



REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 57945

Title: Conservation status of endangered wildlife: the case of the pangolin in a community forest and two classified forests in the Tonkpi region, Western Côte d'Ivoire.

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity			✓	
Significance			✓	

Reviewer Name: **ANAPANA GOPAL**

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

General Comments

This manuscript addresses an important conservation issue by investigating the distribution, habitat preference, and threats affecting pangolins in western Côte d'Ivoire. Considering the global conservation concern surrounding pangolins, the study has potential significance for wildlife management and biodiversity conservation. The combination of ethnozoological surveys and field reconnaissance provides useful baseline information. However, the manuscript requires substantial revision regarding methodology, data analysis, scientific interpretation, language quality, figure presentation, and discussion depth before it can be considered for publication.

Content and Originality

Strengths

- The study focuses on pangolins, one of the world's most threatened mammalian groups.
- Data from Côte d'Ivoire are relatively scarce, making the study regionally valuable.
- The manuscript identifies habitat preferences and major anthropogenic threats affecting pangolin conservation.

Concerns

1. The novelty of the study is not clearly highlighted. Similar studies on pangolin distribution and threats have been conducted in several African countries.
2. The authors should explicitly state how this study advances current knowledge beyond existing surveys.
3. The title refers to "Conservation Status," but the study primarily assesses occurrence, habitat use, and threats rather than actual conservation status metrics such as population size, density, occupancy, or extinction risk.

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4. The ecological significance of comparing community forests and classified forests is not sufficiently developed.

Technical Quality

Minor Revision Required

1. Sampling effort is inadequately described:
 - Number of survey nights.
 - Total survey distance covered.
 - Number of respondents interviewed.
 - Survey duration per forest.
2. The methodology lacks sufficient detail regarding:
 - Selection criteria for interview participants.
 - Validation of species identification during interviews.
 - Detection probability and survey limitations.
3. Statistical analyses are weak:
 - Correspondence analysis is mentioned, but methodological details and outputs are not adequately presented.
 - No statistical tests are reported to compare pangolin occurrence among habitats or forests.
 - No confidence intervals, significance values, or measures of uncertainty are provided.
4. Presence indicators are used as proxies for abundance without discussing limitations.
5. Several conclusions are speculative. For example:
 - The suggestion that pangolins occur more frequently near the Cavally River because water is essential for survival is not directly tested.
 - Statements regarding hunting avoidance and habitat selection require stronger evidence.
6. Threat assessment is based on frequency observations only and lacks quantitative evaluation of impact severity.
7. The manuscript would benefit from occupancy analysis, encounter rate calculations, or habitat preference indices.

Language and Presentation

Minor Revision Required

The manuscript contains numerous grammatical and stylistic issues throughout.

Examples include:

- Missing spaces between words.
- Inconsistent capitalization.
- Incorrect article usage.
- Awkward sentence constructions.
- Repetitive wording.

Examples:

- "currentlyexperiencing" should be "currently experiencing."
- "mightstillharbor" should be "might still harbor."
- "largelyattributable" should be "largely attributable."

Additional issues:

- Scientific names should be italicized consistently throughout the manuscript.

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- Figure captions require formatting improvements.
- Several sentences appear translated directly and require professional English editing.

Comprehensive language revision is strongly recommended.

Structure and Organization

Strengths

- The manuscript follows a conventional scientific structure.
- Objectives are generally stated in the Introduction.

Concerns

1. The Results section is overly descriptive and repetitive.
2. Large portions of the Results simply describe map observations without synthesis.
3. The Discussion is relatively short and does not critically compare findings with previous studies.
4. The Discussion largely repeats results rather than interpreting their ecological implications.
5. The Conclusion mainly summarizes results and provides few practical conservation recommendations.
6. The manuscript lacks a dedicated section discussing study limitations.

References and Citations

Minor to Moderate Revision Required

Strengths

- Most references are relevant to pangolin conservation, wildlife trade, and habitat ecology.
- Recent literature has been included.

Concerns

1. Citation style is inconsistent throughout the manuscript.
2. Several references require formatting corrections.
3. Some journal names and citation details are incomplete.
4. More recent IUCN assessments and conservation planning literature should be included.
5. Reference formatting should be standardized according to the journal guidelines.

Overall Recommendation

The manuscript addresses a relevant conservation topic and provides useful preliminary information on pangolin occurrence and threats in western Côte d'Ivoire. However, the current version suffers from methodological limitations, insufficient statistical analysis, weak interpretation of results, and extensive language issues. Significant revision is necessary to improve scientific rigor and presentation quality.

Final Decision:

Minor Revision