Pangolin (*Smutsia temminckii*)

**Conservation Status:** Vulnerable

The pangolin is distinguished from other mammals by its protective layer of brown horny scales that overlap like roof shingles on the upper body, tail, and outer limbs. It has a tubular head and short, powerful legs with strong curved claws well-adapted for uncovering ants and termites. Other adaptations that make them experts at eating ants and termites are their acute sense of smell that helps them sniff out most of their prey, thick eyelids that protect their eyes from insect bites, and a long, tapering tongue used to lap up prey.

**Fun Facts**

1. Pangolins shed their scales periodically.
2. When not in use, the Cape pangolin’s tongue retracts into a pouch located in its throat.
3. In many cultures it is considered a good omen to see a pangolin.
4. Pangolins lack teeth and are unable to chew.

**Habitat**

The pangolin inhabits savannas and woodlands and usually avoids deserts and forests.

**Diet**

Termites, ants

**Predators**

Lions, leopards,humans

**Behavior**

A solitary and nocturnal animal**,** pangolins use burrows dug by other animals for resting during the day and as a shelter where they give birth and keep their young. They walk slowly, dragging their tail, with their head hung swaying from side to side. They use their keen sense of smell to locate termites and ants. Once they locate prey, they will dig with their front legs to uncover the nest and then use their long tongue to selectively feed.

**Breeding**

The pangolin gives birth to a single offspring after a gestation period of seven months.

**Size:**

Length: 50-60 cm

**Weight**

15-18 kg

**Life Span:** 20 years

**Gestation Period:** 7 months

**Average number of offspring:** 1