

Pangolin lands man in jail

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KOTA KINABALU: A 43-year-old man was sentenced to two years' jail and fined RM50,000 or 10 months in jail by the Sessions Court here for having a live pangolin a protected animal, without permit. Victor Lemberius was found guilty by Judge Amir Shah Amir Hassan on the charge. Victor, who was on court bail, was ordered to serve the jail sentence from Thursday. He was convicted of having the Malayan pangolin (*Manis Javanica*) without authorisation under the Law Enforcement of the Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997, on Nov 16, 2020 at the KM35.5 Jalan Kimanis-Keningau, Papar. The charge stated that pangolin was a fully protected animal listed under Schedule 1, Part 1, of Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997. The offence under Section 41(2) of the Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997 and punishable under Section 41(4) of the same Enactment, carries a fine of between RM50,000 and RM250,000 or jail term of between one year and five years, or both, on conviction.

On Sept 8, this year Victor was ordered to enter his defence and had called six witnesses in his defence. Unrepresented, Victor requested a lenient sentence by saying he has school-going children and has given full cooperation during the investigation. Prosecuting Officer Abdul Karim Hj Dakog of the Wildlife Department applied for a deterrent sentence as a lesson to Victor and to would-be offenders not to commit similar offences. Karim submitted that pangolin is a termite-eating species that eats wood which if not curbed can knock down a large tree or even bring down a tall building which will disturb the balance of the environment. Therefore, pangolin is a species in the food chain to control the presence of termites from continuing to reproduce and for a balanced forest ecosystem, he said, among others.