



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

SEP 08 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967, 22 U.S.C. § 1978(a)(2), (Pelly Amendment) provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall make a certification to the President if the Secretary determines that nationals of a foreign country, directly or indirectly, are engaged in trade or taking that diminishes the effectiveness of any international program for the conservation of endangered or threatened species. Pursuant to the Pelly Amendment, 22 U.S.C. § 1978(a)(3)(4), the Secretary of the Interior must report to Congress, within 15 days, each certification made to the President under this authority.

On August 24, 2023, I certified to the President that nationals of the People's Republic of China (PRC) are engaging in trade and taking of pangolins that diminishes the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a treaty for the conservation of endangered or threatened species. Regarded as the most heavily trafficked mammal in the world, pangolins are unique animals in Asia and Africa that are in high demand in the illegal wildlife trade. All eight pangolin species are at risk of extinction, with trafficking as a primary threat to their survival.

Pangolins are included under CITES Appendix I; thus, pangolin specimens are prohibited from international trade for primarily commercial purposes. The Department of the Interior, in consultation with the Department of State, has determined through a thorough investigation of the evidence that, despite these protections, the government of the PRC has failed to stop pangolin trafficking, with the volume of scales destined for the PRC rising in recent years. The PRC remains the largest destination country for illegal pangolin specimens worldwide and maintains a commercial domestic market for pangolin specimens that fuels demand for illegal scales.

Ongoing illegal trade in pangolins is not only contrary to CITES provisions, it is also a major factor contributing to the near extinction of several pangolin species. Accordingly, the CITES Conference of the Parties urged the closing of domestic markets that contribute to poaching or illegal trade (CITES Resolution Conf. 17.10 [Rev. CoP19]). Closing domestic trade in the PRC, the largest consumer, is critical to pangolin survival. Consistent with the Pelly Amendment, within 60 days of the certification, the President shall notify Congress of any action taken pursuant to the certification to help encourage conservation actions to prevent the extinction of pangolins. The administration will provide an update to Congress within this 60-day timeframe.

Sincerely,

Deb Haaland