

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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CONSERVATION MEASURES AND EFFECTIVENESS IN CHINA ON PANGOLINS

This document has been submitted by China in relation to agenda item 35 on *Pangolins (Manis spp.)*.*

China appreciates the submission of document AC33 Doc.35 by the CITES Secretariat, supports cooperation among the CITES Secretariat, relevant Parties, and wildlife conservation organizations to conserve the pangolins world-wide, and is willing to share information on conservation of pangolins in China.

China is one of the major range states of the Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*), and has the marginal distribution of the Sunda pangolin (*M. javanica*) and the Indian pangolin (*M. crassicaudata*). The Chinese government attaches great importance to the conservation of pangolins and continuously adopts strict measures, and significant results are achieved.

1. Improve the legal system

On June 3, 2020, China uplisted all species of pangolins to national first-class protected wildlife, and provided the strictest protection for their wild populations and habitats in accordance with the Wildlife Conservation Law of the People's Republic of China. Strict management regulations were also established for activities such as population survey and monitoring, rescue, hunting, breeding, trading, transportation, utilization, import and export. The revision of the Wildlife Conservation Law was completed on December 30, 2022. We have formulated and implemented the *Measures for the Administration of Import and Export Permits of Wild Animals and Plants*, *the Methods for Evaluating the Value of Wild Animals and Their Products*, and *the Measures for the Administration of Wildlife Rescue* etc.. We have also issued a series of notices, including the Notice of the State Forestry Administration, the Ministry of Health, the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, the State Food and Drug Administration, and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Strengthening the Protection and Management of Saiga Antelopes, Pangolins, and Rare Snakes Resources, and Standardizing the Administration of Their Products for Medicinal Use, and the Notice of the State Forestry and Grassland Administration on Further Strengthening the Protection and Management of Pangolins and Other Wild Animals.

2. Strengthen habitat protection

China promotes the construction of a protected land system with national park as the main body. Nearly 10,000 various types of protected area have been established, accounting for approximately 18% of the land territory of China. In 2022, the *National Park Spatial Layout Plan* was released to promote the establishment of the world's largest national park system. In 2023, a list of important habitats for terrestrial wildlife was released and implemented, designating 35 important habitats for pangolins. We strictly implemented the accountability of the main body in the range of pangolins, strengthened field patrols and guarding, and resolutely curbed and cracked down on illegal behaviors such as habitat destruction and interference with the reproduction of pangolins. We conducted a national survey of terrestrial wildlife, issued the *Technical Guidelines for Monitoring Terrestrial Wildlife*, and formulated the *Technical Regulations for Monitoring the Field Population of Pangolins*, continuously strengthening the monitoring of wildlife such as pangolins and their habitats. New individual activity records of

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Chinese pangolins have been detected in more than 70 locations across 10 provinces in southern China, especially in Guangdong, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, and other regions where multiple breeding populations have been discovered in the wild. Even warm scenes of Chinese pangolins traveling with their children have been captured. Yunnan Province has captured the first wild activity image of the Sunda pangolin in last 20 years, indicating that the wild population of pangolins is showing a good trend of recovery and growth, and the habitat quality is continuously improving.

3. Strictly manage in accordance with the law

Since 2007, hunting of pangolins other than scientific research has been prohibited. Selling, purchasing, or utilizing pangolins and their products is prohibited except for special circumstances such as scientific research, artificial breeding, public awareness raising and medical use. It is prohibited to advertise for the illegal sale, purchase, or use of pangolins and their products. China prohibits the consumption for food of pangolins and their products. China also prohibits online platforms and commodity trading markets from providing display, trading, and consumer services for illegal sale, purchase, consumption, and utilization of pangolins and their products. Commercial import and export of pangolins and their products is prohibited.

Starting from January 1, 2008, China implemented a wildlife specific labeling management system for patent medicines and products containing pangolin scales. Relevant patent medicines and products must be marked with specific labels before they can enter circulation, ensuring traceability of their sources. This measure has effectively promoted industry self-discipline and engaged in business activities in accordance with the law, greatly facilitating law enforcement agencies to verify the legitimacy of their sources, preventing illegal products from entering circulation channels, and it also facilitated the public's conscious resistance to illegal transactions.

We strictly control the medicinal use of pangolins. Since 2018, no new drugs containing pangolin scales have been approved, and traditional Chinese medicine containing pangolin scales has not been included in the medical insurance reimbursement scope. The Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China (2020 edition) no longer includes pangolins and will actively promote no listing of pangolins in the Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China (2025 edition). The medicinal scope will be limited to designated hospitals and drug production enterprises that meet the conditions and requirements for the treatment of critical, severe, difficult and miscellaneous diseases, and other medical needs. We encourage and support scientific research institutions, relevant enterprises, etc. to carry out research on pharmaceutical alternatives for pangolins.

