

THE PANGOLIN PROJECT

Lead Researcher

Background

The Pangolin Project was founded in August 2019. We are a not-for-profit initiative dedicated to protecting pangolin species and their habitat within Kenya. We strive to be an internationally recognised leader in the monitoring and protection of pangolin species in east Africa and work with the national government of Kenya to develop a National Protection and Recovery Strategy for Pangolin Species. Our activities operate under 4 key pillars: applied conservation research, sustainable protection, community empowerment, and advocacy.

Since August 2019 we have been working in Narok County, Kenya to carry out applied conservation research and to utilise this information to build sustainable protection for pangolin species. We work in partnership with local organisations including NGOs, conservancies, county government, tourism partners and the Kenya Wildlife Service believing that collaboration is the best and most efficient way to achieve conservation success.

Mara Pangolin Research Initiative

The Mara Pangolin Research Initiative is our foundation applied research programme. The initiative aims to assess the population and resource use of Temminck's ground pangolin in the greater mara ecosystem and to better understand the impact of human activity on the species. The specific objectives are:

1. Assess the distribution of pangolin and identify key habitats of pangolin in the greater Mara ecosystem;
2. Estimate the population of pangolin within a specific area of savannah environment;
3. Measure utilisation rate of burrows by pangolin and other species;
4. Estimate the home range of adult Temminck's ground pangolin within savannah environments.

A four person research team based in the Maasai Mara National Reserve are present and carrying out ongoing research activities to meet these objectives. Our research methods include: participatory research assessments, occupancy assessments of burrows, camera-trap surveys, and use of telemetric tracking devices.

Purpose of role:

We are now seeking a lead researcher to continue leading the existing activities and to expand the scope of our applied research. The appointee will pioneer pangolin conservation research in Kenya and will specifically work to further understand the ecology of ground pangolin including habitat selection and use and the impact of human activity on these

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factors. The appointee will: Lead the indepth research initiative in a small area of geographical focus; design and lead a number of ad hoc assessments in different areas of the south rift landscape; coordinate research and monitoring activities across our portfolio of programmes.

The candidate will be responsible for the following activities:

- Provide technical support to the research component of programmes;
- Design and conduct social science assessments within communities;
- Establish relevant and priority research objectives;
- Design data collection tools and methodologies to meet the aims and objectives;
- Manage and lead the data collection process including management of a small research team;
- Work with local partners including Kenya Wildlife Service, tourism partners and conservancy management teams;
- Analyse data;
- Communicate findings with The Pangolin Project team and wider conservation and scientific community;
- Write grant applications and seek additional funding.

The appointee will be directly answerable to the director and founder of The Pangolin Project. They will be required to work closely with our operation and programme team, and remotely with project partners.

Expertise required

We are seeking a vibrant and dynamic individual to join our team and lead our essential research. This is a unique opportunity for a dedicated and passionate researcher to lead ground-breaking research with scope for significant conservation impact.

Essential requirements include:

- Minimum of a master's degree in wildlife conservation, biological sciences, or a related field;
- A passion for conservation of wildlife with at least 3 years of experience working in conservation, or related sectors;
- At least 5 years experience in applied field research including use of standardised data collection tools;
- Highly technically competent and up-to-date on current technology in the investigation of small and medium sized mammals (e.g. using camera-traps);
- Experience designing novel methodologies and data collection tools;
- Outstanding qualitative and quantitative analytical skills (ideally using R); experience using both quantitative and qualitative data to support recommendations;
- Experience working in remote areas independently and an ability/willingness to work at night in remote areas;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English;

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- Excellent communication skills and the ability to lead and engage a team of dedicated individuals working in remote areas; ability to explain complex concepts to employees at all levels of the organization;
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and complete cases or projects in a timely manner;
- Able to work extended hours and to organise own time;
- Experience working in a cross-cultural environment;
- Proven ability to stand apart and to evaluate evidence and make recommendations from a fact-based perspective;
- The ability to live and work in Kenya.

Desirable requirements include:

- A drivers licence and 4x4 experience;
- Experience of writing for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals;
- Experience of writing for lay audiences;
- Experience in social science methods (e.g. specialised questioning techniques);
- Experience in conducting interviews, in person, by video, and by phone;
- Knowledge of pangolins;
- Experience of writing and successfully obtaining grants.

Term and salary

This will be a fixed term contract for a twelve month period. The main locations will be in Nairobi and the Maasai Mara with essential travel across the southern landscapes. This is a research position in a young organisation with an ambitious plan to impact pangolin conservation in east Africa. Remuneration will be based on experience and include a moderate monthly salary with all local travel expenses covered.

How to Apply

Applicants should send a CV and a covering letter detailing why they would be suitable for this role to info@thepangolinproject.org by the 29th May 2020. Short listed candidates will be contacted by the 5th June 2020.