

WOLF TOTEM

Director to showcase real wolves



French director Jean-Jacques Annaud said he wanted to show audiences real wolves and Inner Mongolia in his hotly anticipated film “Wolf Totem” at a press conference in Beijing.

His disclosure came during the 4th Beijing International Film Festival. It is the first time the director has shed light on how “Wolf Totem” has been made.

With its amazing portrayal of wolves, the Chinese novel *Wolf Totem*, written by Jiang Rong and published in 2004, ranked among the top 10 best selling books for nearly six years. The book also has international appeal, as it was translated into over 30 languages and has been sold in more than 100 countries.

The director said he was thrilled to learn that the Chinese people are equally concerned about environmental problems as people in other countries, and was inspired by the novel.

Academy Award winning director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, famous for his movies “*The Bear*” (1988) and “*L’amant*” (1992), has been preparing to bring this marvelous story to the big screen for seven years and started to film it in July 2012. Chinese actors Feng Shaofeng and Dou Xiao star in the film, which portrays a story between the people and a wolf pack in Inner Mongolia.

“As the people who read the novel will know, the story brings you to the heart of the grassland, and shows you things you never knew about wolves,” Annaud said. He revealed a photo of himself and the wolf king for the first time at the press conference. The photo shows the two are close.

The director and his team had to overcome harsh difficulties in the wild, such as low temperatures, extremely bad weather, mosquito swarm attacks and safety problems when dealing with wolves, which still have wild nature. They built long, double fences to keep the 35 wolves under control and to train the wild animals not to avoid the camera and they even raised young wolves that they knew they could build an emotional relationship with.

The director said that in the past people often used dogs instead of wolves in filmmaking, but this time he knew it would be a mistake because the way wolves attack prey is totally different and wolves are more intelligent, so he insisted using real wolves and the production studio built four bases in Beijing and Inner Mongolia to raise and train wolves.



Canadian wolf trainer Andrew Simpson on location in Inner Mongolia with lead wolf Cloudy.