

African Pangolin Working Group Chairman's Annual Report: March 2019 to February 2020

Highlights

With each passing year, I am amazed at what our small organisation has accomplished with only four Board members. With being actively involved in retrieving pangolins in sting operations out of the illegal trade, their rehabilitation, releases and post release monitoring - only covers some of our activities over this past year. We have attended numerous court cases to provide testimony of aggravation against pangolin poachers and 2019 saw the highest jail term of eight years being imposed against a poacher that entered the country illegally with a pangolin from Zimbabwe. We have also provided training courses, given public lectures, multiple media interviews and been actively involved in pangolin documentaries that were screened globally while still pursuing *in setu* research on pangolins in the field as well as in the laboratory with postgraduate students. For all of this, I am extremely grateful to my completely devoted Board members.

The past year had some definite highlights and one that stands out head and shoulders to me was the new project of introducing pangolins into Zululand, a province in South Africa that had received, what I consider, a local regional extinction of the species. The team at Phinda have set the bar in post-release monitoring ensuring almost 24-hour surveillance of released pangolins on the reserve. Of the seven released, five remain after one died due to complications from tick infestation and resulting biliary and one seems to have been predated on by a Nile crocodile whilst attempting to cross a river. Recently, one of the neighbouring reserves to Phinda, Manyoni have now also become partners to this world first project and are showing a similar degree of commitment and success, just an all-good story!

This past year has also seen an addition to our counter-poaching team where Glen Thompson was appointed as team manager to oversee Anika and her K9 unit. Havoc has completed his basic training in indicating the scent of all four species of African pangolin and the unit have received their official insignia and uniforms. They are now fully mobile with a vehicle and they have been a tremendous help in assisting the hospital with walking pangolins. The Ichikowitz Foundation are the patrons of this unit and fund both Anika and Glen's salaries. The foundation are also in the process of building a Pangolarium on their facility near Rustenburg which will be home to the unit and serve as the intermediate rehabilitation phase for pangolins once discharged from the hospital prior to their release. We are also extremely grateful to Hill's for sponsoring Havoc's dog food that is such an important component for a working dog to have such a well-balanced scientifically formulated diet.

A number of new and important friendships were made in 2019 that has resulted in partnerships with organisations such as the Boucher Legacy, founded by Proteas Cricketer Mark Boucher and managed by Alley Hewitt. They have sponsored the hospitalisation and rehabilitation of four pangolins over the past year. Exciting ventures have been planned with McCann who will be developing an advertising campaign to bring in much needed funds and

the world-renowned motivational speaker, Michael Jackson has already assisted us in much needed advice and MC a number of fund raising events.

Of the 36 pangolins retrieved from the illegal trade in 2019, the African Pangolin Working Group were actively involved in 20 that were intercepted and transported to the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital. I cannot recall one moment when the hospital was not without a pangolins last year, on occasion ten at once!

While the public often feel helpless and are desperate to help and contribute more to the conservation of Africa's pangolins, just your support on social media, spreading the word and donations go a very far way in turning the tide against the scourge that is pangolin poaching and trade in Africa. We are most grateful for this support and it does not go unnoticed. I would also like to express my gratitude to the South African Police Service (in particular the wildlife crime stock theft units, organised crime and covert units) as well as government Environmental Management Inspectorate (EMI) for the close working relationship over the past year – teamwork is essential in this war, thank you.

In the rest of my report, I will try and summarise some of the most pertinent activities we have spent our energy on trying to curb the tide that is the scourge of the illicit underground pangolin trade.

