



Pangolin

Why in News

Recently, a pangolin was rescued by a team from Noida and handed over to the forest department.



Key Points

▪ About:

- The pangolin, also called **scaly anteater**, is an elongated, **armour-plated insectivore mammal**.
- It uses these **scales** as armour to defend itself against predators by rolling into a ball when threatened.
- Also, a pangolin's **long claws** help it to dig the ground for termites, which is its staple food.

▪ Species of Pangolin:

- Seven species of pangolin are found across the world, of which, **two are found in India**, namely **Indian pangolin** (*Manis crassicaudata*) and **Chinese pangolin** (*Manis pentadactyla*).
- The Indian Pangolin is found throughout the country **south of the Himalayas, excluding the north-eastern region** while the Chinese Pangolin ranges through **Assam and the eastern Himalayas**.
- The Chinese pangolin is distinguished from other Asian pangolins by its almost helmeted appearance, smaller scales than the Indian pangolin.

▪ Habitat:

- It is adaptable to a wide range of habitats including primary and secondary tropical forests, limestone and bamboo forests, grasslands and agricultural fields.

▪ Threats:

- Once known to be found in large numbers, its population is rapidly declining in its range due to habitat loss and rampant poaching for its skin, scales, and meat.
- It is a **highly trafficked mammal**; due to their huge demand for medicinal purposes, pangolins are smuggled through roads and rails and sent to China.

▪ **Protection Status:**

- As per [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#), the pangolin is part of the “red list”.
 - While the **Indian pangolin is listed as “endangered”** and the **Chinese pangolin has been listed as “critically endangered”**.
- All pangolin species are **listed in [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species \(CITES\) Appendix I](#)**.
- In India, pangolins, both Indian and Chinese, are **protected under Schedule 1 of the [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act 1972](#)**.
 - Therefore, hunting, trade or any other form of utilisation of the species or their body parts and derivatives is banned.
 - In India, hunting and poaching can invite prison time up to 7 years since it involves maximum protection under the section of the Wildlife Act.

[Source: IE](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/pangolin-2>

