

Introduction to CoP17 Prop. 8 - CoP17 Prop. 12 Pangolins

There are eight species of pangolins, all in the genus Manis, following CITES standard nomenclature. Four are collectively distributed in South, East and Southeast Asia, while four others are native to sub-Saharan Africa. All pangolins are currently listed in Appendix II, with wild-caught Asian pangolins traded for primarily commercial purposes being subject to zero export quotas. The five proposals CoP17 Prop. 8 - CoP17 Prop. 12 seek to transfer all pangolin species to Appendix I.

High demand in Asia has clearly led to significant declines in populations of pangolins, in particular M. pentadactyla and M. javanica and an increase in demand for other Manis species, both in Asia and in Africa, to increase. Detailed population data on some species are scarce, resulting in insufficient information to determine if these species meet the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I. However, there are indications that populations have shown significant declines, with high levels of illegal trade recorded, and continual, and in many cases increasingly heavy demand and harvesting. While comparatively little trade in Asian or African pangolins has been reported to CITES since 2000, large volumes of illicit trade have taken place, involving a minimum estimate of some 17,000 pangolins globally each year. In addition to the large shipments being seized in East Asia, originating from Southeast Asia, there are increasingly frequent large shipments of scales being seized coming from Africa.

It is important to note that all pangolins in trade are wild sourced: there are no reliable reports of commercial captive-breeding which is extremely difficult owing to the species' breeding biology and the extreme difficulties in keeping them alive in captivity. Pangolins are vulnerable to overexploitation owing to their low reproductive rates (producing only one or two offspring per year).

Concern over sustainability of trade reported to CITES, particularly in skins, led to the inclusion of Asian pangolins in various phases of the Review of Significant Trade (RST) process in 1988, 1992 and 1999, with recommended actions being made to various range States to control trade. The African species M. tetradactyla, M. tricuspis, M. gigantea and M. temminckii were also included in Phase IV of the RST in 1999 but were subsequently eliminated from the process. M. gigantea and M. tricuspis were again selected for the RST as species of priority concern in 2013.

Despite going through the RST processes multiple times, and having the zero quota with Appendix II, illegal trade seems to have continued unabated for the Asian species. So far these processes have failed to provide any notable protection from unsustainable harvest and trade of these species and an Appendix I would be a precautionary measure proportionate to the anticipated risks to the species.

Inclusion of all Manis species in CITES Appendix I could greatly enhance efforts to safeguard pangolins and support regulatory control mechanisms by non-range States, by placing an overall higher degree of international protection. However, this can only happen if national legislation provides for higher fines and punitive measures for illegal trade in Appendix I-listed species.

CoP17 Prop. 10 [Philippines and United States of America] Transfer of Philippine Pangolin *Manis culionensis* from Appendix II to Appendix I

The Philippine Pangolin *Manis culionensis* is endemic to Palawan and five smaller adjacent islands and is considered Endangered by IUCN largely owing to negative impact from illegal hunting for local and international trade in its meat, scales and skin, which is further compounded by habitat loss. Philippine legislation has prohibited the export of all wild-caught pangolins since 1995.

While there are no baseline data on which to base population trends, the species may meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I as a marked decline in trade in the past 20-30 years (from ca. 1200 per year in the 1980s to around 70 per year in 2000-2013) might be indicative of a corresponding marked decline in the wild population.

M. culionensis seizure cases increased by over 600% between 2010-2012 and 1999-2012 alongside a decrease in the number of pangolins per seizure, indicative of a persistent illegal trade. Given its already precarious status, any further offtake of the species therefore poses a great threat to the survival of the species.

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