

[NEWS](#) [ENVIRONMENT](#)

LOOK: Smugglers jailed for trading nearly one tonne of pangolin scales



The pangolin is a protected wild animal due to increasing demand for its meat and scales in Vietnam and China. Picture: Armand Hough/African News Agency (ANA) Archives

Published 16m ago



Written by

Dominic Naidoo

Environmental Activist and Writer

SHARE



Last week, the People's Court of Hanoi, Vietnam, sentenced three women and one man to a collective 18 years imprisonment for the

illegal transportation and trade of 984kg of pangolin scales, one of the largest cases of wildlife trading investigated in Vietnam's history.

The Vietnam News reported that the leader of the trafficking group, Nguyễn Thị Chính, from northern Vĩnh Phúc Province, was sentenced to seven years, while Hoàng Thị Hiền Phương from Hà Nội, was jailed for five years for her role as a broker.

Story continues below Advertisement

Two other accomplices were each sentenced to two years in prison for illegally transporting the scales. Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) estimated the total value of the confiscated scales to be around 1.313m Vietnamese Dong or \$56 000 (R896 000).

ENV said on Facebook that the group were arrested in March last year when the pangolin scales were confiscated. Bui Thi Ha, ENV's vice director, said that "this case, with its particularly large volume of scales seized, has revealed a sophisticated cross-country trade network of traffickers.

Meet Vietnam's pangolin protector



REUTERS

Vietnamese conservationist Nguyen Van Thai is on a mission to protect critically endangered pangolins. Libby Hogan reports.

More on this

- **Man handed R70k fine or five years in jail for possession of pangolin skin**
 - **PICS: Cop arrested while using SAPS vehicle to deliver ‘injured and traumatised’ pangolin for sale**
 - **Artist to transport Mzansi into the wild to save the Pangolin, the most trafficked animal in the world**
 - **Gauteng police officer arrested for allegedly selling a pangolin**
 - **Four arrested in Mahikeng while selling a pangolin for R250 000**
-

“The successful arrests, strict trials, and criminal prosecution of the perpetrators is an important milestone which demonstrates the zero-tolerance attitude towards wildlife crimes of the prosecution agencies.”

The pangolin is a protected wild animal due to increasing demand for its meat and scales in Vietnam and China. Some pangolin species have been listed as endangered on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s Red List. Vietnamese laws prohibit the hunting, killing, caging, trading, or transport of wild animals.

In 2014, Hong Kong Customs authorities seized just over one ton of pangolin scales from a shipping container that arrived from Kenya. That was the second interception in Hong Kong of a shipment of pangolin scales from the African continent in just eight months, following the seizure of 320kg of pangolin scales in October 2013.

Story continues below Advertisement

Wildlife trafficking: Pangolins under pressure



Wildlife trafficking: Pangolins under pressure

In the 2014 case, 40 bags totalling 1 000kg of pangolin scales were detected in a container, declared as “Plastic PET”, at the Kwai Chung cargo examination compound. While the scales are presumably those of African pangolins, the precise origin species of the scales could not be determined due to the sheer volume.

Current Affairs

Story continues below Advertisement

RELATED TOPICS:

ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION VIETNAM ANIMALS ANIMAL CRUELTY POACHING
CRIME AND COURTS

SHARE



You may like