

Indian Pangolin

January 3, 2022

In news- Recently, the Odisha Forest and Environment Department has completed its first-ever radio-tagging of the Indian pangolin.

About Indian pangolin-

- The Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*), also called thick-tailed pangolin is native to the Indian subcontinent.
- It is a large anteater covered horizontally by 11-13 rows of scales.
- The Indian pangolin is a **solitary, shy, slow-moving, nocturnal mammal.**
- Of the eight extant species of pangolin, the Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* and Chinese Pangolin *M. pentadactyla* occur in India.
- A terminal scale is also present on the ventral side of the tail of the Indian Pangolin, which is absent in the Chinese Pangolin.
- Its sticky tongue, which is longer than its body, is specially adapted.
- It can also **curl itself into a ball (volvation) as self-defence against predators** such as the tiger.
- The **colour of its scales varies depending on the colour of the earth in its surroundings.**
- It is an insectivore, feeding on ants and termites, digging them out of mounds and logs using its long claws, which are as long as its forelimbs.
- It is nocturnal and rests in deep burrows during the day.
- It inhabits grasslands and secondary forests, and is well adapted to dry areas and desert regions, but prefers more barren, hilly regions.
- Major threats to pangolins in India are hunting and

poaching for local consumptive use (e.g. as a protein source and traditional medicine) and international trade, for its meat and scales in East and South East Asian countries, particularly China and Vietnam.

- Within its range it is known as 'khawlyaa manjar', in Marathi; *saal khapri* in Chhattisgarhi, *bon-rou* in Assamese; *eenampechi* in Malayalam, *azhungu* or *alangu* in Tamil, *bajrakapta* in Odia; *kaballewa* in Sinhala; *chippu handi* in Kannada.
- **IUCN status:** Endangered.
- It has been listed **on CITES Appendix I** since January 2017 and is protected in all countries.
- It is also protected and listed under the Schedule I Part I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Eight species of pangolins –

- Eight species of pangolins are found on two continents. They range from Vulnerable to Critically Endangered.
- Four species live in Africa: Black-bellied pangolin (*Phataginus tetradactyla*), White-bellied pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*), Giant Ground pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*) and Temminck's Ground pangolin (*Smutsia temminckii*).
- The four species found in Asia: Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*), Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*), Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) and the Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*).