

Name: _____

The Scaliest Mammal in the World

By Guy Belleranti

In Africa and Asia lives the scaliest mammal in the world. It looks like a mix between a space alien, a pinecone with legs, and a skinny-nosed, long-tailed artichoke. This mammal is the pangolin.



A pangolin's scales overlap and cover most of its body. The scales are made of keratin. This is the same material as your fingernails. The scales have sharp edges and act like a suit of armor. When threatened, the pangolin curls into a ball, protecting its face and soft, non-scaled belly. If necessary, the pangolin swings its scaly tail or sprays a smelly, skunk-like liquid.



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Pangolins have a great sense of smell. They can sniff out insects both on the ground and in the fruit and flowers of trees. They have no teeth. Instead, they use long sticky tongues to lick up the insects.

Because of their armor and their diet, people often call pangolins "scaly anteaters". However, pangolins aren't related to anteaters. They're in their own unique family.

Pangolin mothers usually give birth to one baby. The newborn's scales are soft, but begin hardening within days.

Like many animals, pangolins are losing their habitat to farms, roads, and other human activities. In addition, some people break the law and hunt them for their scales and meat. As a result, pangolins are one of the world's most endangered groups of animals.

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1. Based on the information you read in the article, which statement about pangolins and anteaters is *not* true?
 - a. Both pangolins and anteaters are mammals.
 - b. Both pangolins and anteaters are warm-blooded.
 - c. Both pangolins and anteaters eat insects.
 - d. Both pangolins and anteaters are related species.

2. What do the eight species of pangolins have in common?
 - a. They are all found on the continent of Asia.



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4. How do pangolins find food to eat?

5. Based on what you read, which of the following is the biggest threat to pangolins?
 - a. larger, more powerful animals
 - b. harmful human activities
 - c. competition with other pangolins
 - d. natural disasters and extreme weather patterns

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

_____ 1. artichoke

a. at risk of becoming extinct

_____ 2. armor

b. the natural environment where an animal lives

_____ 3. terrestrial

c. a vegetable covered in scale-like bracts



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_____ 7. prehensile

g. holes or cavities inside something

_____ 8. termites

h. distinct, different from anything else

_____ 9. endangered

i. referring to an animal's tail, the ability to grasp or grip things

_____ 10. hollows

j. having to do with the earth

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In the article, "The Scaliest Mammal in the World," you learned that many people think pangolins are related to anteaters, even though they aren't.

Based on the information you learned in the article, write about **three similarities between pangolins and anteaters** that might make people think this way. (If you choose to use the Internet with an adult's permission, write the name of the website address where you learned more information at the bottom of this page.)



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Website I used: _____

ANSWER KEY

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