

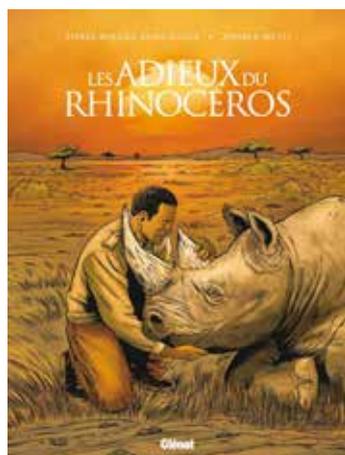


Illegal Wildlife Trade

French Zoo Association Launches Educational Comic Book and Motion to Fight Illegal Wildlife Crime

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The book cover for 'Les adieux du Rhinocéros'.

The illegal wildlife trade poses a significant threat to many endangered species, which is why the Association Française des Parcs Zoologiques (AFdPZ) decided to celebrate its recent 50th Anniversary by producing an educational comic book about the illegal trade in rhino horn. The 56-page comic titled, 'Les Adieux du Rhinocéros' (Rhino Farewell) was written by Pierre-Roland Saint-Dizier and was created in partnership with Glénat Editions – a well-known French publisher – and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) French Committee.

The comic book is aimed at a large audience of people between the ages of 7-77 and includes eight educational pages at the end

of the book about the illegal wildlife trade. It was officially released on 3 June, during an international symposium organised by AFdPZ at the Palais du Luxembourg (French Senate in Paris) dedicated to the fight against wildlife trade and rhinos titled: Lutte Contre le Trafic des Espèces, L'exemple du Rhinocéros (The Fight Against the Trafficking of Species, with the Example of the Rhinoceros).

AFdPZ gathered a variety of great speakers and stakeholders from different organisations for the event. Representatives from zoos, United Nations Environment (UN Environment), *in situ* conservation programmes, Sigfox, Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (ONCFS), IUCN French Committee, the author of the comic book and the French Ambassador for Environment, Mr Yann Wehring who all shared their expertise with participants and explained their individual proposals to fight the international trade in wildlife.

The motion calls on States to tackle and penalise wildlife trafficking at the same level as other serious crimes, such as drugs and arms trafficking, under the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. It calls on the adoption of dissuasive and proportionate sanctions, strengthened investigation capacities and enhanced international judiciary cooperation. AFdPZ welcomes all IUCN members to support this motion.

The rhino poaching comic book has also since been publicly launched in four zoos with the participation of local authorities involved in the fight against wildlife trade, and has been accompanied by several awareness-raising events to educate people about the trade in rhino horns. The book is currently being sold in French bookstores and zoos (French zoos welcome more than 20 million visitors per year). A percentage of the retail price will be used to fund the *in situ* rhino conservation programme, Save The Rhino International.

While the book is currently only available in French, the editor would welcome the opportunity to work with other zoos and aquariums to translate the book into different languages.

Photo: The comic book author signing copies of the rhino poaching comic book. © AFdPZ

