In Genesis the ark was said to be 30 cubits high, but the waters were said to have risen 15 cubits in Genesis 7:20. Was the ark taller than the waters?

The flood written about in the Book of Genesis was a worldwide flood.

Regarding Genesis chapter 7 verse 20, D. Kidner wrote:

Fifteen cubits deep refers to the clearance above the mountains, not the total depth. Possibly, as many have suggested, the measurement was learnt from the draught of the laden ark (i.e. half its height of thirty cubits), which had cleared all obstacles. It should perhaps be added that some of the writers who consider the flood to have been global conjecture that in the prediluvian world the main mountain ranges had not yet been thrust up (see, e.g. Whitcomb and Morris, The Genesis Flood, pp. 267ff.).¹

Secular scientists attempt to forward the idea that Noah's flood was a small, localized event; however, the evidence proves differently.

John Morris wrote:

The key is to remember that the Flood didn't have to cover the present Earth, but it did have to cover the pre-Flood Earth, and the Bible teaches that the Flood fully restructured the earth. "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:6). It is gone forever. The earth of today was radically altered by that global event.

That Flood accomplished abundant geologic work. Eroding sediments here, redepositing them there, pushing up continents, elevating plateaus, denuding terrains, etc., so that the earth today is quite different from before. Today even mountain ranges rise high above the sea.

Mt. Everest and the Himalayan range, along with the Alps, the Rockies, the Appalachians, the Andes, and most of the world's other mountains are composed of ocean-bottom sediments, full of marine fossils laid down by the Flood. Mt. Everest itself has clam fossils at its summit. These rock layers cover an extensive area, including much of Asia. They give every indication of resulting from cataclysmic water processes. These are the kinds of deposits we would expect to result from the worldwide, world-destroying Flood of Noah's day.²

All scientists have the same data. It is the interpretation of that data which makes for a worldview. Young earth creation science has come a long way in the past decades. The evidence supports the bible.

¹ Kidner, D. (1967). Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary (Vol. 1, p. 98). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

² Morris, J. 2003. Did Noah's Flood Cover the Himalayan Mountains? Acts & Facts. 32 (9): https://www.icr.org/article/520