



Asian Pangolin Conservation Program

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What are pangolins?

Very little is known about Asian Pangolins. They are a highly specialized group of nocturnal mammals. They have an armour of overlapping keratin scales on their dorsal surfaces, down their legs, and covering both sides of their strong, prehensile tail. They feed exclusively on ants and termites.

There are 8 species worldwide, two of which occur in Vietnam: (top) the Malayan Pangolin (*Manis javanica*) and (bottom) the Chinese pangolin (*M. pentadactyla*).



Left: 63 pangolins are confiscated by Ninh Binh Provincial Forest Protection Department in December 2006.
Above: Pangolins (Te Te) on the menu

What are the threats?

- Illegal hunting and wildlife trade; meat and scales are valued for medicinal purposes (\$60 USD/kg of pangolin)
- Population status is unknown, however the scale of pangolin trade represents a major conservation risk for these species.
- 100's of animals are confiscated in Vietnam each month.
- There are currently few alternatives for confiscated pangolins; they are either inappropriately released into the wild, die after a short time in captivity or are legally sold back into the trade.

The Asian Pangolin Conservation Program (APCP) began in late 2005 as a cooperative program between Cuc Phuong National Park and Newquay Zoo (UK).

Mission Statement

“To conserve Asian Pangolins through improved understanding of both their natural ecology and captive requirements; and raising awareness of the species and the threats to their survival.”

Objectives

- Increase knowledge on the wild ecology and behaviour of Asian pangolins
- Improve decision-making processes and options for placement of confiscated pangolins
- Increase knowledge of captive management
- Develop a conservation breeding program
- Reduce mortality of pangolins placed in rescue centres



Future work of the APCP

- Research on the captive needs including nutrition, quarantine guidelines, captive behaviour, enclosure design.
- Field research to better understand the natural habitat, diet and behaviour
- Rehabilitation and release programs.
- Training for Vietnamese forest rangers, students and staff of rescue centres to improve species understanding

Rescued pangolins

Currently the APCP is caring for 6 pangolins (*M. javanica*), 3 males and 3 females, ranging from 900gm to 3.5kg.



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