both the young Junior Rangers and also for their Mentors.



The 20th International Junior Ranger Camp was hosted by the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape and funded by Tirweddau Cymru Landscape Wales and the Welsh Government. It took place from the 20 - 27 July 2024 and was attended by 12 Mentors and 32 Junior Rangers.



## Participants

In 2024, the participants were from 16 different Protected Areas across 11 European countries:



Wales:  
Clwydian Range and Dee Valley  
National Landscape

Denmark  
Frederikshavn Kommune

Sweden  
Kullaberg Nature Reserve

Latvia  
Rāznas NationalPark  
North Vidzeme Biosphere  
Reserve

The Netherlands  
Dwingelderveld National Park  
Weerribben-Wieden National  
Park

Czech Republic  
České středohoří - Central  
Bohemian Highlands Protected  
Landscape Area

Estonia  
Karula National Park  
Vilsandi National Park  
Soomaa National Park

Germany  
Müritz National Park  
Unteres Odertal National Park

Italy  
Prealpi Giulie Nature  
Regional Park

Slovenia  
Triglav National Park

Austria  
Gesäuse National Park



# The principles of a EUROPARC International Junior Ranger Camp

- Experiential, practical, fun, safe and **inspirational activities in Protected Areas** managed by Rangers and “learning by doing”;
- A **non-discriminatory** programme, which requires a professional approach and high-quality standards;
- Promotes **international exchange** to develop positive, cooperative and social skills, and to encourage the active citizenship of youth;
- **Enhance connections** between EUROPARC Protected Areas and young people;
- **Develop cooperation** between Rangers, Parks, and EUROPARC.



Photo credit: Imogen Hammond



Photo credit: Emma Schweinsberg



Photo credit: Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre



Photo credit: Erica Zwanenburg



# Inspirational Activities in Protected Areas

## Introduction to the local history and culture

The varied and diverse programme included trips to various historical and cultural sites along with qualified archaeologists, storytellers and site managers. These included a visit to Caer Drewyn (an Iron Age hillfort), Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, Plas Newydd (the historical house and gardens of the Ladies of Llangollen), the Dinas Bran Castle, the historical Llangollen and Corwen Railway as well as a day trip to the lakes at the foot of Mount Snowdon.



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic

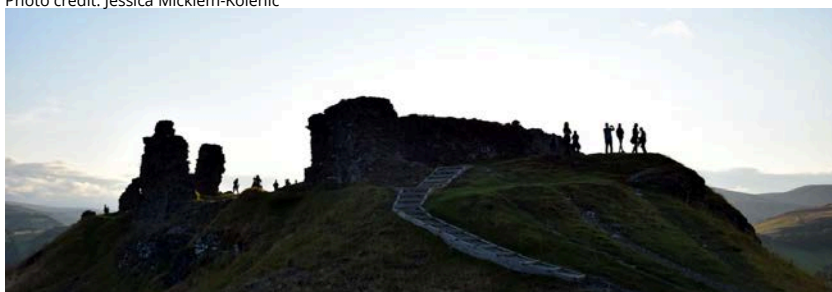


Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Niels Storm



Photo credit: Erica Zwanenburg



## Outdoor Sports:

The CWDV Team partnered with the Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre and planned for the Junior Rangers to experience scenic hikes, scrambling along the Panorama cliffs, and white-water rafting down the Horse shoe falls in the Dee Valley.



Photo credit: Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic

## Nature Restoration and Management

The National Landscape has many tasks to manage the landscape and keep it as natural as possible. The Junior Rangers assisted in beating down bracken to prevent it from overtaking the landscape completely and reducing space and habitat for other flora and fauna species. Another task was removal of invasive species from neighbouring commercial plantations and clearing litter on frequented paths.



Photo credits: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic





## Tourism Management & Maintenance

With the CRDV being so close to large urban centres, there are many challenges to maintain the land and create a safe environment. The Junior Rangers enjoyed the visits from the Mountain Search and Rescue and the Search and Rescue Dog Associations, as well as learning how to build dry walls and clearing drainage ditches along busy paths.



Photo credit: Niels Storm



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Niels Storm



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic

## Learning about the local nature

The Curlew Connection project spent the day sharing the challenges of Curlew conservation in Wales with the Junior Rangers and all created screen-printed bags to increase public awareness through art. One evening a moth trap was set up and the Junior Rangers spent the following morning identifying moths. Lastly, the portable planetarium was brought to the Bryntysilio OEC and the Junior Rangers were taken along on an exploration of the universe with a discussion on Dark Sky Parks and light pollution.



Photo credit: Emma Schweinsberg



Photo credit: Erica Zwanenburg



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



## Non-discriminatory Programme



The site host, Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre were very supportive, accommodating all needs and adapting flexibly to any and all changes in the timetables, meal plans and activities. Their food was praised by the participants who were able to experience many traditional meals such as Cawl, Yorkshire Pudding (not a pudding) and sticky toffee pudding (a dessert).



