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Images available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B4YRXkdvJ5rFYINwOGdQWjFzbFE?usp=sharing>

Experts convene to save one of world's most trafficked mammals

Saving the Sunda pangolin – one of the world's most trafficked mammals – from extinction will require engaging local communities in their conservation and addressing the demand for pangolin products, according to international wildlife experts gathered in Singapore this week to create the first ever conservation strategy for the species.

Pangolins are scaly insect-eating animals that live in Asia and Africa. The Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*), one of eight species of pangolin, lives in Southeast Asia and is classified as Critically Endangered by The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species™. A thriving illegal trade for pangolin meat and scales is behind the decline. An estimated 200,000 Sunda pangolins have been illegally traded in the last decade, according to the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Pangolin Specialist Group.

A range of interventions will be needed to conserve the Sunda pangolin, according to a group of more than 50 conservationists, researchers and wildlife authorities representing 16 countries gathered in Singapore for the workshop. Priorities include combatting trafficking, strengthening legal policies, and building capacity for effective enforcement,

“The sheer scale of the pangolin trade is staggering, and time is of the essence,” says **Dr. Dan Challender, Chair of the IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist Group**. “The only way to stop the decline is through implementation of a clear strategy and unified effort to stop the demand, supply and trafficking.”

Stopping the poaching of pangolins will require engaging local people who live within or close to Sunda pangolin habitats, according to the group. This could involve hiring community members as rangers, or devising incentives for locals to protect pangolins. Additional research is needed

to understand the drivers and motivations behind consumption of pangolin products, and what will be successful in changing consumer behavior away from unsustainable consumption.

The eight species of pangolin recently received the highest level of international protection under the Convention of International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) when they were uplisted to Appendix I, which bans international commercial trade in pangolins. Strengthening domestic legislation and policy to combat the illegal wildlife trade remains a top concern. China and Vietnam are the global centres of demand for pangolin meat and scales. The meat is consumed as a luxury dish and the scales are used in various traditional medicines.

“Ensuring the survival of a Critically Endangered species like the Sunda pangolin requires collaboration and commitment,” says **Nerissa Chao of the IUCN SSC Asian Species Action Partnership**. “This has been a terrific moment to bring people together from across the region.”

This workshop is the first in a series of regional and national meetings to create a global strategy for all eight pangolin species.

“There’s a real sense of urgency but also a sense of optimism,” says **Sonja Luz of Wildlife Reserves Singapore**. “We can change the plight of the Sunda pangolin to make it a wildlife success story.”

The workshop was organised by the IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist Group, IUCN Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP), and Wildlife Reserves Singapore, and sponsored by the Wildlife Reserves Singapore Conservation Fund.

The final report from the workshop will be released later this year and freely available from the IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist Group website.

More information on IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist Group can be found at <http://www.pangolinsg.org>

About the IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist Group

The IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist Group is a voluntary network of experts from around the world including field biologists, social scientists, zoologists, veterinarians, ecologists and geneticists, all of whom are actively involved in pangolin research and conservation. The Pangolin Specialist Group was re-established in February 2012 in recognition of the widespread threats to pangolins globally and to address the lack of understanding of the species and their conservation needs. The group is an advisory body to IUCN and currently has around 100 members from 25 countries around the globe.

ABOUT WILDLIFE RESERVES SINGAPORE

Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) is dedicated to the management of world-leading zoological institutions—Jurong Bird Park, Night Safari, River Safari and Singapore Zoo—that aim to inspire people to value and conserve biodiversity by providing meaningful and memorable wildlife experiences.

A self-funded organisation, WRS focuses on protecting biodiversity in Singapore and Southeast Asia through collaborations with like-minded partners, organisations and institutions. Each year, the four attractions welcome 4.6 million visitors.

Mandai Park Holdings (MPH), the driving force behind the rejuvenation of Mandai into an integrated wildlife and nature heritage space, is the holding company of WRS and oversees its business and strategic development.

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of 1,300 Member organisations and some 16,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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