



Smutsia temminckii

Common name: **Temminck's Ground Pangolin**Latin name: **Smutsia temminckii**

Local name: أم قرقة



ECOLOGY

Type:

Wild

Role in Ecosystem:

Temminck's pangolin is prey to animals like the African lion, leopard, spotted hyaena and ratel (honey badger). There is a record of a Nile crocodile preying on a Temminck's pangolin.

HABITAT

Temminck's pangolin inhabits mainly savannas, floodplains, woodlands, and grasslands in areas with sufficient population of the various ant and termite, which it feeds on, as well as burrows for shelter. It is also found in well-managed livestock farms. It mainly lives on the ground but can also climb trees.



Food

Carnivore

Temminck's pangolin feeds on ants and termites. It uses its sense of smell to find its prey, then use its sharp claws to tear into termite mounds and ant nests on the ground or in dead trees, inserting its long tongue to catch the insects.



Movement and Communication

Communication:

Both males and females scent-mark by regularly depositing small volumes of urine as they walk and may defecate and drag the tail through the faeces in order to spread it further. The species also defecates at burrow entrances and in burrows. Individuals communicate by vibrating their bodies when curled up, which is audible to the human ear. Males may hiss when approaching females.

Movement:

Temminck's pangolin walks and bears the weight on its hind legs, with the forelimbs tucked up towards the chest, and the tail held off the ground to balance, unlike other pangolin species. They are capable of climbing over fallen logs and other debris with ease, and can swim.



Social Habits

Solitary

Temminck's pangolin is normally solitary, with males and females coming together briefly to mate. After conceiving, the female pangolin will stay with her offspring for a period. It spends most of the time resting in a burrow or similar place of shelter and is typically active for only a small proportion of the day or night. When threatened, pangolins roll into a ball and are protected by their hard scales from predators.



Reproduction

Viviparous

Temminck's pangolin breeds throughout the year. Gestation period is 105-140 days. Females give birth once a year to a single young or twins though rarely. The females give birth in a burrow. The young are weaned at four months of age and then transition over to a diet of ants and termites. The mother carries its young on its back when travelling, and the young stay with their mothers until about six months old.

Females reach sexual maturity at around 2 years old, but reproduction does not start until 3 or 4 years of age. Males also likely reach sexual maturity at 2 years old, but start breeding at 6 or 7 years of age.



Attributes



Appearance:

Temminck's pangolin is a medium-sized, stout species with a tail that is slightly shorter than the total head-body length.

The body is covered in large, overlapping scales comprised of keratin, which cover the back and sides, the limbs, tail, and the forehead. Scales are absent from the head, the abdomen, and the inside of the limbs, which are covered in soft skin and sparse hairs. The color of the scales ranges from gray to dark brown and yellow-brown.

Pangolins have no teeth, but have a very long tongue that may be as long as 40-60 cm.

The forelimbs are short and end with long, sharp claws.

Size:

Up to 140 cm in length.

Weight:

9-10 kg.

Lifespan:

Unknown in the wild, up to 20 years in captivity.

INTRODUCTION

Temminck's pangolin is ground-dwelling, ant-eating mammal that inhabits dry and wet savannas, woodlands, and grasslands. It is the most widespread African pangolin species.

It is characterized by its keratinous scales that cover its whole body and protect it from predators.

It is listed as vulnerable due to hunting.

In Sudan, its scales are thought to have superstitious and spiritual value and are extensively used for medicinal purposes.

LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

Human interaction

Temminck's pangolin is hunted in Sudan and South Sudan, eaten as bushmeat, although its consumption is limited. They are mainly hunted for its body parts and scales which have superstitious and spiritual value and which are used for medicinal purposes.

Pangolin scales are used to treat illness like rheumatism, and as charms to ward off evil spirits from newborns. The scales are fashioned into accessories, worn as good luck charms jewellery particularly rings in order to bring luck.

Cultural value

Pangolins are almost thought of as mythical due to their rarity.

Its scales are believed to bring good luck and rain, while smoke from burning scales is said to improve the health of cattle and cure persistent nose-bleeds. There is also a belief that pangolins are omens of drought, and that killing the animal will deter its onset. They are also caught as presents for a superior or local chiefs.

Cultural expression

جرر أب أضلاف

(Lit. A pangolin's burrow)

A metaphor for a messy living space, like a pangolin's burrow.

THREATS

Temminck's Pangolin is listed as vulnerable.

It is threatened by habitat loss due to agricultural expansion and hunting.

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