



## Namibia warns of rising pangolin trafficking on World Pangolin Day

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WINDHOEK, Feb. 17 (Xinhua) -- Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism issued a warning on World Pangolin Day, exposing the extent of illegal trafficking and poaching activities targeting pangolins.

Pangolins continue to be illegally captured and are the most trafficked mammals since 2014, causing their population to steeply decline and putting them at risk of extinction, said Teofilus Nghitila, executive director of the ministry.

Recent seizures include 18 pangolin skins, 12 live animals and 146 scales in 2023 alone, leading to a surge in criminal cases, according to the ministry. Thirty-eight suspects were arrested in connection with 23 registered incidents, surpassing the combined poaching cases of elephants and rhinos during the same period in the country.

Nghitila noted that these cases are predominantly from the northern regions, with Kavango West having the most cases registered.

World Pangolin Day is observed on Feb. 17 this year, providing an opportunity for people worldwide to join together in raising awareness about these unique mammals and their plight.

"We should use this day to mobilize each other as Namibians and reject illicit activities related to pangolin poaching," he said.

Pangolins are legally protected in Namibia, and stringent penalties await those caught trafficking or possessing these animals. Offenders could face up to 25 years in prison and hefty fines, with recent cases resulting in severe sentences. ■

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