Presentations, Interviews, Excursions, Events & Documentaries

1. On the 6th March 2019, Ray and Nicci presented an overview of the illegal trade to the SAPS DPCI (HAWKS) at the Head Office in Silverton. Regional DPCI Directors from each provincial branch were present.
2. On the 15th March Ray & Dr Karin Lourens (from the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital) presented talks at Onderstepoort (Faculty of Veterinary Science) to interested students and staff.
3. April saw the establishment of new friendships and networks through networking from Alexis Kriel with the Boucher Legacy (ex Protea's cricketer MarK Boucher and manager Alley Hewitt) and with the famed motivational speaker, Michael Jackson.
4. May saw the launch of the documentary "Eye of the Pangolin" at the Labia Theatre in Cape Town where the entire Board made an attendance. Later that month, Ray attended its premier screening in White River as well.
5. Through networking by Amanda Irving, we were approached by Gone.Outdoor who nominated us as the 2019 beneficiary for 1% for the planet. Amanda attended the launch of the campaign at their store in 44 Stanley in early May 2019.
6. On the 24th May, Ray & Nicci were interviewed in the "Rhino Tower" at Monte Casino Bird Gardens that was streamed live on social media.
7. 11 July Nicci and Ray had a meeting with DEA and the National Prosecuting Authority to streamline the chain-of-custody sampling procedure.
8. 18-21 Aug, Ray met up with Francois in Tshipise to shoot the documentary for CNN's Great Big Story.
9. 21-22 September, Amanda represented the APWG in our new gazebo stand on Madikwe for the Rhino day walk.
10. Amanda Irving made contact with Rob van Vuuren and Dani Boschhoff and they built pangolins into one of the main characters of their live play and children's book. We received a donation from them from sales of their book Florence and Watson and the Great Pangolin Mystery. We introduced Rob and Dani to the people at Skoobs which provided some good promotional opportunities for them at Skoobs and Montecasino and

opportunities to talk to kids about pangolins. Our Board attended the Skoobs fundraising initiative at Montecasino which proved to be highly successful.

11. 31 October, Nicci and Ray delivered training to the Mpumalanga Province Judiciary (prosecuting advocates) in Nelspruit.
12. 6 November, Board attended the launch of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) ENACT report and the illegal trade in pangolin at their head office in Hatfield, Pretoria, Johannesburg.
13. APWG Board and K9 Counter-poaching unit gave a demo for SAA, USAID and TRAFFIC at the OR Tambo International Airport in a 380 airbus.

Court proceedings (in providing expert testimony in aggravation of sentencing)

1. 22 July 2019 - Nicci and Ray attended court proceedings in Randburg Magistrates Court
2. 5 August 2019 – Ray attended court proceedings in the Krugersdorp Magistrates Court
3. August 2019 - Glen Thompson attended court proceedings in Lenyenye Magistrates Court
4. August 2019 - Francois Meyer attended court proceedings in Musina Magistrates Court
5. 18 September 2019 – Ray to return to Krugersdorp Magistrates Court
6. 7 October 2019 – Ray attended court proceeding at the Pretoria Central Magistrate Court

Press and Media

Radio

PHELI FM 95.0: 29 October 2019
SA FM, Sunday 16 February 2020

Television

SABC 2, 50/50 3rd February 2019
Eye of the Pangolin, global YouTube, 17 May 2019
Prontuit, Kyknet interview, DSTV channel 144, 24 June 2019
CNN International: Inside Africa: 18:30, 4 October 2019
Die Groot Ontbyt (KykNet, Ch 144): 06:40, 8 November 2019
Great Big Story-Protecting pangolins from poaching in South Africa YouTube, 9 January 2020

Media

Associated Press, >57 news rooms globally, 16th February 2019
The (Natal) Witness, 22nd February 2019
Middleburg Observer, 28 February 2019
The Citizen, 1st March 2019
Le Point, Paris (France), May 2019
Daily Maverick, 29 July 2019
Daily Maverick, 6 September 2019
Rekord East, Pretoria, 4 October 2019
The Maritime Executive, 6 November 2019
The Daily Maverick, 8 November 2019
Saturday Star, 9 November 2019
Farmers Weekly, February 10 2020
Saturday Star, February 15 2020

Pangolin trade in Africa 2019

The illegal trade in African pangolin scales reached the highest proportions ever experienced, topping in December 2019 at 97 tons of scales. This is approximately 170,000 pangolins (see attached Appendix 1 for African trade). If we consider that this is only around

10% of the actual trade as the vast majority remains undetected, the Pholidota cannot survive this unprecedented onslaught.

