



HERPETOFAUNA OBSERVATIONS FOR CONSERVATION: INSIGHTS FROM JHUMPA LAHIRI AND CELESTE NG.

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Abstract

For the purpose of conservation efforts, this article emphasises the significance of herpetofauna observation and communication. The study starts by tracing the development of herpetofauna observation, defining that term, and introducing two novels, *The Lowland*, by Jhumpa Lahiri and *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng, and how they depict herpetofauna observation. The paper gives background information on Subhash and Mia and describes how their research and observations are depicted in the novels. It examines the effects of their findings on conservation planning and management and notes the parallels and discrepancies between the two portrayals. The article's conclusion emphasises the necessity of interpersonal relationships and communication in motivating people to preserve the environment, as well as the significance of observing and monitoring herpetofauna populations for conservation efforts.

Keywords: Amphibians, Reptiles, Ecology, Biodiversity, Wildlife management, Conservation, etc.,

Introduction

The intriguing and diverse group of animals known as the herpetofauna, or reptile and amphibian fauna, has played significant roles throughout human history and is still essential to the health of ecosystems. Herpetofauna have fascinated and enthralled humans for millennia due to their scaly skin, capacity to swim, crawl, or jump, and distinctive behavioural patterns. Its origins are in the Greek words "herpein," which means "to creep or crawl," and "fauna," which means "animals." Snakes, lizards, turtles, and crocodilians are all included in the group of creatures known as reptiles. They deposit their eggs on land, have scales, and have cold blood. On the other hand, amphibians are reptiles like frogs, toads, salamanders, and newts. They have smooth, moist skin and are cold-blooded. Most amphibians deposit their eggs in water, unlike reptiles. As predators and prey, as well as being involved in nutrient cycling and habitat modification, herpetofauna play significant roles in the ecosystem. They serve as crucial ecosystem health indicators as their presence or absence might reveal the condition of the ecosystem. Many



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herpetofauna species are endangered or threatened as a result of habitat loss, pollution, and other problems. Thus, it is essential to research and conserve herpetofauna in order to keep the ecosystem in balance.

Ancient civilisation like those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome understood the significance of herpetofauna. Some species were kept as pets or as emblems of power, and they were also employed in religious rituals, sorcery, and medical treatments. The renowned Greek philosopher Aristotle in his *Historia Animalium*, wrote in great detail about the anatomy and behaviour of reptiles and amphibians. The observation of herpetofauna remained a crucial activity across time. Naturalists like Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace researched herpetofauna throughout their journeys in the 19th century and made significant contributions to biology. To better understand ecosystem health and support conservation efforts, scientists and conservationists still observe and research herpetofauna today.

The title "Herpetofauna Observations for Conservation: Insights from Jhumpa Lahiri and Celeste Ng" highlights the significance of monitoring amphibians and reptiles in the wild and how these observations can offer insightful information for management of conservation efforts. The research specifically examines how the protagonists in the novels view and record their observations of herpetofauna in *The Lowland*, by Jhumpa Lahiri and *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng. Subhash, a character in *The Lowland*, is fascinated by amphibians and keeps a journal of his observations. The character Mia in *Little Fires Everywhere* urges her daughter Pearl to examine and document her observations of herpetofauna. The paper aims to offer insights into the significance of observing herpetofauna and amphibians by examining these characters' observations and findings. The paper aims to offer insights into the significance of observing herpetofauna and conveying life history observations for conservation management by analysing these characters' observations and findings.

Observing Herpetofauna in *The Lowland*

The protagonist in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland*, is Subhash. He is shown as a thoughtful, contemplative person who has a keen interest in nature and the environment. He is the youngest of two brothers. Subhash's mother introduced him to the local flora and animals while he was a child in Calcutta, which inspired his interest in the natural world. Subhash as a young boy grows his interest particularly in amphibians and on their behaviour. He spends hours monitoring and learning about these animals because of their fascinating traits and crucial function in the ecology. Subhash's passion for amphibians emerges as a character trait that distinguishes him from his peers and directs his future profession. Subhash's decision to pursue a career in science only serves to highlight his love for the environment and his commitment to protect it. He relocates to the US to pursue his studies in ecology and conservation biology with the goal of becoming an environmental science professor. Subhash's fascination with amphibians is used throughout the novel as a metaphor for his close relationship with nature and his dedication to protecting it for future generations.

"He couldn't shake the sense that there was something different, something inherently alert, about amphibians."(The Lowland,24).

The perspective of the character Subhash, who is studying amphibians as part of his academic research. The quote highlights the significance of Subhash's observation skills and suggests that his interest in herpetology is more than just academic. Subhash's fascination with amphibians becomes a symbol of his desire to understand the world around him and his own place in it.

In *The Lowland*, Jhumpa Lahiri gives a thorough and descriptive account of Subhash's observations and research on amphibians. Lahiri's prose beautifully captures the serenity and tranquillity of the natural world, whereas Subhash's observations are frequently presented as a type of meditation or introspection. *The Lowland* highlight the novel's emphasis on the natural world and the significance of observing and appreciating it. The lowland setting and its associated sensory experiences create a vivid backdrop for the characters' lives, and their interactions with the natural world reveal insights into their personalities and motivations. The quotes also demonstrate Lahiri's skill in using language to evoke a sense of place and to create a connection between the reader and the natural world.