It was wonderful to have queer history and culture represented in the programme with a visit to Plas Newydd, a 200-year-old residence by two queer ladies who ran away together and tended to a very diverse garden. The garden is managed by the local CRDV team following the spirit of the original owners via their detailed diaries.



This year there were additional challenges with Junior Rangers experiencing medical and social setbacks. The Mentors and the hosts were very accommodating, sometime staying behind to take care of the sick or looking after the mental wellbeing of the Junior Rangers.



The participation of local Junior Rangers is often restricted to ensure mixing with the international group. However, accommodation was made for additional Junior Rangers to join for some activities such as Fort Drewyn and the Young Rangers from Eryri joined us on the day trip to the pass.



This year's International Junior Ranger Camp was organised through the support of Tirweddau Cymru Landscape Wales who selected the CRDV as the hosts, despite them not being EUROPARC members. The experience was a very positive one and we look forward to welcoming them into the network in the near future.



## International Exchange

The Junior Rangers had delivered their homework in their teams to rotations of small groups. In 10 minutes, they presented their home Protected Areas and their Junior Ranger programme while fielding questions. Almost all groups experienced some nerves but after the first presentation, the words flowed easier. The Junior Rangers had the chance to improve their public speaking and English skills and it was a great way for them to grow comfortable as ambassadors for their Protected Areas.



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic

An international exchange is not only about nature protection but also sharing of culture through music, food and dancing. A staple event is the International Food Night. Each team brings local food from their areas (e.g. Czech bread, Baltic Sea fish, Welsh cakes) and presents it to the group. Thereafter all get to taste new experiences! In the evenings there were spontaneous camp fire songs and sharing traditional dances. Throughout the event, everyone tried to learn to pronounce a few Welsh words.



Photo credit: William Söderberg



Photo credit: Imogen Hammond



Photo credit: Erica Zwanenburg



## Enhance connection to EUROPARC

It is good to celebrate diversity, but it is also good to find unity through a shared community and identity. The International Junior Ranger Camp is an opportunity for the young participants to feel part of something bigger and to find common understanding with like-minded peers. It is also an opportunity to identify as part of the EUROPARC community, which links their parks.

During the formal ceremony on the penultimate night, notable VIPs were invited from the Welsh Government, local council government, the Friends of the CRDV amongst them. Anna Jones from TCLW presented on the youth work across Welsh Landscapes and Jessica Micklem-Kolenic gave an overview of the EUROPARC Federation and its range of youth opportunities.



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic

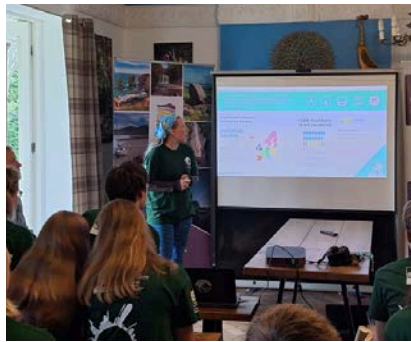


Photo credit: Niels Storm



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



This year we were happy to welcome three mentors who were Junior Ranger alumni. From left to right: Emma Schweinsberg (Germany, 2010 - 2022), Benedikt Janda (Czech Republic, 2013 - 2017) and William Söderberg (Sweden, 2015 - 2020).

### Instagram Highlights @europarc.youth

The EUROPARC youth page on Instagram (@europarc.youth) was used to give updates on the activities of the Junior Rangers at the Camp. These stories were available for 24 hours and then stored as part of the highlight. We received positive feedback on this from the Junior Rangers, the Mentors and the parents.





# Developing Cooperation

**JUNIOR RANGERS**  
CHALLENGES & POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

**THERE IS HIGH INTEREST FOR SOME ACTIVITIES (CAMP) BUT LESS FOR OTHERS. HOW CAN WE ENSURE HIGH LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION?**

- Combine less wanted activities with things that are usually well received
- Let the Junior Rangers take part in organising their activities
- Connect with other Junior Ranger groups in your area to spark motivation (competitiveness on who works the hardest)
- Have requirements for the camp that they only get to take part if they committed to other activities throughout the year
- Have clear goals for high participation in local camps or exchanges

**HOW CAN WE ENSURE WHEN ONE MENTOR RETIRES/LEAVES THE NEW MENTOR HAS THE NETWORK TO CONTINUE THE PROGRAMME?**

- If possible, have a phase of the retiring mentor teaching new mentors what they have done so far
- Encourage current rangers to make lists of their connections, phone number and reoccurring programme plans
- Consider time it takes the Junior Rangers to get used to the new mentor
- Give the mentor good team support

**HOW CAN WE MAKE GROUPS TO VISIT OUR EASIER?**

- Ask parents to help, the to join the activities as parents have to join
- Maybe public transport an adventure!
- Consider cycling there
- Ask bus company for discount ("makes rates")
- Ask other organisations cars/sponsor petrol
- Ask the municipality for the JR are from one region Latvia

**Inclusion & Diversity in the EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme**

**01** Barriers to more inclusion and diversity in the JR programme are:

- the physicality of the activities
- the input pool in small towns
- communication (languages used, verbal communication required)

**02** Communication may be "judged" according to only visible diversity. Programmes could have more info on being open to disabilities or special needs on their info pages.