4. Strengthen law enforcement efforts

On December 18, 2020, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Justice jointly formulated the Guiding Opinions on Punishing Illegal Wildlife Trading Crimes in accordance with the Law. On April 6, 2022, the revised Interpretation of the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate on Several Issues Concerning the Application of Law in Handling Criminal Cases of Destruction of Wild Animal Resources was released, which made clear provisions on the conviction and sentencing standards for six types of criminal acts involving wild animals and their products, as well as the identification of the types and values of the wild animals and their products involved. For example, the Valuation Method for Wild Animals and Their Products determines the value of a wild pangolin in a case to be 80,000 Chinese Yuan (CNY), equivalent to approximately 11,400 USD. In this case, smuggling one wild pangolin will be considered a crime and will result in imprisonment of up to five years and a fine; smuggling three individuals will result in imprisonment of not less than five years but not more than ten years and a fine; and smuggling 25 individuals will be deemed as "extremely serious" and will result in imprisonment of more than ten years or life imprisonment, as well as confiscation of property.

We established an inter-ministerial joint conference mechanism consisting of 27 departments at the national level to combat illegal trade in wild animals and plants, holding regular meetings, summarizing work progress, analyzing the situation of species protection, and formulating the next steps of work priorities. Among them, a working group has been established to combat illegal online wildlife trade, with a focus on combating illegal online transactions. We established a joint conference mechanism to crack down on illegal trade in wild animals and plants in people's governments at or above the county level, with market supervision and management, customs, railways, roads, water transportation, civil aviation, postal and other departments working together to strengthen daily supervision and inspection of the entire chain of hunting, collection, artificial breeding, trading, transportation of, and import and export wildlife in accordance with the law. We regularly organize a series of joint crackdowns such as "Internet Shield", "Green Sword", "Clear Wind", and "National Sword", making pangolins one of the key action points, severely cracking down on their smuggling and illegal trading activities, and strengthening law enforcement and confiscation of pangolins and their products management, prohibiting their use for commercial purposes, and related illegal activities are showing a significant downward trend.

5. Strengthen scientific research

On July 3, 2020, a specialized pangolin conservation research center was established to strengthen pangolin rescue, breeding, and field research. We promote the establishment of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration Pangolin Conservation Expert Committee, leverage the strength of domestic and foreign experts, and jointly promote pangolin protection research, especially field population investigation and monitoring. Scientists from the Pangolin Rescue and Breeding Base of Guangxi Forestry Research Institute in China have overcome the problem of artificial breeding of F3 (the fourth generation) of pangolins for the first time globally, and have published relevant results in the journal *Nature and Biological Communications*. For the first time in the world, the third generation of pangolins has been systematically bred and successfully survived; The world has produced the most offspring for the first time, with a total of 43 offspring; it has established for the first time a self-sustaining captive population of the Sunda pangolin in the world; and it systematically studied and revealed the reproductive biology characteristics of the Sunda pangolins.

6. Promoting international cooperation

We will firmly fulfill CITES obligations, actively promote its implementation, cease commercial import and export of pangolins and their products, and have reported to the CITES Secretariat the quantity of confiscated pangolin scales received and stored by the Chinese forestry and Grassland authorities. For over a decade in a row, we have supported pangolin range countries to strengthen their capacity for wildlife conservation. We have collaborated with pangolin exporting, transit, and destination countries to carry out a series of anti-smuggling operations, timely submitted CITES annual reports on illegal trade, and have won multiple awards such as the CITES Secretary General's Certificate of Commendation, the United Nations Environment Program Asia Environmental Enforcement Award, and the Clark Bavin Award.

7. Increase publicity efforts

We utilize important windows such as World Wildlife Day and Wildlife Conservation Awareness Month to carry out a series of themed promotional activities, develop and release a series of conservation promotional videos, public service advertisements, etc. For example, we cooperated with international organizations such as WildAid to launch documentaries on pangolin protection such as "Hope", and public welfare posters have been posted at major airports, high-speed rail stations, and promotional brochures such as "Protecting Wildlife - Caring for Pangolins" have been distributed to enhance public awareness of conservation.

Next, China will continue to adhere to the principle of prioritizing protection, continuously increase efforts to protect pangolins, fully leverage the role of the Pangolin Conservation Research Expert Committee, comprehensively monitor the wild population of pangolins in China, and promptly identify and report to the CITES Secretariat the stockpiles of pangolin scales obtained by law enforcement agencies before the transfer and those of corporate inventories, as well as the stockpiles of pangolin scales acquired before the implementation of the Wildlife Conservation Law, and further limit the scope and consumption of pangolin scales in corporate inventories, and actively take scientific and practical actions with the international community to protect endangered species such as pangolins.