"The lowland was a marshy grassland, at the end of which the sea surged and hissed, its blue a permanent spectacle beyond the horizon." (The Lowland, 14)

It describes the setting of the novel's title, the lowland, which is an area in East Calcutta characterized by its flat, marshy landscape. The quote highlights the natural beauty of the lowland, with its grassy plains and views of the sea in the distance. The lowland becomes a symbol of both beauty and danger, as it is the site of a political uprising that has tragic consequences for the characters.

"The air had the smell of the sea, the humidity of the wetlands. The sound of crickets filled the night." (The lowland, 34)

It illustrates the sensory experience of being in the lowland, with its distinctive smell and sounds. The image of the crickets filling the night emphasizes the natural world's presence in the setting and creates a sense of harmony between the characters and their environment. It is also significant that the lowland is associated with the sea, as the sea often symbolizes change and transformation in literature.

Lahiri tells how Subhash spends hours observing and researching the mating habits of a specific species of frog in one scene. He would spend hours by the pond watching the male frogs croak and enlarge their throats in an effort to catch the girls' attention. He recorded the length and frequency of the sounds, the quantity of eggs laid, and the size of the tadpoles in his notes. Lahiri's descriptions of Subhash's observations are frequently in-depth and vivid, emphasising the complicated interactions between various species and the inner workings of the natural world. She emphasises the value of biodiversity and the interdependence of all living things using Subhash's findings. Additionally, Subhash's research on amphibians is presented as a type of knowledge that is both valuable and deeply individualised. In contrast to dispassionate scientific research, Lahiri emphasises how Subhash's observations and results are based on his own experiences and feelings. Through Subhash's persona, Lahiri emphasises the value of a multidisciplinary approach to science.

as well as the contribution that intuition and first-hand experience may make to new scientific understanding.

Subhash's observations on amphibians have significant implications for conservation management, particularly in the context of preserving biodiversity and protecting threatened species. One of the key themes that emerges from Subhash's observations is the importance of understanding the ecological relationships between different species. By studying the behavior and habitat requirements of amphibians, Subhash is able to gain a deeper understanding of how they fit into the broader ecosystem. This knowledge can be applied to conservation efforts, such as identifying key habitats for threatened species and developing strategies to protect them. Furthermore, Subhash's observations highlight the vulnerability of amphibians to environmental degradation and the impact of human activities on their populations. Amphibians are highly sensitive to changes in habitat, water quality, and climate, and their decrease may be an early indicator of larger ecological issues. The study by Subhash emphasises the necessity of preventative efforts, including as habitat restoration, water quality monitoring, and climate change mitigation, to safeguard amphibian populations and their ecosystems. Furthermore, Subhash's persona serves to emphasise the significance of individuals in conservation efforts. Individuals like Subhash can make significant contributions through their study and activism, even while government organisations and conservation groups play a crucial part in managing and safeguarding species. Subhash increases public awareness of the importance of amphibians and the need to preserve them by sharing his research and observations with others.

Observing Herpetofauna in *Little Fires Everywhere*.

Little Fires Everywhere gives significant insights on how people interact with nature, despite its little focus on herpetofauna. The characters' connections with nature, such their trips to neighbourhood parks and participation in environmental activism, serve as a reminder of how intertwined human civilization and the natural world are. The story also emphasises the moral conundrums that arise when human interests clash with those of the natural world, as well as the difficulties in striking a balance between development and conservation. One of the key characters in "Little Fires Everywhere," Mia Warren, is an artist who is greatly interested in nature. She is especially drawn to the patterns and structures seen in organic things, such the veins in leaves or the patterns on animal skins. Her artistic work often incorporates these natural patterns and shapes, highlighting the beauty and complexity of the natural world.

Mia's love of the outdoors is evident in her personal life as well. She practises vegetarianism and strongly believes in the welfare of animals. Her daughter Pearl is encouraged to appreciate and connect with nature by her frequent nature excursions and treks. Her interest in the natural world is motivated by a desire to conserve and protect the environment as well as aesthetics and personal satisfaction. The attitudes of some of the other people in the novel, who largely see nature as a setting for human activity or a resource to be exploited, contrast with Mia's passion for the natural world. Mia's viewpoint emphasises the significance of appreciating nature for its own purpose and understanding the inherent value of the natural world.

Mia and her daughter Pearl observe a turtle laying eggs on the beach. Mia tells Pearl, "This is what you call the circle of life. The turtle has come all this way to lay her eggs, and in a few months, they'll hatch, and the babies will make their way down to the water." The above emphasizes the importance of observing the natural world and the interconnectedness of different species. It also emphasizes the importance of conservation efforts to ensure the continuation of these cycles.

