

TOP 10 NOMINATION FORM

2020 Topic: Illegal wildlife (plants and animals) trafficking and unsustainable trade

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Nominated Species Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*), Sunda pangolin (*M. javanica*), Philippine pangolin (*M. culionensis*), Indian pangolin (*M. crassicaudata*), white-bellied pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*), black-bellied pangolin (*P. tetradactyla*), and giant pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*).

Question 1: Threat to the Species

All eight pangolin species are threatened primarily by illegal trade. While demand for their parts and products is primarily from Asia, a significant portion of the demand is from the United States. In 2015, it was estimated that 1 million pangolins had been trafficked in the previous decade.¹ In addition to trade, pangolins are threatened by habitat loss in Africa and Asia

Question 2: Role of the Species

Pangolins consume insects, but on the scale to be considered keystone species. Pangolins are solitary and most populations have a low density. However, pangolins constitute a unique phylogeny. They are the only species in the order Pholidota, which split from the order Carnivora an estimate 87 million years ago. They are the only mammal with scales.²

Question 3: Message

Despite being listed under Appendix I of CITES in 2016, pangolins continue to be illegally traded on massive scale. It is imperative that demand for pangolins be reduced in order to reduce trade. The seven currently unlisted species were proposed to be listed in 2015. Following a positive 90-day finding in 2016, there has been no action by the US government. In order to help raise awareness and reduce demand, the US government should list the seven species as Endangered. Some scientists suspect pangolins of serving as an intermediate host for the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. But it was human exploitation of wildlife that ultimately allowed the virus to spill over into humans.

Final Selections

¹ https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/mammals/pangolin/pdfs/ESAPangolinPetition_07-2015.pdf

² Du Toit, Z., Grobler, J. P., Kotzé, A., Jansen, R., Brettschneider, H., & Dalton, D. L. (2014). The complete mitochondrial genome of Temminck's ground pangolin (*Smutsia temminckii*; Smuts, 1832) and phylogenetic position of the Pholidota (Weber, 1904). *Gene*, 551(1), 49-54.

If my nomination is selected for inclusion in the report, I would like the first draft of the species profile for the report to be written by (choose one):

You (ESC), and then my NGO will edit the profile and approve the final draft.

Deadline: May 8, 2020

Send to: top10@endangered.org