

Major Wildlife Trafficking Seizure in Kinshasa: Over One Ton of Pangolin Scales and Lion Skull Confiscated

Kinshasa, January 26 ICCN , in collaboration with Conserv Congo and the judicial Police of the court of Matete, and has supported a major arrest and seizure operation in central Kinshasa resulting in the confiscation of 1,054 kilograms of pangolin scales and a lion's skull intended for illegal international trade.

Two suspected Congolese traffickers were arrested and placed in detention, while the seized wildlife products have been secured by judicial authorities.

The pangolin is currently recognized as the most trafficked mammal in the world. Based on scientific estimates, this seizure alone represents the killing of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 pangolins, as each animal yields only a small quantity of scales.

In 2019 and 2020, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was identified as one of the countries most affected by pangolin trafficking in Africa, serving both as a source and a transit country for international wildlife crime networks. Today, all four African pangolin species are threatened with extinction.

In the DRC, pangolin conservation faces serious challenges, including:

The vast size and limited surveillance of forest areas

The involvement of organized criminal networks

Weak border controls and limited forensic capacity

Insufficient resources for law enforcement and judiciary follow-up

Persistent international demand, particularly from Asian markets

Without strengthened enforcement, judicial action, and international cooperation, pangolin populations in the DRC face a risk of irreversible decline.

Conserv Congo reiterates its commitment to working with national authorities to dismantle trafficking networks, protect endangered species, and strengthen wildlife law enforcement across the country.