exchange, and nutrient input from land, may provide favourable conditions for bloom persistence.

Given the ecological and socio-economic impacts of *P. noctiluca*, particularly for tourism and fisheries, we urge monitoring and documentation of this potential bloom. Local marine users, including fishers, divers and recreational boaters, are encouraged to report sightings, which may aid in understanding the scale and progression of the phenomenon. The use of citizen science tools such as the iNaturalist platform and social media may provide effective early-warning signals for such events.

Long-term monitoring of jellyfish blooms in the Aegean Sea, integrated with temperature, salinity and planktonic data, will be vital to determine if *P. noctiluca* blooms are becoming more frequent or shifting in phenology as a result of climate change or other anthropogenic pressures. The recent observation from the Pagasetic Gulf serves as a reminder of the dynamic nature of Mediterranean marine ecosystems and the need for coordinated responses to emergent ecological patterns.

The videos are available at doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28961093.v2.

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Large-scale seizure offers glimpse into the hidden hornbill trade in West Africa

On 12 March 2025, 128 hornbill heads were seized by the Customs Service in Cross River State, Nigeria, underscoring growing concerns about trade as an underestimated threat to Africa's hornbills. The confiscation involved black-casqued hornbills *Ceratogymna atrata* and white-thighed hornbills *Bycanistes albotibialis*, both currently categorized as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List, and may be indicative of a large illegal trade in these species. The black-casqued hornbill is under consideration for categorization as Near Threatened, primarily because of increased exploitation for trade. However, reliable population estimates and data on population trends are lacking, and conservationists fear the situation could be worse than currently assumed.

It was previously believed that hornbill trade in Africa was mainly driven by local demand, but recent large-scale seizures bound for Europe and the USA indicate increasing and broad international consumer interest. There is also growing evidence that most African hornbill heads in Cameroon are bought by Chinese traders. Whether these products are destined for the Chinese market or resold elsewhere remains unclear. A brief search on a large trading website in China did not yield evidence of hornbill parts being traded there but more research is needed to better understand global trade chains.

Hornbill parts, especially heads, are sold as curiosities, decorations and for use in fetish practices. Many Western buyers are unaware of, or misled about, the illegal harvest of these products from the wild. Although some traders claim their specimens died in captivity or private collections, recorded trade volumes far exceed what these captive sources or local wild populations could viably supply, indicating unsustainable harvesting from the wild.

The Hornbills in Trade Database (hitdb.org), established in November 2023, highlights West Africa as a trade hot spot, with three overlapping African species heavily represented, although actual trade volumes are presumed to exceed these conservatively recorded numbers collected over 6 months. The black-casqued hornbill is the species most represented in the database, with 311 recorded individuals, followed by the white-thighed hornbill with 228 and the Vulnerable yellow-casqued hornbill *Ceratogymna elata* with 41.

The trade of none of these species is regulated by CITES. We strongly recommend listing these species in CITES Appendix II, to facilitate the monitoring and regulation of trade. To protect these remarkable birds from further decline, more targeted research and enforcement are needed to unravel global trade routes and understand population trends.

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Trend or coincidence? The removal of pangolin tongues threatens rehabilitation efforts

Pangolins have distinctive adaptations for their diet of ants and termites, including a specialized tongue that can extend to over half of their body length and on which they are entirely reliant for feeding. Overharvesting is a driver of decline in all pangolin species, and the trade in pangolins is regulated in many range states to prevent this. Enforcing regulations and trade bans often results in the

seizure of live pangolins. In some instances, these pangolins are then transported to rehabilitation centres before release. During trade, there is generally limited consideration of pangolin welfare, and recovered pangolins often present with a variety of health issues caused by trade conditions, such as emaciation, snare wounds, infection and fractures.

Since 2019, the Tikki Hywood Foundation has been receiving pangolins confiscated from bushmeat markets throughout Cameroon during missions organized by Cameroonian authorities. During 2024–2025, four live white-bellied pangolins *Phataginus tricuspis* with their tongues partially or completely removed were received by the Foundation.

The pangolins were retrieved from markets or directly confiscated by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in various towns and regions (Manjo, Abong Mbang, Nyong and Yaoundé). The most recent case was on 16 May 2025. Three pangolins (two pregnant females and one immature male) were retrieved with the full free section of their tongues removed. One subadult male was retrieved with the end of his tongue removed. It is unlikely such tongue injuries were caused by snares as there were no signs of wounds around the pangolin's necks. Regardless of the extent of tongue loss, all four pangolins were unable to feed, and following confirmation of tongue damage, were euthanized on ethical and medical grounds.

The inability of pangolins to feed following even partial removal of the tongue is a concern for conservation rehabilitation. Pangolins are considered difficult to kill, and therefore tongues may be cut as this is believed to quickly kill the animal (our observations). More research into any potential increase in tongue cutting is needed, including a review of the treatment of pangolins while in the bushmeat trade, and survey of the motivations of collectors and handlers in selection of animal housing, treatment and slaughter method.

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Transboundary elephant poaching along the Bangladesh–Myanmar border

Bangladesh has an estimated 268 resident and 93 migratory Asian elephants *Elephas maximus*. The species faces severe threats in Bangladesh from human–elephant conflict, with at least 124 elephants reportedly killed in the last 10 years. The regions of Chittagong-Cox's Bazar and Sherpur are the most conflict-prone, where human settlements have encroached upon elephant corridors, and the Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar has exacerbated human–elephant conflict.

The Sangu-Matamuhuri and Kassalong Reserve Forests, with relatively intact habitats and low human pressure, offer long-term conservation potential for elephants in Bangladesh. During multiple field surveys in the Sangu-Matamuhuri Reserve Forest during 2016–2025, camera-trap data confirmed the presence of elephants, but local communities reported frequent cross-border poaching incidents. However, because of the remoteness of the area, these reports remained anecdotal. Here we present evidence of elephant poaching in the Sangu-Matamuhuri Reserve Forest, bordering Rakhine

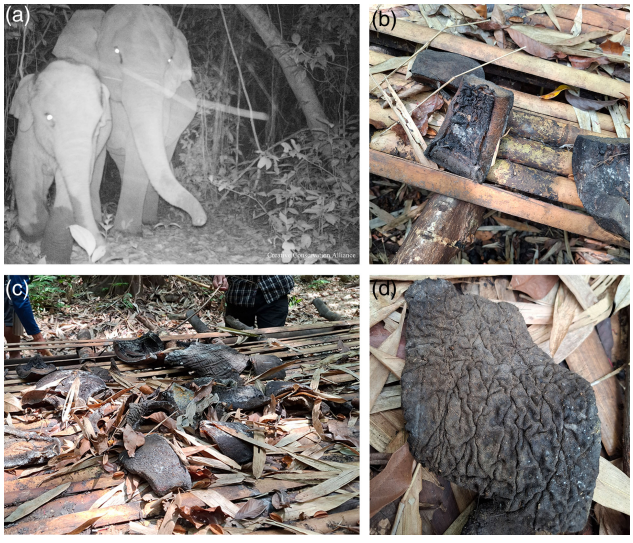

Plate 1 (a) Elephants recorded by a camera trap in the Sangu-Matamuhuri Reserve Forest, Bangladesh, near the border with Myanmar, and (b-d) elephant skin found at a poaching site in the Reserve Forest. Photos: S. Chakma.