

# Long jail term for Malaysian ex-police officer caught with Critically Endangered Pangolins

**Almost six years after he was caught for illegal possession of 81 pangolins, a former police officer has been sentenced to one of the longest jail terms Malaysia has meted out for a crime involving the world's most trafficked mammal.**

Mohd Sharwandy Sollahudin, arrested in August 2018, was sentenced last month to a total of 15 years and 9 months in jail on four charges including for illegal possession of juvenile and female pangolins under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010.

However, he is expected to serve just six and a half years in jail as Alor Setar Sessions Court Judge Rohatul Akmar Abdullah ordered that the jail terms on the four separate charges should run simultaneously.

The sentence is especially significant because no fines were issued, making this a hard-hitting prison-only punishment. The jail terms issued exceed half the maximum term allowed for each of the four charges.

*A sentence like this is important because wildlife criminals must understand there is more than a slap on the wrist awaiting those who traffic wildlife.”*

*Datuk Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim, director General of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (PERHILITAN), the agency responsible for Sharwandy's arrest and successful prosecution.*“Pangolins are highly priced in the black market and the cost to traffickers must also be equally high in order to dissuade them,” he said.

Sharwandy's case follows several arrests of other enforcement officers involved in pangolin smuggling who also work in the state of Kedah. This state lies in the north of Peninsular Malaysia bordering Thailand and frequently witnesses wildlife smuggling attempts.

One former policeman was arrested for illegal possession and cruelty towards pangolins in [2012](#) and jailed. He was arrested again on the similar charge in [2014](#) near the Malaysia-Thailand border checkpoint at Bukit Kayu Hitam in Kedah.

In 2018 a [retired army serviceman](#) was stopped in the same area with 56 pangolins in the trunk of his car.

While in [2019](#), a Malaysian policeman was caught by Royal Thai Customs officers at a border checkpoint in Thailand with 47 pangolins in his car.

The former policeman's trial also spotlights the continued pressure on Critically Endangered Sunda Pangolins in the wild, with TRAFFIC data showing more than 80 incidents involving over 2,500 Sunda pangolins seized in Malaysia from 2014 to 2023.

More than two-thirds of the pangolins in Sharwandy's possession were either female or juvenile animals which underscored the impact his smuggling attempt would have had on the species. Sunda Pangolins mate once a year, usually producing just one offspring.

*“This might be just one case in one country, but a critical court decision like this is one way we can effectively portray the severity of the situation facing pangolins.”*

*Kanitha Krishnasamy, Director for TRAFFIC in Southeast Asia.*