Pangolin trade in South Africa 2019

The total trade in pangolin in 2019 was somewhat down from the previous year at 36 individuals (see attached Appendix 2 for South African trade). Of these, 12 were successfully treated at the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital, 8 died in the hospital where their condition was too severe to have survived the trade, 10 died in the trade and 6 were unaccounted for where they were either released by police or nature conservation without our involvement.

I would like to thank the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital for their continued support and collaboration, without which we would not have had so much success in increasing the survival rate of the retrieved pangolins.

Research

Students

Francois Meyer is submitting his final dissertation for examination to the University of Venda (UNIVEN) in March 2020. His study is ground-breaking and has focussed on the survival and distribution of Temminck's pangolins retrieved out of the illegal wildlife trade in South Africa. One of the most critical findings is the greatly increased survival of pangolins that undergo the "soft" release process instead of the hard and fast release once discharged from hospital.

Thando Radebe has submitted her final master's thesis for examination and one of the two examiners reports have been submitted, she investigated the association of pangolins and ectoparasites with a focus on African pangolins.

Zelda du Toit is finalising her PhD investigating the evolutionary genetic relationships between the four African pangolin species.

Lauren Offered will be starting her MSc with me on the description of the reproductive tract for both male and female Temminck's pangolins early this year.

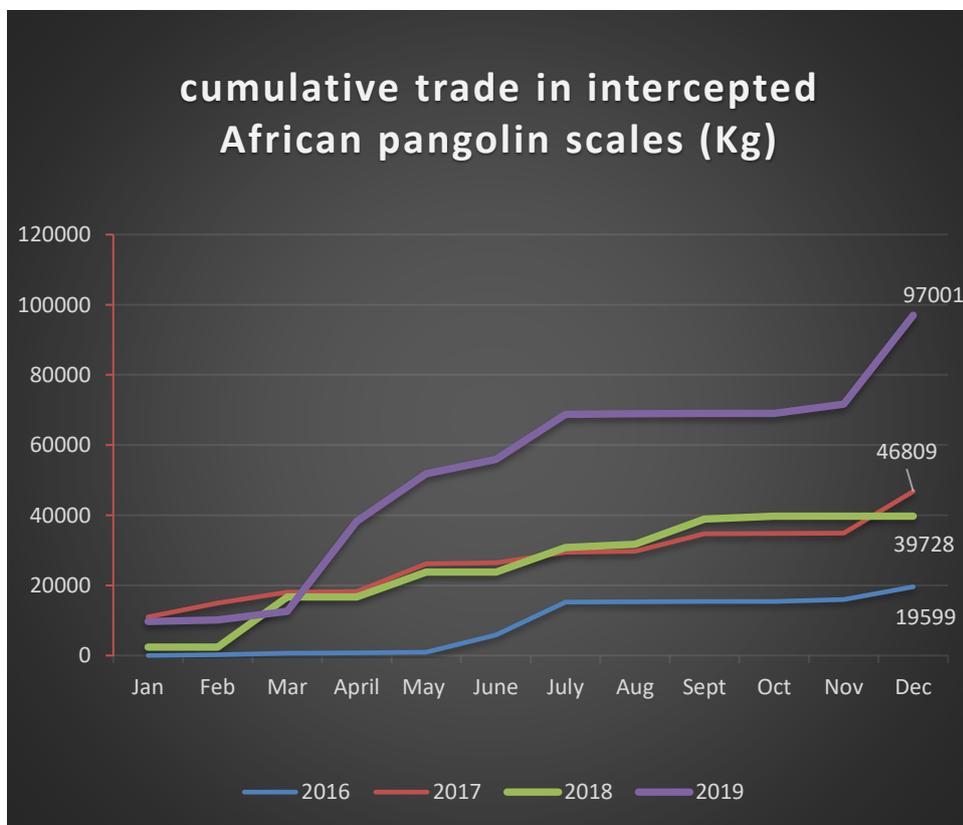
Publications

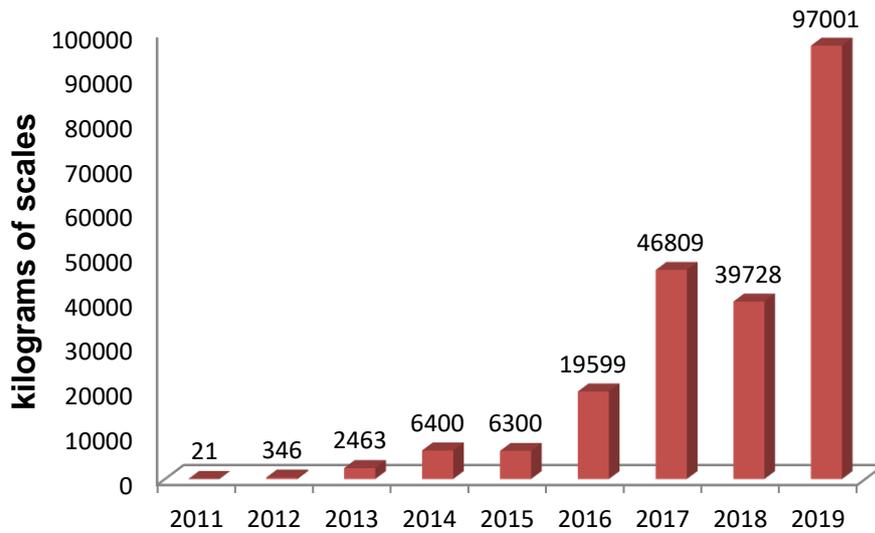
- Pietersen, D., **Jansen**, R. & Connelly, E (2019). *Smutsia temminckii*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2019: e.T12765A123585768
- Jansen**, R, Sodeinde, OA, Soewu, DA & Ingram, DJ (2019). White-bellied pangolin *Phataginus tricuspis*. In: Challender, DWS, Nash, H, Waterman, C & Nyhus, PJ (Editors). Pangolins: Science, Society and Conservation. Academic Press (Elsevier), pp. 139-156.
- Pietersen, DW, **Jansen**, R, Swart, J, Panaino, W, Kotze, A, Rankin, P & Nebe, B (2019). Temminck's ground pangolin *Smutsia temminckii*. In: Challender, DWS, Nash, H, Waterman, C & Nyhus, PJ (Editors). Pangolins: Science, Society and Conservation. Academic Press (Elsevier), pp. 175-193.
- Soewu, DA, Ingram, DJ, **Jansen**, R, Sodeinde, O & Pietersen, DW (2019). Bushmeat and beyond: historic and contemporary use in Africa. In: Challender, DWS, Nash, H, Waterman, C & Nyhus, PJ (Editors). Pangolins: Science, Society and Conservation. Academic Press (Elsevier), pp. 241-258.
- Wright**, N & Jimerson, J (2019). The rescue, rehabilitation and release of pangolins. In: Challender, DWS, Nash, H, Waterman, C & Nyhus, PJ (Editors). Pangolins: Science, Society and Conservation. Academic Press (Elsevier), pp. 495-504.

