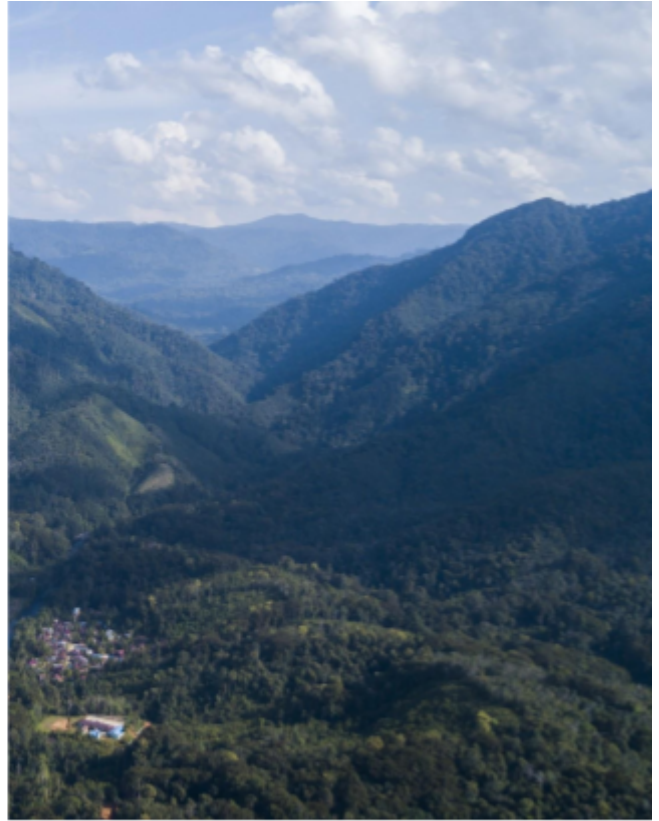


Review of Sunda Pangolin (*Manis javanica*) Species Status and Ecology



Michael Pitts



Planet Indonesia



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Authors:

Marissa Balfour¹, Ethan Moorar², Marc Heinzman³, Lady Diana Márquez⁴,
Jeffrey Popp⁵, Taylor Rhoades⁶

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Pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, are members of the mammalian order Pholidota and are characterized by the many rows of keratinized scales that cover their bodies. The Sunda pangolin is Southeast Asia's most widely distributed species, found in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. It is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and was last assessed in 2019 (Challender et al., 2019). All eight species of pangolin are experiencing population declines, with the Sunda pangolin (also known as the Malayan or Javan pangolin, *Manis javanica*), Philippine pangolin (*M. culionensis*), and Chinese pangolin (*M. pentadactyla*) being classified as Critically Endangered and the remaining species classified as either Endangered – the Indian pangolin (*M. crassicaudata*), white-bellied pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*), and the giant ground pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*) – or Vulnerable – the black-bellied pangolin (*P. tetradactyla*) and Temminck's pangolin (*S. temminckii*) (IUCN, 2022).

The Sunda pangolin is a nocturnal, solitary, and elusive species. They are capable climbers who sleep in the hollows or bases of trees or, at times, may reside in fallen logs or burrows dug in soil (Challender et al., 2019). Their diet consists mainly of many species of ants and termites, with a preference for *Oecophylla* sp. and *Anoplolepis gracilipes* ant species, as well as other insects, sand, and grass ([Hua et al., 2015; Lim, 2007; Lim Ng, 2008; Ngyen et al., 2014] as cited in Challender et al., 2019). They provide important ecosystem services by regulating populations of insects as well as aerating the soil while searching for prey, thus aiding in nutrient cycling (Challender et al., 2019). Adult males have been observed to have a greater home range than females (41.3 hectares vs. 6.97 hectares), and males may be territorial (Challender et al., 2019). This species breeds throughout the year, but it has been suggested that this may not be the case in the northern areas of its range (Challender et al., 2019). Additionally, female pangolins have a gestation period of approximately six months, typically carrying only one offspring at a time (Challender et al., 2019).

Sunda pangolins are reported to have a widespread distribution on the northwest coast of Borneo, with potentially a lower abundance in Borneo's eastern and central peat-swamp forests (Phillipps & Phillipps, 2018 as cited in Challender et al. 2019). They are known to inhabit primary forests, secondary forests, and cultivated areas, including plantations of rubber and oil palm ([Nowak, 1999; Azhar et al., 2013; Chong et al., 2016; Nash et al., 2019] as cited in Challender et al., 2019). Further research is needed to better understand habitat use and distribution.

Population status information is lacking for the Sunda pangolin due to both limited abundance and behavioral characteristics. Information on population trends is determined from indirect sources of information, including local knowledge and shifts in documented trade activity (Challender et al., 2019). Hunting and poaching pose the greatest threats to the Sunda pangolin. In China and Viet Nam, pangolins and their scales are sold in supply markets for traditional medicine practices as well as consumable meat. Large numbers of this species are poached to feed this demand, including from local populations in Indonesia (Sopyan, 2009). Meat from Sunda pangolins is also consumed in the communities within its range, such as in West Kalimantan, where hunting practices are traditional (survey data, Planet Indonesia). Data regarding the trafficking of pangolins from Indonesia, including multiple incidents of large-scale seizures of Sunda pangolins since 2000, indicates a large source population potentially in a significant decline due to these threats (Challender et al., 2019).

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