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Pangolins

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PANGOLIN DNA TO REVEAL ILLEGAL TRADE

Ellanie Smit

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DNA data is currently being collected from pangolins in Namibia to help identify smuggled pangolins and the extent of the international illegal trade.

According to Namibia's Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement Report for 2022, it is not known how many pangolins will be successfully smuggled out of the country.

Investigations are needed, including tracing origins and trade routes, it said. "To make this possible, DNA data will be collected in Namibia, but will need to be cross-checked with data from transit and end-market countries to determine the presence and extent of international trade." According to the report, an international initiative to facilitate such analysis is underway .

After rhinos, pangolins are considered the most endangered, high-value animal species. Of the 175 recorded wildlife crime cases in 2022, pangolins were involved in a total of 36 cases. "Pangolin products are very rarely seized in other circumstances, such as special searches at border posts."

Statistics show that last year, 57 suspects in connection with pangolin crimes were arrested and 11 convicted, while 12 live pangolin, 28 dead pangolin and 873 scale armor were confiscated.

It goes on to say that live animals make up a significant portion of pangolin cases, accounting for nearly 40 percent of all incidents in some years.

"While it was initially believed that most pangolins seized alive can be safely released back into the wild, post-release surveillance has shown that pangolin rehabilitation is complex and mortality rates can be very high." Through the DNA

data the initiative hopes to learn more about illegal trade so that it can take better action in the future.