

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



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 3 – 8 February 2025

PANGOLIN CONSERVATION IN CHINA

This document has been submitted by China in relation to agenda item 67 on *Pangolins (Manis spp.)*.*

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China supports the cooperation among the CITES Secretariat, relevant contracting parties, and wildlife conservation organizations to conserve pangolins all around the world, and is willing to share again the relevant information on pangolin conservation in China.

The Chinese government continues to attach great importance to the protection of pangolins. At AC33, China reported a series of measures and achievements in pangolin conservation from the aspects of improving the legal system, strengthening habitat protection, strict management according to law, strengthening law enforcement work, enhancing scientific research, promoting international cooperation, and increasing education efforts. Recently, China has once again strengthened its protection and management requirements. On November 13, 2024, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and National Medical Products Administration issued the "Notice on Effectively Strengthening the Protection and Management of Pangolins" (hereinafter referred to as the "2024 Pangolin Notice"), further reiterating the prohibition of illegal hunting of pangolins, the prohibition of commercial import and export of pangolins and their products, the prohibition of using CITES Appendix I pangolin scales for commercial purposes, deploying inventory verification of pangolins and their products, severely cracking down on illegal and criminal activities of pangolins, promoting measures to gradually reduce the use of pangolin drugs, and expanding the effectiveness of pangolin conservation.

1. Continue to prohibit commercial hunting of pangolins

In 2007, multiple departments in China issued a notice on strengthening the protection of Saiga antelope, pangolin, and rare snake resources and regulating the management of their medicinal products, stopping the hunting of pangolins from the wild. In 2020 and 2024, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration issued notices on further strengthening the protection and management of pangolins, and the 2024 pangolin notice reiterated this requirement.

2. Give full play to the role of the Pangolin Conservation and Research Center of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration in population monitoring, scientific research, and other aspects

In July 2020, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration's Pangolin Protection Research Center was established to coordinate domestic and international research forces in pangolin protection, strengthen the management of containment and rescue archives, focus on field monitoring, habitat restoration, containment and rescue, disease prevention and control, and natural release scientific research work, and carry out continuous monitoring in accordance with the "Technical Regulations for Monitoring the Field Population of Chinese Pangolins". The "2024 Pangolin Notice" once again emphasizes the need to increase the construction of the center, establish a pangolin artificial breeding base and germplasm resource bank, jointly carry out research and development on key technologies for pangolin artificial breeding, and strive to promote substantial progress in the artificial breeding population of pangolins. As of now, pangolin activity has been detected in various provinces and regions in southern China, and the population is showing a good trend of steady increase.

3. Strictly prohibit the commercial import and export of pangolins and their products

In 2017, China ceased commercial import and export activities of pangolins and their products. In 2020 and 2024, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration issued the "Notice on Further Strengthening the Protection and Management of Pangolins" and the "2024 Pangolin Notice" reiterating this requirement. According to the Wildlife Protection Law of the People's Republic of China and the Regulations on the Import and Export Management of Endangered Wild Animals and Plants of the People's Republic of China, the import and export of pangolins and their products require approval and issuance of CITES certificates in accordance with the law. Since 2017, China has not imported any CITES Appendix I pangolins and their products.

4. Strictly prohibit the commercial use of confiscated pangolins and their products

China strictly adheres to CITES regulations and has not used Appendix I pangolins and their products confiscated by law enforcement for commercial purposes. The 2024 Pangolin Notice reiterates that the confiscated pangolin scales and other products would only be used for bona fide scientific, educational, enforcement, or identification purposes.. Strictly prohibit the use of other illegal or unknown sources of pangolin scale and other products.

5. Continuously investigate the inventory of pangolins and their products

China has effectively fulfilled reporting obligation under CITES for reporting inventory information of pangolins, and reported to the CITES Secretariat in a classified and phased manner: By the first half of 2024, it reported to the CITES Secretariat the enforcement checked pangolin scales stored in the forestry and grassland system; by SC78, it will report on enforcement checked pangolin scales stored in other relevant departments , and before SC79, it will report on pangolin scales held by various enterprises. In June 2024, the Secretariat was notified in accordance with the relevant work plan that the number of pangolin scales and their products confiscated by Chinese law enforcement and transferred to various levels of forestry and grassland authorities for centralized storage had been determined. The Chinese side will further investigate and obtain relevant data before submitting relevant information in the future.

