

# Government warns against engaging in illegal trade of pangolins

The Ministry of Tourism has warned members of the public against engaging in the illegal trade of pangolins and their products following a continued rise in related arrests.

In a press statement issued to the media by Ministry of Tourism Principle Public Relations Officer Nelly Banda, through the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), revealed that 154 pangolin-related arrests were recorded between January 2024 and December 2025.

Ms Banda said during the same period, authorities recovered 65 live pangolins, eight dead pangolins and 14 pangolin skins, highlighting what the Ministry described as a serious threat to Zambia's biodiversity.

She noted that Zambia is home to two pangolin species, the Temminck's ground pangolin and the white-bellied tree pangolin classified as vulnerable and endangered respectively under National and International Conservation Frameworks.

Ms Banda expressed concern that criminal networks are increasingly targeting individuals, including those in rural communities, to participate in illegal wildlife activities.

She said members of the public have been cautioned against the capture, possession, sale, purchase, transportation or export of pangolins and their products such as scales, meat, skins and nails.

Ms Banda added that under Section 130 (1) of the Zambia Wildlife Act No. 14 of 2025, any person found guilty of dealing in protected wildlife species is liable to imprisonment of not less than five years and not more than ten years without the option of a fine.

She has since urged citizens to report suspected illegal wildlife activities to the nearest DNPW office or police station and to refrain from disturbing pangolins in their natural habitats.

Ms Banda further stated that any rescued pangolin must be handed over to DNPW within 24 hours.

The Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to protecting Zambia's wildlife heritage and promoting sustainable tourism.

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