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THE FACTS IN BRIEF:

- > Pangolins are considered the most trafficked wild mammal in the world
- > Significant upsurge of pangolin trafficking in Namibia
- > Pangolin conservation initiative started in Namibia mid-2017
- > Between mid July 2017 & end January 2018, the following was achieved:
 - > 19 live pangolins confiscated and released into the wild after veterinary observation
 - > 33 pangolin skins seized
 - > 76 suspects arrested for involvement in pangolin trafficking
 - > 33 cases divided between Kavango (East & West), Khomas, Zambezi, Otjozondjupa & Oshana
 - > pangolin hotline activated to enable easy public reporting of suspicious activity
- > **PANGOLIN HOTLINE: 081 413 2214** (call or sms); information treated with strict confidentiality

- > Investigating authorities: Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Namibian Police, Namibian Defence Force
- > Support organisations: Namibian Chamber of Environment, The Wildcat Foundation

THE FULL STORY:

Pangolins are considered by CITES, TRAFFIC and the IUCN to currently be the most trafficked wild mammal in the world. An average of 20 tons of pangolins and pangolin parts are being trafficked each year.

A significant upsurge of pangolin trafficking in Namibia in recent years motivated a targeted pangolin conservation initiative in mid-2017, led by the MET with support from the NCE and The Wildcat Foundation. The initiative focuses on two aspects: stringent law enforcement and wide-scale community awareness.

The law enforcement campaign, led by the MET with police and defence force support, is producing immediate results. Law enforcement relies on community information about pangolin trafficking and on a rapid response to any information received.

The MET investigated 33 cases over the last six months. Most cases were in the Kavango Regions, followed by Windhoek and the Zambezi Region. Seizures often included other illegal wildlife products in addition to those of pangolin. Investigations of wildlife crime syndicates, international links and trade routes are ongoing.

All live pangolins that were seized could be released back into the wild at secure locations after receiving health status checks.

The community awareness campaign disseminates information through posters and info cards that advertise the pangolin hotline (call or sms 081 413 2214). Distribution of the materials to rural communities is prioritised.

In addition to being collected for the illegal trade, pangolins are threatened by a variety of human activities, including habitat destruction and electric fencing (pangolins curl up around the electric wire and are killed).

Four pangolin species occur in Asia and four in Africa. Temminck's ground pangolin (*Smutsia temminckii*) is the only pangolin found in Namibia. Pangolins are protected throughout their entire range. They are listed on CITES Appendix I and all international trade in pangolins is prohibited. In Namibia, any collecting or killing of pangolins, and all trade in pangolin parts is against the law.

Pangolins are killed for bush meat and local traditional medicines, ornaments and good luck charms. The biggest demand for pangolins is in Asia, especially China. Pangolin meat is sold in Asian restaurants; the scales are used in traditional Asian medicines, and for ornaments and charms. Pangolin scales have no proven medicinal properties. Pangolins are far more valuable in our environment than killed for illegal Asian markets. Pangolins eat billions of ants and termites, and reduce the impact of the insects on grasslands and crops, as well as on fence poles, homesteads and other infrastructure.

THE PHOTOS:



Seized live pangolins. The animals are often kept under atrocious conditions by poachers and are monitored for good health prior to release back into the wild.



Confiscated pangolin skins and scales. These are often found together with other contraband; in one case ivory and a crocodile skin (right image)



Confiscated weapons

WILDLIFE CRIME PREVENTION SUCCESS BAROMETER 2018: 01.01.18 to 31.01.18

(Note: Current monthend data is preliminary; investigators work throughout the country & some data may not be immediately available at monthend. Aggregate data is published at regular intervals, and may vary slightly from preliminary monthend data.)

IN NAMIBIA:

Cases: 6

Arrests: 19

Weapons seized: 4

Court appearances: NA

Convictions: NA

Seized contraband by species: Crocodile 1; elephant tusks 4, pangolin 3

Cross-boundary investigations/collaborations: NA

International arrests with Namibian law enforcement input: NA

NAMIBIAN WILDLIFE CRIME DISPATCHES are current, factual wildlife crime reports that inform both the local and international community about Namibia's very active and successful approach to combating wildlife crime, based on strong partnerships and innovative action.

As the DISPATCHES regularly report on active crime cases, no names of investigators or support organisation staff, nor locations or criminals are disclosed. This protects the individuals involved and safeguards against compromising ongoing investigations.

The DISPATCHES are produced by a coalition of government agencies and support organisations combating environmental crimes in Namibia (and across its borders through collaboration with neighbouring authorities) to apprehend and charge perpetrators and ensure appropriate sentences according to national legislation.

To report any suspicious activity related to wildlife crime, send an anonymous sms to: 081 413 2214 (call or sms; information treated with strict confidentiality). No correspondence with the public will be entered into. For more information, contact the relevant authorities: Ministry of Environment and Tourism; Namibian Police

ABOUT:

