

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

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Sixty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 11-15 January 2016

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Pangolins (Manidae spp.)

REPORT OF THE FIRST PANGOLIN RANGE STATES MEETING  
(24-26 June 2015, Da Nang, Viet Nam)

1. This document has been submitted by the United States of America.\*
2. The Annex to this document presents a report of the First Pangolin Range States Meeting held 24 through 26 June 2015, in Da Nang, Viet Nam. This report is a unified pangolin conservation action plan developed and agreed to by delegates of the 29 African and Asian pangolin range States and the United States, pangolin experts, and non-governmental organizations, which participated in the meeting. The action plan provides a suite of recommendations to addresses conservation, management and enforcement issues to protect pangolins against over-exploitation as a result of illegal and unsustainable legal trade. The governments of Viet Nam and the United States co-hosted the meeting, which was organized and facilitated by Humane Society International.
3. A list of all the participants of the meeting is included at the end of the report.

Recommendation

4. The Standing Committee is invited:
  - a) to note this document; and
  - b) to discuss this document in relation to the agenda item on Pangolins (Manidae spp.).

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

## **FIRST PANGOLIN RANGE STATES MEETING**

**June 24-26, 2015  
Da Nang, Viet Nam**

### **REPORT**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The first meeting of pangolin range States was held 24-26 June 2015 in Da Nang, Viet Nam. The meeting was co-hosted by the governments of Viet Nam and the United States of America, and organized by Humane Society International. Ninety-five people attended the meeting including 56 representatives from 29 of the 48 pangolin range States. Funding for the meeting was provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Humane Society International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Freeland Foundation.

On the first day of the meeting (June 24, 2015), delegates heard opening speeches by dignitaries including Dr. Ha Cong Tuan, Vice Minister of the Viet Nam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Mr. John E. Scanlon, Secretary General of the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); Ms. Claire Pierangelo, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy in Ha Noi, Viet Nam; and Mr. Phung Tan Viet, Vice Chairman of the Da Nang People's Committee, Da Nang, Viet Nam. Delegates also received information about pangolin conservation, management and trade presented by invited experts. Question and answer sessions followed presentations. A group photo was taken. In the evening, a welcome reception was hosted by the government of Viet Nam.

On the second day of the meeting (June 25, 2015), delegates participated in Working Groups each of which addressed one of the following topics: Conservation, status and monitoring (biological issues); Management and implementation: legal harvest and trade (including captive stock); and Enforcement and compliance: illegal harvest and trade (including cross-border laundering). At the end of the day, each Working Group provided a verbal report of their findings to the meeting participants.

On the third day of the meeting (June 26, 2015), participants met in their Working Groups to review the written report of their findings and to make any desired changes. The written reports of each Working Group were distributed to all participants in written form, projected onto screens, and read aloud in Plenary. Participants were invited to identify which of the recommendations they wished to discuss in detail; each of these was discussed in Plenary and edits were made to the results of the Working Groups. Reports of the Working Groups were agreed in Plenary. In Plenary, participants also drafted and agreed to introductory language to the reports of the Working Groups. Agreed language may be found in this report. Delegates heard closing remarks from Ms. Lori Faeth, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Interior, United States of America.

The governments of Viet Nam and the United States of America, and Humane Society International, warmly thank the delegates who participated in this historic meeting.

## RESULTS OF THE FIRST PANGOLIN RANGE STATES MEETING

The participants in the First Pangolin Range States Meeting, held 24-26 June, 2015, in Da Nang, Viet Nam, recognize that all four Asian pangolin species are threatened with extinction due to illegal international trade and all four African pangolin species are threatened with extinction due to increasing international trade and domestic use, which is why we have gathered this week and adopted the following recommendations.

### Working Group 1: Conservation, Status, and Monitoring Working Group

1. Evaluation of CITES Listings: Assess available scientific information about pangolin species with regard to the biological criteria for listing on Appendix I to determine if any species meets the criteria, and make recommendations regarding changes to the current listing status, if warranted.