6. Strictly crack down on illegal hunting, import and export, transportation, carrying, delivery, sale and utilization of pangolins and their products

China has established an inter ministerial joint conference system consisting of 27 departments to combat illegal trade in wildlife and plants, and local governments have also established inter departmental coordination mechanisms to carry out actions such as "Internet Shield," "Green Sword," "Clear Wind," and "National Gate Sword," with pangolins as one of the key focuses, and to crack down severely on illegal activities such as smuggling and illegal trade. Among them, the "Internet Shield" operation is specifically aimed at illegal online transactions. The 2024 Pangolin Notice once again strengthens division of labor and cooperation, resolutely cracking down on and severely punishing illegal hunting of pangolins, destruction of pangolin habitats, interference with pangolin reproduction, as well as illegal sales, purchases, utilization, transportation, carrying, delivery, import and export of pangolins and their products. It strengthens the full chain supervision of all links, especially increasing law enforcement and inspection efforts on online platforms, commodity trading markets, catering venues, ports, etc; Strictly verify the source of pangolin scales, resolutely destroy illegal trading channels, dismantle criminal networks and gangs, severely punish criminals in accordance with the law, maintain a high-pressure situation, and crack down on crimes severely. In recent years, there has been a clear downward trend in illegal activities.

7. Continue to support for protection and management capacity-building in pangolin range states

China has held training courses on wildlife conservation and compliance for more than 10 years in a row, supporting Asian and African countries in strengthening their capacity to protect wildlife. It has joined forces with relevant countries to carry out a series of anti-smuggling operations against wildlife such as Cobras and Mekong Dragons, making positive contributions to strengthening the protection of endangered species such as pangolins worldwide and curbing illegal trade. China is willing to continue to strengthen cooperation with relevant countries, including countries where pangolins are distributed, and organize or participate in regional and international joint actions to jointly combat smuggling activities of pangolins and their products in source, transit, and destination countries.

8. Long term promotion of pangolin protection education activities

For many years, China has been continuously promoting laws, regulations, and scientific knowledge on pangolin protection. Recently, a documentary film titled "Hope" was filmed and released, and posters will be posted in key places such as airports in 2024. Organize publicity activities for pangolin conservation, distribute promotional brochures such as "Protecting Wildlife - Caring for Pangolins", popularize the importance of pangolin conservation, and raise public awareness of conservation. The 2024 Pangolin Notice further requires extensive publicity, popularization of legal knowledge on pangolin protection, and conscious resistance to illegal activities; Establish a sound reward reporting system and encourage the public to provide clues on various issues related to the destruction of wild animal resources such as pangolins.

9. Gradually reduce the consumption of pangolin medicine

Firstly, China has not approved new medicines containing pangolin ingredients in recent years.,the current Pharmacopeia does not include pangolins, and it is promoting that pangolin will not be included in 2025 Pharmacopoeia, and no new medicines containing pangolin ingredients will be approved;

Secondly, the 2024 Pangolin Notice provides for continuous suspension on the inclusion of pangolin scales in the medical insurance category, and clarify that drugs containing pangolin ingredients cannot be added to the medical insurance category;

Thirdly, China continues to strengthen coordination, the 2025 Pharmacopeia will not include pangolin ingredients ;

Fourthly, since 2007, China has implemented a management system for special identification of wild animals, which includes legally loading special identification on pangolin scales and their products to ensure traceability of their sources. According to the Wildlife Protection Law, provincial forestry and grassland authorities strictly review the legality of the source and purpose of pangolin tablets, and only allow legally sourced scales to be used in medicine after approval;

The fifth is to respect the humanitarian spirit of treating and saving lives for the legally obtained pangolin slices obtained before the convention, and only use them for the diagnosis and treatment of critical illnesses, difficult and complicated diseases, etc. According to the requirements of the "2024 Pangolin Notice", strict management of the use of pangolin scales as medicine, reasonable reduction of consumption, and annual consumption in principle controlled at around 1 ton.

Sixth, it clearly stipulates that pangolin raw materials may only be used at designated hospitals, for clinical use and the production of prepared traditional Chinese medicine, and cannot be retailed outside designated hospitals.

Seventh, we are always committed to researching alternatives to pangolins and their products. The "2024 pangolin notice" reiterates the encouragement and support for research institutes, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to jointly carry out research and development on alternatives to pangolin tablets.

Through a series of measures, the number of pharmaceutical production enterprises and hospitals which use pangolin scales will be significantly reduced. Such number is expected to decrease by 30% by the end of 2024, 60% by the end of 2025, and 90% by the end of 2026. The amount of pangolin scales for medicinal use is expected to decrease by at least 50% by the end of 2026.. Actively organize in the Chinese Pangolin Protection Expert Committee

In order to jointly study global pangolin conservation strategies, China established a pangolin conservation expert committee in December 2024 to discuss protection strategies for pangolins in the wild, investigation and monitoring, breeding research, inventory management, and other aspects. The members of the expert committee has invited numerous international experts, including IUCN.