

WORLD PANGOLIN DAY 2018

Date: 17 February 2018

Themes: Pangolins are the pride of Central Africa and are increasingly being trafficked to Asia.

Together, Let's Protect Our Pangolins!

Main hashtags: #WorldPangolinDay; #SavePangolins; #ProtectOurPangolins; #pangolins

Main Facebook accounts: PangolinSaver, USFWS International Affairs

Main Twitter accounts: @PangolinSaver, @USFWSIntl

Background

Celebrated every year on the third Saturday in February, World Pangolin Day is an international event to raise global awareness about pangolins, the alarming threats they face, and the inspiring efforts to prevent them from going extinct. Pangolins are believed to be the most heavily trafficked mammals in the world. In 2016, all eight species of pangolins were uplisted to Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). With this uplisting to Appendix I, trade in pangolins for primarily commercial purposes is prohibited as of January 2017.

Last year, our social media content for World Pangolin Day raised awareness in Central Africa, where pangolins have received little conservation attention and there is a lack of knowledge of the impacts of national and international trade on pangolin populations. This year, we are broadening our target audience to include Asia, which has become a major destination for the illegal trade in pangolin scales originating from Central Africa.

We aim to reach representatives from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry, and civil society in Central Africa and Asia through Facebook and Twitter to raise awareness about Central Africa's pangolins and the trafficking crisis that is currently affecting them. We also seek to highlight some of the positive steps that are being taken to protect Central Africa's pangolins following the CITES Appendix I uplisting.

Sample messages by platform:

Facebook:

Timing: *Any time during the week leading up to and on World Pangolin Day (February 17, 2018)*

Central Africa is home to four pangolin species. All are threatened by poaching and uncontrolled harvest for the national and regional, illegal bushmeat trade and illegal international trafficking for scales and meat. Demand is escalating and Central Africa is emerging as a hub for illegal trade in pangolin scales. Since 2013, more than 20,400 kg of scales originating in Central Africa have been

confiscated, primarily in or in transit to Asia. Already unsustainable, the situation is worsening and needs immediate attention and action from governments and other stakeholders in range countries as well as transit and destination countries.

Pangolins are unique, in that they are the only mammals in the world with scales. These scales are made of keratin, the same substance as human fingernails and rhinoceros horn. When threatened, pangolins curl into a ball, shielding their body with their tough armor of scales. This behavior protects them from predators such as big cats. Unfortunately, it also makes it easier for humans to collect them.

Central Africa's pangolins (giant ground pangolin, Temminck's ground pangolin, white-bellied pangolin, and black-bellied pangolin) are primarily nocturnal, solitary, and shy mammals. They give birth to only one offspring per year and are highly vulnerable to overexploitation. Very little is known about the status of Central Africa's pangolins, including their strongholds in the wild.

Pangolins live predominantly on a diet of ants and termites. Lacking teeth, they lap up insects with their remarkably long and fast and sticky tongue. Pangolins locate insect nests using a well-developed sense of smell, and voraciously dig for ants and termites with their long foreclaws.

Pangolins play a critical role in their ecosystems. They provide the earth with all-natural pest control and are fantastic tenders of soil, and they do these things simply through their everyday behaviors. It is said that a single pangolin consumes as many as 70 million insects per year, mainly ants and termites. Pangolins also excavate deep burrows for sleeping and nesting. Burrowing animals are sometimes referred to as “ecosystem engineers” as their burrows may be used by other species; for example new research shows that [giant armadillos](#), South American mammals that fulfill a similar ecological niche to ground pangolins, dig burrows that are used for shelter by at least 24 other species.

All species of pangolin are now listed on Appendix I of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). This prohibits trade for primarily commercial purposes and represents the highest level of protection available under international law.

Following the CITES Appendix I uplisting of all pangolins, several priority actions have emerged for Central Africa’s pangolins.

In Central Africa:

1. It is imperative for all countries to immediately update their national legislation to reflect the ban in commercial trade of meat and scales of all pangolins.
2. The illegal trade in pangolins needs to be taken seriously, with improved law enforcement and proper following of judicial proceedings.

In Central Africa and Asia:

1. Governments, non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, academics, and other stakeholders across Central Africa and Asia should join forces to raise awareness about pangolin conservation on #WorldPangolinDay, which will next be held on February 17, 2018.
2. Governments, NGO representatives, academics, and other stakeholders across Central Africa and Asia should share information to improve investigating and prosecuting pangolin trafficking cases.

Facebook:

*Timing: **On 17 February***

Happy #WorldPangolinDay! Join us in lending a voice to Central Africa's pangolins. They are the pride of Central Africa and we need everyone to help fight against pangolin poaching and trafficking to #SavePangolins. Say no to eating pangolin meat, and help let people know that commercial trade in pangolins is now illegal. Together let's #ProtectOurPangolins!

Did you know that #pangolins are one of the most trafficked animals on the planet? Their scales are used as traditional medicine and unfortunately are in very high demand in countries like China and Vietnam. Help prevent extinctions - say no to pangolin scales! Together, we can #SavePangolins.

Twitter

*Timing: **Any time during the week leading up to and on World Pangolin Day (February 17, 2018)***

The #pangolin is the most heavily trafficked wild mammal in the world. A new study puts the number even higher than previously thought, with up to 2.7 million pangolins a year hunted in #CentralAfrica alone. Help #SavePangolins by ending their illegal commercial trade. #ProtectOurPangolins

All 8 species of #pangolin are now listed under Appendix I of CITES, which bans commercial trade and represents the highest level of protection available under international laws. Four species live in Africa & four in Asia. Together, let's #ProtectOurPangolins! #WorldPangolinDay

In #pangolin news - the world's only scaly mammal which has lived on Earth for about 80 million years is being poached to the brink of extinction. #pangolinupdates #SavePangolins #WorldPangolinDay - Together, let's #ProtectOurPangolins.

Did you know that #pangolins are the most heavily trafficked mammals in the world? Since January 2017, all commercial trade in pangolins is banned. Help #ProtectOurPangolins by saying no to pangolin meat and scales! #SavePangolins #WorldPangolinDay