- Each Asian species was evaluated and found to qualify for listing on CITES Appendix I in accordance with CITES Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16) Annex 1 (C) due to a marked decline in the population size in the wild in the past or projected into the future equaling or exceeding 50 percent or more in ten years or three generations. In addition, the Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) was found to qualify for listing on Appendix I under Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16) Annex 1 (B)(iv) due to having a restricted area of distribution and a projected population decrease of  $\geq 50$  percent over the next three generations or 21 years.
- Each African species was evaluated and found to qualify for listing on CITES Appendix I in accordance with CITES Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16) Annex 1 (C) due to a marked decline in the population size in the wild. Noting that the general guideline for marked decline is 50 percent or more in ten years or three generations but that the determination of marked decline should be species specific, the Working Group concludes that African pangolin species qualify for listing on CITES Appendix I based on the following facts: a) dramatic increase in international trade in African pangolin species in the last five years; b) high vulnerability due to the species' biology (e.g., low reproductive rate); c) decrease in area and quality of habitat; d) inferred decrease in recruitment due to the capture of adult pangolins; and e) the 30-40 percent inferred, ongoing, or projected population decline determined by the IUCN/SSC Pangolin Specialist Group may be an underestimate due to lack of knowledge about generation lengths.

2. Non-detriment Findings (NDFs): Where there is legal trade in African species of pangolins, what forms the scientific basis for how NDFs are made (i.e. is there population monitoring etc.)? What biological information should form the scientific basis for making NDFs for pangolins?

- Given that all pangolin populations are declining and that there is a lack of sufficient biological information on harvested populations, the Working Group recommends that no positive non-detriment findings be made at this time, except for scientific research.
- In addition, the Working Group recommends that, if a range state desires to allow the legal trade in pangolins it should make non-detriment findings that comply with CITES Res. Conf. 16.7 and, in addition, consider the following factors with respect to the specimens to be exported: a) quantity; b) specific area where the animal was removed from the wild; c) number collected in comparison to the size of the population from which collection occurred; and d) whether the animal was killed to obtain the specimen (i.e., tissue samples obtained through biopsy versus scales which require the animal to be killed).

3. Strongholds: Identify national pangolin strongholds and what could be done to strengthen these strongholds (please complete the chart<sup>1</sup> for each country for which information is known):

- Each country delegate who participated in the Working Group completed a chart identifying actual and/or potential national pangolin strongholds in their country for each species and for each stronghold they noted the challenges, ongoing conservation activities, and actions to address challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> The strongholds chart completed by delegates in attendance at the First Pangolin Range States Meeting is in Annex 1 of the full report (AC28 Inf. 23 and submitted as an Information Document to the current meeting).

- The Working Group agreed that once actual and/or potential strongholds are identified, they should be verified as pangolin strongholds, and to strengthen strongholds there should be, where appropriate, increased enforcement, community awareness raising, public education and outreach, research and planning, population monitoring and examination of the socioeconomic context and appropriate interventions which provide favorable outcomes for pangolin populations and sustainable livelihoods.
- The Working Group recommends that country delegates in other Working Groups complete the stronghold chart.

4. Other:

- Most country delegates present in the Working Group indicated that their countries do not allow the export of pangolins for commercial purposes but that borders between countries are porous and there is concern about cross-border trade in pangolins to countries that allow pangolin exports. Consequently, the Working Group recommends that the IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group produce a map, as soon as possible of Africa and Asia that depicts the country-specific laws and regulations that govern the management and trade of pangolins which can then be used to inform future conservation and management actions.
- The IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group should develop standardized tools for establishing pangolin population estimates.

**Working Group 2: Management, and Implementation: Legal harvest and trade (including captive stock)**

1. Value of Appendix I versus Other Options: *Assuming the CITES Appendix I listing criteria are met (note: this is being discussed in another working group) what would be the conservation benefit of such a listing for pangolins? If these criteria are not met, what other CITES options would improve conservation of pangolins (inclusion in Significant Trade Review process by CITES Animals Committee, listing on Appendix II with a zero quota?).*

Based on the criteria for Appendix I listing, and evaluation of the implications of an Appendix I listing, Working Group (WG) 2 made the following recommendations:

- Appendix I listing for all 8 species;
- However, should any species not meet the criteria for App I listing, then:
  - Appendix I listing for all species that meet criteria; for those that do not meet the criteria, maintain listing on Appendix II with a zero export quota, and through a Decision of the Conference of the Parties (CoP), inclusion in the Animals Committee (AC) Review of Significant Trade (RST). In addition, any request by a range state to increase the quota would require approval by the AC of the Non-Detriment Finding as part of the RST;
  - However, another opinion expressed within the WG suggested that: For those species that do not meet the criteria, Parties implement Appendix II listing with voluntary export quotas set by the range states.