Prof Ray Jansen
Chairman: African Pangolin Working Group

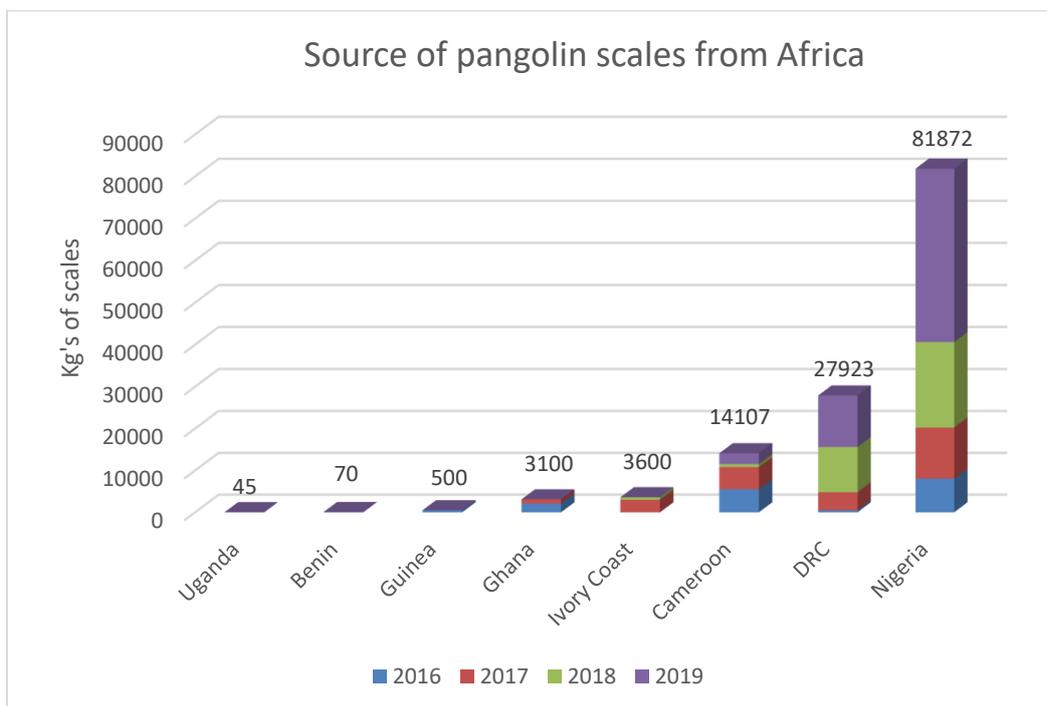
APPENDIX 1: THE AFRICAN TRADE

97 tons of pangolin scales intercepted in Africa in 2019 destined for Asia
The greatest volume ever recorded



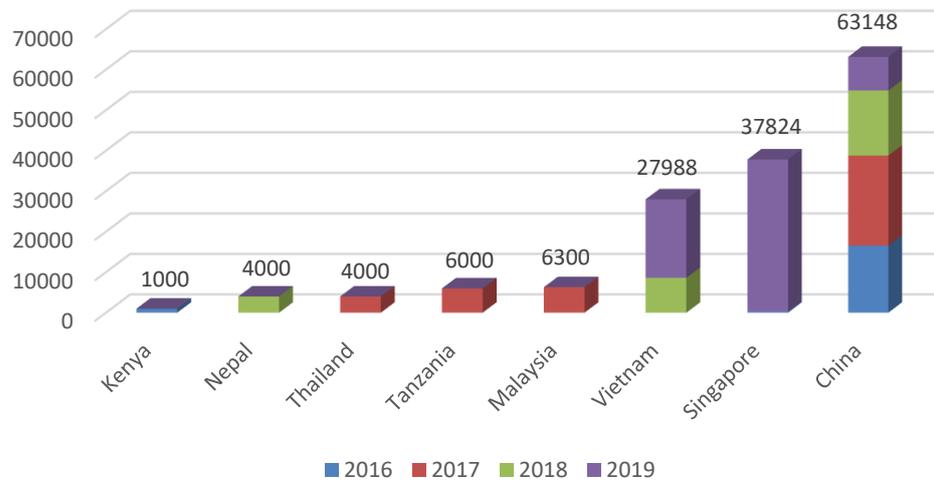


The largest source of pangolin scales over the past four years was from Nigeria, responsible for around 70% of all scales



Destination countries were primarily Asia, China being the most favoured followed by Singapore and then Vietnam

Destination of pangolin scales from Africa



APPENDIX 2: THE SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE

Total number of pangolins retrieved out of the illegal trade in 2019 was 36, the vast majority of cases were recorded in Limpopo Province

	Gauteng	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	KZN	N Cape	W Cape	E Cape	Free State
2019									
Jan									
Feb	1	1							
Mar	1		1						
Apr		1				1			
May		2				4			
June		1							
July		1				1	1		
Aug		1							
Sept	1	1	1						
Oct	2	5	1						
Nov	1	1		1					
Dec			1	1			3		
TOTAL	6	14	4	2	0	6	4	0	0

The trade in 2019 was down from 45 pangolins in 2018 to 36 in 2019