**03** The Junior Ranger programme is inclusive. It is:

- open to most learning disabilities
- free (or with subsidies)
- open to a large age range
- also for home schooled kids
- a safe space for all genders and sexualities

**04** Most common current diversity categories in the JR programme:

- Social anxiety
- ADHD and autism
- Queer & transgender

**05** Challenges for future work on this theme:

- How to reach low income communities, refugees or migrants?
- How to adapt to physical disabilities?

youth.europarc@europarc.org

It is not only the Junior Rangers who benefited from the camp. The Mentors were able to meet, share, learn and be inspired.

Each camp, the EUROPARC representative organises a Mentors workshop where they not only share their experiences, but also share their journeys and their challenges.

This year the workshop included icebreakers, sharing what brings joy and inspiration to mentors, sharing challenges and brainstorming possible solutions, and a discussion on inclusion and diversity in the Junior Ranger programme.

Challenges & Solutions

Inclusion & Diversity



Photo credit: Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



Photo credit: Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



# Media Coverage



Photos were collected with permission and a photo album was created to share with participants, parents and parks.



Many of the park pages shared photos and comments about their participation:

## General Press:

### Austria

In Austria, the Junior Rangers participation in the International Camp was featured in two newspapers; Ennstaler and Ennsseiten.

### Latvia

An article was published in a local newspaper "Auseklī" featuring the Junior Rangers from the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve and a [blog post](#) was written for the Latvian Nature Conservation Agency.

### Wales

One of the VIPs invited to the formal ceremony to hand out certificates, Carolyn Thomas, a member of the Welsh Senate, [posted about the event](#) on her personal X account.



- [Erica Zwanenburg](#), Dutch Mentor
- [Triglav National Park](#), Slovenia
- [Parco Naturale Prealpi Giulie](#), Italy
- [Rāzna National Park](#), Latvia
- [Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape](#), Wales
- [North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve](#), Latvia
- [Nature Conservation Agency](#), Latvia



- Two sets of Photos posted by [Junior Ranger Kullaberg](#)
- The Junior Rangers themselves posted on their private accounts
- The [Bryntysilio OEC](#) instagram account shared all the stories throughout the camp duration
- [CurlewConnectionsWales](#) made a lovely reel featuring the Curlew art workshop
- The [CRDV](#) Instagram account made 3 posts and 6 reels throughout the camp as well as sharing the EUROPARC stories



## Feedback & Highlights

On the last day, the mentors were given an assignment to ask their Junior Rangers about the top highlights from the camp. Below you can see some of the answers shared with EUROPARC.

They loved the rafting, building the wall and the last day. Generally the nature here was great and perfect for all the activities. Also the last evening!

Picking up litter, campfires, beautiful views, rafting, hiking in the mountains, working together, pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal, learnt a lot about Wales!

Being together, the landscape, rafting, dry wall building, walks and new landscapes, evening hike up to the castle for the sunset!

Rafting, the Planetarium, playing Mafia, scrambling, and conversations

Rafting!! The socialisation in the evenings, meeting all the different park rangers during the week. The curlew workshop! The History woman! All the ice cream!

The highlights were mostly the white water rafting, the train ride and the walk up to Dinas Bran Castle. I really liked the mixed activities when we mixed walking with the management work.

It is not only the Junior Rangers who benefit from the event, the mentors are also able to exchange, share, learn and build social capital. Below you can read some of the personal feedback from two of the mentors.

We liked all the programmes and activities. The effort was enormous, thanks for everything!

It's really nice to see them smiling and explaining what happened to them while being on the camp!







We would like to take this opportunity to thank again all participants, the Junior Rangers, the Mentors and the Park Administrations.

In particular we want to express our gratitude for the expertise, dedication and passion of the CRDV staff as well as the Bryntysilio OEC staff for their enthusiasm, support and dedication in pulling the different parts of this event together.

## About the EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme

The EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme was launched in 1998 and the network has grown ever since. Being part of an extended European Junior Ranger network enables young people to connect with their peers across Europe.

The EUROPARC Federation Junior Ranger Programme is aimed at young people aged 12-18 who are living within or close to the Protected Area. The programme involves around 50 Protected Areas across 21 different countries, working with ~1300 youth every year.



## About the EUROPARC Federation

The EUROPARC Federation is the largest European network of Protected Areas with more than 400 members from 40 countries. Our members are directly or indirectly managing thousands of National and Regional Parks, Marine Protected Areas, Natura 2000 sites. We are working on different levels to improve the management of Protected Areas in Europe to the benefit of nature and people. [www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)

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### Funded by the European Union.

The production of this report has been supported financially in the framework of the European Commission's (Directorates General Environment and Climate Action) LIFE funding programme of operating grants for European Environmental NGOs. The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the publication lies entirely with the authors.