



## JOINT NEWS RELEASE

23 July 2019

# National Parks Board works with Singapore Customs and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority to seize 11.9 tonnes of pangolin scales and 8.8 tonnes of elephant ivory

*Haul marks third major seizure of pangolin scales in Singapore in 2019, and largest seizure of elephant ivory in Singapore to date*

On 21 July 2019, the National Parks Board (NParks) worked with Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) to inspect a shipment of three containers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo being transhipped through Singapore to Viet Nam. The three containers were said to contain timber according to the bill of lading. Upon inspection, sacks containing pangolin scales and elephant ivory were found in one of the containers.

Packed into 237 bags were 11.9 tonnes of pangolin scales, estimated to be worth about US\$35.7 million (approximately S\$48.6 million). The scales were assessed to be from the Giant Pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*), and the quantity seized was equivalent to close to 2,000 pangolins. With this seizure, Singapore has seized a total of 37.5 tonnes of pangolin scales since April 2019.

The shipment also contained 8.8 tonnes of elephant ivory, packed into 132 bags and estimated to be worth US\$12.9 million (approximately S\$17.6 million). The ivory is estimated to have come from nearly 300 African Elephants (*Loxodonta africana*). This is the largest seizure of elephant ivory in Singapore to date. Previously, Singapore had seized 177kg of cut up and carved elephant ivory in April 2019.

These latest seizures are testament to Singapore's commitment to the global effort to stem illegal trade in CITES-listed species, including their parts and derivatives. The seized pangolin scales and elephant ivory will be destroyed to prevent them from re-entering the market.

NParks, Singapore Customs and ICA adopt a Whole-of-Government approach, have a robust domestic risk assessment framework, and strong cooperation with international and local partners to combat the illegal trade in ivory and other CITES-listed species. There is also sharing of information amongst international agencies. In



this particular case, the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China had shared information that enabled the Singapore agencies to successfully seize the pangolin scales and ivory.

Singapore is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and is committed to international efforts to curb illegal trade in CITES-listed species. Elephants and pangolins are protected species under CITES, and international trade in elephant ivory and pangolin is prohibited.

Under the Endangered Species (Import & Export) Act, the maximum penalty for illegal import, export and re-export of wildlife is a fine of up to \$500,000 and/or 2 years' imprisonment. The same penalties apply to transit or transshipment of CITES-listed species of wildlife, including their parts and derivatives.

The Singapore Government adopts a zero-tolerance stance on the use of Singapore as a conduit to smuggle endangered species and their parts and derivatives. Our agencies will continue to collaborate and maintain vigilance to tackle the illegal wildlife trade.

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## ANNEX

### Ecological Information on Pangolins and Elephants

#### Pangolins

Pangolins are solitary, primarily nocturnal animals that have a full armour of scales. There are eight species of pangolins found on two continents. Four species of pangolins live in Africa. The scales seized on 21 July 2019 were found to have come from the Giant Pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*). It is estimated that the 11.9 tonnes of scales seized were equivalent to close to 2,000 pangolins, taking into account the weight of the species.

#### African pangolins

| Species  | Details   |
|--|---|
| <i>Smutsia gigantea</i><br>Giant Ground Pangolin | <p><b>IUCN Status:</b> Vulnerable</p> <p><b>Country of Origin:</b> Native to Africa</p> <p><b>Average Lifespan:</b> 9 years</p> <p><b>Use and Trade:</b> Food, medicine (both human &amp; veterinary)<br/>           Mainly hunted for its meat, which is either consumed or traded. Its scales are also used for cultural and ethno-medicinal purposes.</p> <p><b>Habitat/Ecology:</b> Forest, savanna; terrestrial<br/>           This species occurs in lowland tropical moist and swamp forests and feeds exclusively on ants and termites.</p> |

#### Pangolin found in Singapore

**Species:** *Manis javanica*

**Common Name:** Sunda Pangolin

**IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered

**Native to:** Southeast Asia

The Sunda Pangolin is a shy, nocturnal and solitary animal. In Singapore, it is mainly distributed in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve and Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. It can also be found in forested areas in Bukit Batok, the Western Catchment Area and on the islands of Pulau Ubin and Pualu Tekong.



## Elephant Species

**Species:** *Loxodonta africana*

**Common Name:** African Elephant

**IUCN Status:** Vulnerable

**Country of Origin:** Native to Africa

**Average Lifespan:** 60-70 years

**Habitat/Ecology:** Wetlands (inland), grassland, forest, shrubland, savanna, desert; terrestrial

The African Elephant moves between a variety of habitats, migrating between different types of environments.