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Photos: PCRF

- IMAGE OF THE DAY

WORLD PANGOLIN DAY

Organizations indicate that pangolins are endangered

Few people have been able to see the extremely rare and shy pangolin in the wild with their own eyes. And the odds are getting smaller and smaller as poaching has reached massive proportions. Tomorrow's World Pangolin Day wants to create awareness.

- 23 HOURS AGO

By Katharina Moser, Bonn/Windhoek

Fascinating, rare and often the target of poaching and smuggling - pangolins, also known as pangolins. They are the only scaly mammal and their species, which has eight subspecies, is over 60 million years old. Tomorrow, February 19th, is World Pangolin Day to draw attention to the endangerment of this impressive species. Humans are the biggest threat: pangolins are the most trafficked mammal species in the world, especially since their scales are used as a traditional medicine in Asia. The Xinhua News Agency reported last year that the number of pangolins poached in Namibia continues to rise. Between 2016 and 2021, 496 people were arrested for pangolin poaching, according to a scientific article in Conservation Namibia. In four years, Namibian authorities confiscated 128 live and 268 dead pangolins. However, the number of unreported cases is said to be enormous. “The poachers' strategy is to use middlemen who run poaching syndicates. We have to get hold of them," Environment Minister Pohamba Shifeta said recently.

Kelsey Prediger, founder of the Namibian organization "Pangolin Conservation and Research Foundation" (PCRF), is also highly critical of the situation. "More cases of pangolin poaching and smuggling are recorded in Namibia each year than elephants and rhinos combined," she says. According to her, on average about 30 live pangolins and 70 shells or dead animals are confiscated each year.

The organization was founded in 2020 and operates from Windhoek in Namibia and parts of southern Africa. She not only takes care of the development of protective measures, but also collects valuable information and data on the pangolins, especially in Namibia. To this end, the organization is also working with the Ministry of the Environment and the Namibian police as part of a working group on pangolins in Namibia. They work together to develop guidelines and protocols for handling pangolins. The organization is also the first in Africa to develop a blueprint for pangolin management and conservation in Namibia. The fight against poachers and smugglers, some of whom transport and sell the animals alive, is particularly important: “Pangolins should never be taken from their native habitat as they do not survive in captivity. It is illegal to capture, transport or kill pangolins," Prediger told AZ. “When smugglers with live animals are caught, they are immediately assessed by a veterinarian

and a rehabilitation process begins. If they are healthy, they are immediately released and monitored via GPS to ensure their survival and prevent further poaching.” To raise awareness among the community, PCRF is hosting a day of pangolin-related events tomorrow at Eagle's in Avis, at which is also about fun and entertainment in a family-friendly way. "We look forward to many visitors and have a running competition, great prizes, information opportunities, music,