



There are seven species of pangolins in the world, four in Africa and three in Southeast Asia.

Chinese Manis pentadactyla and Indian Pangolin *M. carassicaudata* are found in Nepal as our country is in a transition zone between Oriental and Palearctic regions.

Word pangolin is derived from the Malayan phrase 'Pen Gullinġ' meaning 'rolling ball'. They roll whenever they feel insecure. Pangolins are also called as Scaly Ant-eater because of overlapping scales and insectivorous habit. They are placental mammal bearing birth canal. Generically pangolins are known as "Saalakī" in Nepal and there are some popular local names such as kangnaya kose, hilemaccha, salmachhari etc.

Pangolin

A Unique Gift of Nature



Status

Protected by National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973

CIIES: Appendix II, IUCN Red Data Book: Lower Risk/Near Threatened

How to distinguish Chinese pangolin and Indian pangolin!

Chinese Pangolin is quite smaller with 15- 18 scales around the body, shorter tail with a naked tip and protective ear-flap. The Indian Pangolin has large, overlapping scales (11-13 around the body) on the body with longer tail.

Where do they live!

Pangolins generally inhabit in tropical and subtropical belts of Nepal. Chinese Pangolin is commonly found from east to west Nepal at suitable elevation and habitats whereas Indian Pangolin occurs marginally on the southern belt of Nepal. They prefer sandy soils, red soil and loamy soil within reach of water.

What they feed!

They use sense of smell to locate termite and ant nests. They dig the insects from mounds with their claws and engulf them through 16 inches long tongue, retracted from the chest cavity. That is why they are known as scaly ant eater.



What about pangolin nature!

They are nocturnal so remain in their burrows in day time. They bear anal scent glands that emit strong, foul smelling secretions for marking territory. They are solitary in nature except when mother are found with their young and occasionally are accompanied by a male in their burrow.

Why pangolins are in risk!

Many people think that Pangolins are harmful and take them like snakes because of its long body and scaly appearance. Due to this many pangolins become victim of torture or death. Their meat is eaten as a delicious food in Nepal. Scales are made into a ring as a charm against various diseases. In certain areas, they are sacrificed for rain making ceremonies.

Pangolins do not harm or bite people. None of the products used from pangolin body parts and used for traditional purpose have any scientific basis.

Are pangolins important to us!

Pangolins are the natural predator of ants and termites thus maintain the ecological balance by their miraculous anting behavior. Ants and termites, though very small, cause great damages to the plants and other human properties. Therefore in true sense pangolins are our friends.

What can we do!

We can conserve/restore their habitat, raise public awareness to appreciate their good work for people, keep an eye on illegal trade of products from pangolin in the market and inform the relevant authority eg Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation or Department of Forests for necessary action.



Let's be supportive for pangolin conservation, every small effort counts a lot for their wellbeing in wild.