

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# UNUSUAL MAMMALS

In “Plight of the Pangolin” (p. 14), you learned that the high price for pangolins’ scales is one reason the animals are under threat. The diagram below describes some of the other features of these unusual mammals. Use the diagram, along with the article, to answer the questions below.

## WHAT MAKES PANGOLINS UNIQUE

Pangolins are the only mammals completely covered with scales, but that’s not their only special adaptation.

### NOSE

Pangolins have an excellent sense of smell that allows them to sniff out insects. Their long snout helps them to forage into ant and termite nests.

### ARMOR

Scales cover the bodies of pangolins, protecting them from predators.

### TAIL

Pangolins that live on the ground walk on their hind legs and use their tail for balance. Those that live in trees have a *prehensile* tail that can grip branches.

### CLAWS

Long, curved claws help ground-dwelling pangolins dig and tree-dwelling species climb trees.

### TONGUE

A long, sticky tongue—the longest of any mammal—allows pangolins to slurp up ants and termites.



## QUESTIONS

- How are pangolins different from most mammals?
- Describe two adaptations that help pangolins find and catch insect prey.
- Some pangolins live in trees and some live on the ground. Choose a feature shown in the diagram. How does its function vary between the two types of pangolins?
- In what type of habitat would you expect to find animals that have prehensile tails? Explain your thinking.
- Explain how pangolins defend themselves when threatened. How does this put the animals at risk from poachers?

**TAKE IT FURTHER:** Platypuses are another unusual mammal. Research the different adaptations and body structures that platypuses have. Create a platypus diagram like the pangolin one above. Then research and describe threats to their survival.