2. Population Management: *Assess the relative conservation importance of the management of pangolin populations in the wild, in captivity, and those being ranched. Are any wild, captive or ranched populations of pangolins being currently managed, using wildlife management techniques, for sustainable harvest for trade?*

After evaluating management options for wild, captive, or ranched populations of pangolin, WG 2 recommends that:

- Stakeholders prioritize conservation monitoring and research of wild populations, and develop methodologies for analyzing wild population abundance and ecology;
- The CITES Standing Committee (SC) Pangolin WG introduce a Resolution at CoP17 that pangolin captive breeding facilities, confiscation facilities, and rescue centers, adopt a breeding registration system based on genetic standards to prove lineage;

- Range, transit, and consumer countries implement and enforce minimum husbandry and welfare standards for pangolin confiscation facilities, rehabilitation facilities, rescue centers, and captive breeding centers, as set by IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group guidelines;
- Range, transit, and consumer countries implement standard protocols for live seizures (e.g. enforcement, medical guidelines, expedited processing, DNA sampling, repatriation, and release into a safe and suitable environment);
- Range, transit, and consumer countries enact legislation ensuring that confiscated pangolins are not resold into trade; and ensure that legislation allows, when appropriate, for repatriation to countries of origin, in accordance with CITES Res. Conf. 10.7 (Rev. CoP15);
- Given current limitations in our understanding and ability to measure captive breeding, welfare, reproduction, and nutritional requirements for pangolins, encourage countries to consult the IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group on the establishment, registration, and monitoring of all captive facilities.
- In accordance with Decision 16.64, the CITES Animals Committee WG on Captive Breeding and Ranching investigate pangolin specimens declared as bred in captivity or ranched;
- Private and public partners build capacity in, and provide resources to, range countries for wild population inventories/assessments, monitoring, and conservation actions;
- Range countries develop comprehensive management plans that address all present and future threats;
- Applicable countries regulate captive breeding facilities to ensure that wild-born pangolins are not sold as second-generation offspring; and
- Consumer countries analyze illegal consumption patterns including how changes in such patterns would impact livelihoods (CITES Res. Conf. 16.6); and implement effective behavior change strategies.

3. *Laws, Regulations and Policies: Assess the adequacy of existing laws, regulations and policies at national and local levels that pertain to pangolin conservation. What would you recommend be adopted as part of laws, regulations and policies at the national and local levels to improve pangolin conservation?*

After evaluating national laws, regulations, and policies WG 2 made the following recommendations:

- Range, transit, and consumer countries evaluate existing laws, regulations and penalties pertaining to poaching, illegal trade, and illegal possession of pangolins and their parts, products, and derivatives; and ensure that these are effective deterrents; and implement new laws, regulations, and penalties where gaps exist.
- Stakeholder countries ensure that capacity and resources exist for enforcement, prosecution, and judiciary measures.
- Range countries find, declare, and protect pangolin strongholds.

### **Working Group 3: Enforcement and Compliance: Illegal harvest and trade (including cross-border laundering)**

1. *Adequacy of Enforcement: Assess the adequacy of existing enforcement at the international, national and local levels with respect to pangolins. What enforcement actions would you recommend be adopted at all three levels to improve pangolin conservation?*

2. *Genetics and Enforcement: What is the value of genetic identification to enforcement in the case of pangolins?*

3. *Improving Enforcement: What could help enforcement officials do their jobs better when it comes to pangolins (i.e. identification materials, training, etc.)?*

Actions to be implemented:

1. Establish community outreach programs that, with a particular focus on youth, educate individuals about the endangered status of pangolins, the importance of pangolin conservation and their role in ecosystems, issues related to cultural or ritual uses, and laws governing trade.

