**PRESS RELEASE**

**10/09/2024**

**Opening of the 10th IRF World Ranger Congress**

**Yesterday marked the inauguration of the 10th IRF World Ranger Congress. The International Ranger Federation (IRF) and the association Gardes Nature de France (GNF) welcomed 450 participants from all over the world to Hyères. The aim? To highlight the key role played by rangers in preserving the world's biodiversity, and to propose solutions to the lack of financial, human and technical resources faced by this profession. With 15 days to go until COP16 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (21/10-01/11/2024, Colombia), this congress is a platform for rangers to exchange best practices and make their voices heard at international events.**

**A first day of reunion and a reminder of the key issues at stake**

The rangers, those men and women committed to people and nature, were delighted to meet up with their peers around the world, without forgetting the difficulties they face in the field. Between the lack of manpower, the risk of conflict, particularly in areas where illegal practices are common, obsolete equipment, difficult working conditions in isolated locations, and training that is often non-existent and inadequate for today's challenges, their daily lives are proving increasingly complex.

This international event will address these issues in order to find solutions together. As IRF President Chris Galliers pointed out in his welcome speech: *“We are privileged to be present at this congress and have a responsibility to represent our fellow rangers. Through this event, we must carry their voices, especially in the Hyere Ranger Declaration, the official document that will close the congress”*.

According to Carole d'Antuoni, President of GNF, *“The congress is the starting point for collective action. We need to leave Hyères with concrete commitments. Rangers need to be better trained, better equipped, better regarded and, above all, more numerous. More than a million additional rangers are needed within the next five years if we are to achieve the world's conservation goals.”*

**For the first time, the World Ranger Congress is held in France**

For France, this congress is an opportunity to bring together French nature protection organizations and to highlight the commitment of French rangers. GNF hopes that this congress will lead to a better understanding of this profession and an improvement in the conditions under which this future-oriented activity operates.

France co-chairs the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC N&P). NatureXpairs, the French Hub for Nature and People, leads a French working group dedicated to achieving Target 3 of the Biodiversity Plan (to protect 30% of the world's land and oceans by 2030). This congress represents a unique opportunity to showcase French expertise and the richness and diversity of French protected areas. As an extension to the conference, foreign rangers who wish to do so will be welcomed by French protected areas to discover and learn from each other's management and protection practices.

**Download photos of the day** [**here**](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1A0WsosO1T6XCIckwwbmUjXoRsqrYYEpL?usp=sharing)**.**

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**About organizers**

**The “International Ranger Federation” (IRF)** is a worldwide, non-profit membership-based organization, established in 1992 to develop, advance, and promote the Ranger profession. The IRF recognises Rangers and protected and conserved area workers whether state, regional, communal, indigenous, or private, as essential on-the-ground planetary health professionals, that are responsible for safeguarding nature, and cultural and historical heritage, and protecting the rights and well-being of present and future generations. The IRF is the standard bearer for the Ranger profession globally and the voice of Ranger Associations and Rangers everywhere.

***> www.internationalrangers.org***

**The “Gardes Nature de France” Association (GNF)** was established on October 16, 2010, in Florac, following the National Parks Meetings. This professional association unites field agents from various natural areas in France, such as Regional Natural Parks, National Parks, Nature Reserves, Coastal Conservatory sites, and Great Sites of France, to support nature protection professionals and their institutions. GNF’s main goals include promoting the nature guard professions, networking field agents, providing solidarity and support, enhancing professionalism through experience sharing and information exchange, and organizing congresses and working groups. GNF also serves as the French section of the “International Ranger Federation” (IRF).

***> www.gardesnaturedefrance.org***

**More information at: https://worldrangercongress.org/press/**

