

# Nature Vocabulary Worksheet

## - PRECIOUS PANGOLINS -

A) Before you start reading, match these words with their definitions.

<b>1. quirky</b>	a) to search for food
<b>2. scales</b>	b) a group of babies born at the same time to the same mother
<b>3. snout</b>	c) to tear something
<b>4. to seal</b>	d) a little strange
<b>5. brood</b>	e) to close tightly
<b>6. to rip</b>	f) to hunt illegally
<b>7. to forage</b>	g) the long protruding nose of animals such as pigs, bears and most dogs
<b>8. to poach</b>	h) small thin plates covering fish and reptiles' bodies

## FUN FACTS about PANGOLINS

B) Fill the gaps with these words:

bark, bears, claws, deter, forest, horns, insatiable, native, offspring, phenomenally, role, swallow

Pangolins are shy and quirky-looking creatures. They are unique in that they are the only mammals with scales.

These scales are made of keratin, the same substance found in hair, fingernails, and a) \_\_\_\_\_. Thanks to their appearance, behaviour, and diet, pangolins are sometimes known as scaly anteaters.

Yet, despite their appearance, pangolins are actually more closely related to carnivores such as dogs and b) \_\_\_\_\_. It's strange when you consider that pangolins don't have teeth!

There are eight different kinds of pangolin, including the black-bellied pangolin and the Sunda pangolin. Four species are c) \_\_\_\_\_ to Asia and four to Africa.

Depending on their species, they are found in a wide variety of habitats from tropical d) \_\_\_\_\_ to savannah or desert. Most live on the ground but some are tree-dwelling.

These solitary, and generally nocturnal creatures have a long slender snout and a e) \_\_\_\_\_ long tongue. Fully stretched, it's about forty centimetres long! The tongue is narrow and sticky, perfect for slurping up insects from tunnels and hard-to-reach places.

Their strong f) \_\_\_\_\_ allow them to rip into ant and termite mounds or to tear g) \_\_\_\_\_ off trees.

Since they don't have teeth, pangolins h) \_\_\_\_\_ insects whole. They ingest stones and they also have spines inside their stomach which help to break down their food.

Pangolins play a vital ecological i) \_\_\_\_\_ in that they help to keep down ant and termite populations. This is why they are known as guardians of the forest. It is estimated that, thanks to their j) \_\_\_\_\_ appetite, pangolins can polish off seven million insects a year!

To protect them while they are foraging, pangolins have strong muscles which help to seal shut their nostrils and ears so that the ants and termites can't bite them.

When threatened pangolins behave like armadillos and hedgehogs – they roll up into a tight ball. Their hard scales act like a suit of armour, protecting their head and soft belly. This is in fact how pangolins got their name – 'pengguling' in Malay means 'something that rolls up'.

This defensive ball can k) \_\_\_\_\_ predators as formidable as lions, but unfortunately, it's this very posture that makes them so easily caught by humans who can just pick them up.

Pangolins don't have big broods. African pangolins usually give birth to just one pup, whilst Asian pangolins only have one to three l) \_\_\_\_\_. When they are born the pangopups have soft scales which soon harden. The mothers will curl around their young to protect them while they are sleeping or if they sense danger.

### **Not so Fun Facts about Pangolins**

Tragically, these gentle and fascinating creatures face immense threats to their survival such as poaching and habitat loss.

They are regarded as the most trafficked mammal in the world, due to a high demand for their meat and scales.

In some areas of Asia, pangolin meat is regarded as a delicacy and pangolin scales are used in traditional medicine, despite the fact that, as with rhino horn, there is no scientific evidence of health benefits.

All eight species are listed as threatened with extinction, two are critically endangered.

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Answers

Exercise A	Exercise B
1 d)	a) horns
2 h)	b) bears
3 g)	c) native
4 e)	d) forest
5 b)	e) phenomenally
6 c)	f) claws
7 a)	g) bark
8 f)	h) swallow
	i) role
	j) insatiable
	k) deter
	l) offspring

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