When Mia tells Pearl about the importance of sharing observations with others. Mia says, "You see something, and you think, that's interesting, and then you look closer, and it becomes more interesting, and you start to see the connections." It highlights the importance of not only observing nature but also sharing those observations with others. By communicating these observations, people can work together to better understand the natural world and develop conservation strategies. Mia's involvement in the Save the Wetlands group further emphasizes the importance of exchanging observations for conservation efforts. Mia works with the group to monitor the wetlands and report any changes or issues to the authorities. It shows how sharing observations and working together can lead to effective conservation efforts.

Little Fires Everywhere highlights the importance of observing nature and exchanging observations for conservation efforts. Through Mia and Pearl's observations of the turtle and Mia's involvement in the Save the Wetlands group, the novel emphasizes the interconnectedness of different species and the importance of working together to conserve them.

The Lowland, and *Little Fires Everywhere* feature characters who have a passion for observing the natural world, there are some key similarities and differences in the portrayal of observing herpetofauna in the two novels.

Similarities

Both novels underscore the value of observing and appreciating nature for its own sake and the wonder and intricacy of the natural world. As their love of nature can encourage others to cherish and protect the natural environment, the insights made by the protagonists in both works can have significant consequences for conservation management. Herpetofauna observations are used as a metaphor in both novels to explore issues of identity, change, and the intricacy of the natural world.

Differences

Subhash, the protagonist in *The Lowland*, is especially interested in amphibians, whereas Mia and Pearl in "Little Fires Everywhere," are more broadly engaged in nature. In *The Lowland*, Subhash presents his observations in a more objective and scientific way. The more subjective and sentimental views made by Mia and Pearl in *Little Fires Everywhere* are a reflection of their emotional ties to nature. The consequences of observing the herpetofauna change across the two novels. In *The Lowland*, Subhash's observations have significant ramifications for conservation management and the preservation of wetlands, whereas in "Little Fires Everywhere," Mia and Pearl's observations highlight the significance of appreciating and safeguarding the natural environment for its own reason.

Comparing and Contrasting the Novels

The Lowland, and *Little Fires Everywhere* both emphasise the value of brainstorming and sharing life cycle observations for conservation management. In *The Lowland*, Subhash learns the value of wetlands ecologically and the necessity of their preservation through his observations of amphibians. He discusses his findings with his brother Udayan, who also develops a love for conservation, and the two of them share their findings with others in the neighbourhood, sparking a campaign to safeguard the wetlands. Similar observations about the natural world are made by Mia and Pearl in "Little Fires Everywhere," emphasising the value of preserving and safeguarding it. Pearl and Mia frequently discuss their observations of the natural world and share their love of the outdoors. A larger audience is also reached by Mia's artwork, which draws inspiration from her observations and emphasises the value of conservation.

Both novels suggest that exchanging ideas and communicating life history observations can have important implications for conservation management. The characters in these novels demonstrate how individual acts can have a greater impact on conservation efforts by sharing their findings and encouraging others to love and protect the natural environment. These novels also imply that preserving and safeguarding the natural world involves more than just having an understanding of it from a technical standpoint, but also having strong emotional ties to it. These novels show the need for a comprehensive strategy to conservation that takes into account both scientific understanding and emotional links to the environment by highlighting the beauty and complexity of the natural world as well as the significance of personal relationships to it.

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland*, and Celeste Ng's *Little Fires Everywhere* offer crucial insights into the significance of herpetofauna observation in conservation management. Both novels emphasise how crucial it is for conservation efforts to share information and observations about life histories. Subhash, a character in *The Lowland*, is inspired to start a movement to defend wetlands after realising the value of wetlands from an ecological standpoint through his observations of amphibians. In "Little Fires Everywhere," the protagonist Mia and her daughter Pearl observe the natural world, which highlights the need for conservation and encourages others to respect and conserve it. The novels make the case that, when it comes to conservation management, human connections to the environment are just as significant as scientific understanding. They draw attention to the necessity of a comprehensive strategy that considers both the complexity and beauty of the natural world as well as the emotional ties that people have to it. The lessons learned from these novels demonstrate how individual actions, like viewing herpetofauna and communicating thoughts and observations, can significantly influence conservation efforts. People may help towards a more sustainable future for the environment and humanity by appreciating and defending the natural world.

Conclusion

Effective conservation efforts depend on the observation and sharing of herpetofauna. In the administration of conservation efforts, the herpetofauna, which includes reptiles and amphibians, is frequently disregarded and understudied. Nevertheless, they have significant ecological functions, such as regulating insect populations and acting as markers of environmental

health. Researchers and environmentalists can track environmental changes and spot risks to biodiversity by studying and tracking herpetofauna populations. Aside from informing policy choices, these insights can also help direct conservation initiatives like habitat protection and restoration. Personal observations and the sharing of these observations, in addition to scientific study, can significantly affect conservation. The novels *The Lowland*, by Jhumpa Lahiri and *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng show the value of sharing one's views of the natural world with others as well as the strength of one's own connections to it. People may encourage others to cherish and protect the environment and build a feeling of community around conservation activities by sharing their knowledge and experiences. Observing herpetofauna and sharing observations are crucial for efficient conservation management, to sum up. It encourages people to take action towards a more sustainable future for the environment and humanity by enabling us to comprehend and safeguard these significant species and their habitats.

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