



# *Manis javanica*

## Malayan / Sunda Pangolin



Pangolins, or "scaly anteaters," are covered in tough, overlapping scales. These nocturnal mammals eat ants and termites using an extraordinarily long, sticky tongue, and can quickly roll up into a tight ball when threatened. Pangolins are highly secretive, and many mysteries remain about their behavior and habits.

### Range

Tropical Southeast Asia is home to the Malayan pangolin (*Manis javanica*), also known as the Sunda pangolin. The historic range of the Malayan pangolin includes Vietnam, Lao PDR, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and Indonesia (Sumatra, Java, Borneo). Eight pangolin species can be found across Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.



Estimated range of Malayan / Sunda pangolin

### Habitat

Malayan pangolins are found in a variety of habitats including forests, thick brush, grasslands, and plantations. They sleep in the hollows and forks of trees and logs, and burrows they dig with their claws.

### Diet

*Ants, termites*

Pangolins locate insects using a well developed sense of smell, and they use their extremely long sticky tongues to capture and eat them. Estimates indicate that one adult pangolin can consume more than 70 million insects annually.

### Predators

Humans, tigers, leopards, clouded leopards, wild dogs, pythons

### Benefits

Burrowing animals worldwide are ecologically important, as their actions create breeding habitat or shelter for many other animals and are thought to contribute to increased species diversity.

### Physical Characteristics

*Weight: 2 - 12 kg*

Pangolins are covered with protective, overlapping scales, which are made from the same proteins that form human hair and fingernails. The scales grow throughout the life of a pangolin just like hair, and are constantly filed down as pangolins dig burrows and forage for insects. They have special muscles that can seal their nostrils, ears, and mouths, which protect them from ant or termite attacks.



# Malayan / Sunda Pangolin

## Behavior

Malayan pangolins are nocturnal. They sleep during the day in hollow trees or burrows, and emerge in the evening to forage for ants and termites. Long, curved foreclaws are used to demolish ant and termite nests, to climb trees and to dig burrows. Pangolins shuffle on all fours, balancing on the outer edges of their forefeet and tucking their foreclaws underneath as they walk. They can run surprisingly fast, and will often rise on their hind limbs to sniff the air. Malayan pangolins can swim, and they are excellent climbers, using their claws and tails to grip bark and scale trees.



## Offspring

A female Malayan pangolin will give birth to one young. At birth, pangolins are about 15 cm (6 in.) long and weigh about 120 grams (~4 oz). Their scales are soft and pale, and begin to harden by the second day. Pangolin mothers nurture their young in natal hollow trees or burrows. A mother will protectively roll around her infant when sleeping or if threatened. Infants nurse for 3 to 4 months, but may begin eating termites and ants at one month. At that time, the infant begins to accompany the mother outside of the burrow, riding on the base of her tail as she forages for insects.

## Legal Status and Conservation

- Malayan pangolins are listed as "endangered" on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) red list of threatened species. They are protected under Appendix II of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) with a zero export quota. There is a complete international ban on commercial trade in the species.



## Threats

Pangolins are in danger of extinction because of a devastating illegal international trade; there is high demand for pangolin scales and nearly all of their body parts for use in food, medicine, and leather goods. The main markets for pangolin parts are in Vietnam and China. Malayan pangolins are the most numerous mammals found in confiscations of illegal wildlife shipments in Southeast Asia. Wildlife authorities in Hai Phong, Vietnam seized 23 tons of pangolins (about 8000 animals) in just one week in February 2008, and Indonesian authorities confiscated about 14 tons of pangolins in Sumatra in July 2008. Because of this rampant illegal trade, pangolins are quickly disappearing from Southeast Asia. Pangolins are also threatened by rapid loss and deterioration of habitat.

## Solutions

Pangolins rarely survive in captivity. It is crucial that conservation efforts focus on preventing poaching, ending illegal trade, and protecting the habitat of these imperiled animals.

## SavePangolins.org

You can help to save pangolins. Do not eat pangolins and do not buy products made from pangolins. Visit [www.SavePangolins.org](http://www.SavePangolins.org) to learn more.

