

Pangolins

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

Recently, the Sangtam community in Nagaland has resolved to protect pangolins, a heavily trafficked mammal, strengthening community-led conservation along the India-Myanmar border.

- **Pangolins** - Pangolins are **mammals covered in scales, also known as scaly anteaters**.
- **Types** - 4 Asian species - Chinese, Sunda, Indian, and Philippine pangolins.
- 4 African species - Temminck's Pangolin, giant pangolin, white-bellied, and black-bellied.
- **Habitat** - They live in tropical forests and grasslands.
- **Distribution** - They are found across tropical and subtropical regions of Africa and Asia
- **India** - **India is home to two species**
 - The Indian Pangolin is found across the subcontinent.
 - The Chinese Pangolin in the Northeast Region.

The name "pangolin" originates from the Malay word *pengguling*, which translates to "rolling up".

- **Behaviour** - Nocturnal in nature, burrowing and insectivorous; rolls into a protective ball when threatened.
 - These animals are insectivores; they have no teeth, so they use their sticky tongues to pick up food.
- **Uniqueness** - They are the only mammals wholly covered in keratin scales, and they use those scales to protect themselves from predators in the wild.
- **Diet** - They eat ants, termites, and larvae, essential players in controlling insect populations within their ecosystems.

World Pangolin Day is observed annually on the third Saturday of February.

- **Threats** - **Trafficked for scales and meat**, which are in high demand across Asia and Africa.

- Poaching, illegal wildlife trade, habitat fragmentation, and cross-border trafficking.
- **Conservation Status -**
- **IUCN Status -**
 - *Indian Pangolin - Endangered*
 - *Chinese pangolin - Critically Endangered*
- Both are,
 - **CITES** - Appendix I.
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** - Schedule I.

Reference

[TH | Sangtam community on pangolin conservation](#)