2. Establish education programs for law enforcement agencies including police, customs officials, wildlife agencies, judges, prosecutors, (forest) rangers, military and related enforcement personnel about the importance of pangolin conservation and clarifying the laws governing trade in pangolins and other protected species.
3. Compile and distribute relevant data on pangolin populations and population status, including genetics, range, distribution, trends, and threats.
4. Elevate pangolin trafficking as a national priority and wildlife trade as a global priority by highlighting trafficking activities and wildlife crime as national and global security issues.
5. Provide centralized resources, tools, on-line and web-based resources and other assets related to science, enforcement training and methods, forensic analysis, and other enforcement-related topics, including those currently available from the CITES Secretariat (including the CITES Virtual College), other multilateral bodies, and civil society organizations.
6. Implement programmes to provide training and build capacity among range States in the following areas:
  - a. Methods of determining the species of pangolin in trade and species or source of seized specimens, including from alleged captive breeding operations;
  - b. Best practice protocols for safe handling, care and rehabilitation, and release back into the wild of live pangolins confiscated from trade;
  - c. Best practices for storage and/or disposal of confiscated pangolin parts and derivatives;
  - d. Methods for identifying fake permits and other documents and other fraudulent activities;
  - e. Tools and methods for tracking criminal activities facilitated by online communications;
  - f. Techniques for tracking genetic information related to pangolin seizures and prosecutions, including DNA evidence and information on pangolin-related arrests, prosecutions, and sources/lineages of confiscated specimens;
  - g. New technologies and innovations in the detection and prevention of wildlife crimes including scanning and detection techniques at ports and airports;
  - h. Techniques for engaging in law enforcement operations that include controlled deliveries.
7. Encourage cooperation and establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) between national-level law enforcement agencies and between national agencies and their respective local, district, or provincial leaders and local law enforcement officers to clarify responsibilities.
8. Promote regional enforcement cooperation with wildlife enforcement networks (WENs) and, where possible, promote regional enforcement operations (e.g., INTERPOL, Operations WENDI, COBRA II and COBRA III, World Customs Organization (WCO), etc.) and create national or regional hubs for forensic analysis and range state communication to speed up detection and identification of specimens in illegal trade, identify key wildlife trafficking transit points and pursue syndicate leaders involved with coordinating illegal wildlife activities.
9. Encourage and facilitate international cooperation through CITES, and other forums including ICCWC, WENs, regional workshops, etc.
10. Make financial resources available to range states to develop and implement enforcement actions and achieve enforcement goals.
11. Provide assistance to Parties to bring their national legislation into compliance with the CITES treaty and to apply the ICCWC forest and wildlife crime analytical toolkit.

12. Foster greater communication between trading Parties prior to the issuance of permits for trade in listed specimens as well as when questions arise at borders during import or export.
13. Develop motivations (e.g., awards, etc.) to measurably increase effectiveness and compliance among individual law enforcement staff.
14. Encourage local and national law enforcement offices to place the burden of proof of legal origin of specimens on the importer/exporter/applicant and be ready to seize shipments rather than allow illegal material when origin is unclear.
15. National legislatures and executives should empower wildlife agencies and other law enforcement officials to prosecute offenders, including by passing legislation necessary to increase fines and penalties for offenses.
16. Make existing anti-corruption best practices and the training opportunities readily available and promoted through ICCWC partners and enforcement personnel and encourage range state governments to promote transparency and accountability.
17. Fully protect all species of pangolin under national law in every range state, thereby removing ambiguities regarding the enforcement between native and non-native species.
18. Develop a standardized minimum penalty reference as guided by the United Nations Convention of Transnational Organized Crime across regions (possibly through WENs and other regional MOUs) and ensure that pangolin crimes are punished as serious crime instead of as administrative or civil offenses.

As a postscript, while it is beyond the scope of this working group to recommend uplisting, we recognize that the transfer of all eight species of pangolins from App. II to App. I under CITES in all range states will allow standardization of law enforcement efforts across regions by treating all species of the taxa uniformly.