

Threats, Perceptions, and Conservation Challenges of Indian Pangolins in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Manis crassicaudata, the Indian pangolin, is one of the most heavily trafficked animals in the world. Their scales are the most sought-after commodity in the illegal wildlife trade market. This research examined the species' current population status, threats, and conservation problems in five places of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, these places are Peshawar, Azakhel, Charsadda, Nizampur and Lalakalay. Information was gathered through direct observations, camera traps, and interviews with locals and wildlife officers; besides this, signs of burrows and fecal were also used as sources. There is a steep decline in the population of this species in all the areas surveyed. Among the survey sites, Azakhel is reported to have a higher density of the species. Poaching is among the highest of the threats that have been enumerated, as well as illegal trade and the exploitation of animals as a source of traditional medicine. The data on public perception has driven the point home that the awareness level of the conservation of the species has very low enthusiasm. The outcome of conservation awareness in the region revealed the species' situation and highlighted the main issues that must be dealt with as well as the urgency for the formulation of practical conservation actions. These actions should include the educating of the populace, the strengthening of law enforcement, and the establishment of community-based surveillance programs as the primary pillars of the protection of the Indian pangolin population in the area.

Keywords: Indian pangolin, poaching, trafficking, public awareness, conservation strategies