

Human-Wildlife Interaction: The Superstitious, Narratives and Dreams about Wildlife

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SUMMARY

Wildlife superstitions are present in cultures throughout the world, and magical or superstitious ideas quickly inspire people. In addition, myths and narratives about animals depict humanity's close link with the natural world, displaying fear or engagement with certain species. Furthermore, dreams involving wild animals are interpreted differently in each culture, as either auspicious or negative omens. This review shows that superstitions are present in wrong reasoning. Humans believe that the presence or absence of animal species in real life or dreams might have either negative or positive impacts. This study shows how we can conserve animals if we know the thoughts and society's concept about wildlife.

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INTRODUCTION

Wildlife and humans are connected, sometimes societies have either negative or positive thoughts about specific species (Moures-Nouri et al., 2023). These ideas may develop from folk stories, imagination, misconceptions, misidentification and/or due to psychological problems (Altaf et al., 2017). Superstitions about specific species (Altaf, 2016), such as owls (Altaf et al., 2017) or snakes (Altaf et al., 2020), can cause fear, and create conflict (Conover and Conover, 2022; Hamid et al., 2021). Narratives for wildlife work as mirrors, reflecting our connection to the natural world, and curiosity (Altaf et al., 2017).

THE SUPERSTITIOUS ABOUT WILDLIFE

Superstition is defined as people's beliefs that are not present in fact, but only irrational thinking (Vyse, 2022; Vyse, 2013). People believe that a specific species' presence or absence may bring good luck (Wiseman and Watt, 2004) and bad luck (Jarvis, 1980), while these thoughts or information have no scientific as well as logical basis (Radding, 1979). These beliefs might be cultural, regional, or personal, and they can differ greatly among societies (Rice Jr, 1985; Risen, 2016; Vyse, 2022).

Superstitions about wildlife have deep cultural roots and also negatively impact on the human activities (Adil et al., 2022; Altaf et al., 2017; de Farias, 2020; Gnanaolivu et al., 2022; Parmar and Kaiser, 2022). For example, in many societies

owls are commonly seen as omens of bad luck or death in many cultures, leading to fear and avoidance due to their nocturnal habits and haunting sounds (Altaf, 2016). Although factually false, these superstitions reflect the enduring relationship between humans and the natural environment, impacting actions and beliefs through generations, even in current times.

People from all walks of life, regardless of gender, education, or social level, may accept superstitions in their daily thoughts and behaviors (Gallup and Newport, 1991). This underlines the importance of delving deeper into how such variables can influence consumer decisions and, more significantly, wildlife conservation efforts (Moures-Nouri et al., 2023; Nikolić et al., 2021). These myths emphasize the wildlife industry, which is driven by both animal poachers and customers (de Farias, 2020). As Researchers point out, superstitions are typically strongly rooted in specific societies, and they thrive when people feel powerless over events (Altaf, 2016; de Farias, 2020). Superstitions are furnished in markets, which sell live animals for use in superstitious ceremonies (Gnanaolivu et al., 2022; SEE et al., 2022). Such superstitious clients actively seek specific products (Bending, 2018), sometimes driving up the black market value of commodities like rhino horns (Bending, 2015; de Farias, 2020), thus encouraging wildlife crimes (Beckert et al., 2015; Coggins, 2002; Wyatt, 2021). Superstitious ideas are part of a cultural belief that is learned through socialization and shared within society (Kramer and Block, 2008). Ethnozoological study shows that some species have bad omens i.e. striped hyena (Moures-Nouri et al., 2023) in Iran; snakes (Attuquayefio, 2004), in Ghana; Fish consumption (Costa-Neto, 2005) in Brazil; wild boar (Altaf et al., 2017) in Pakistan.

THE NARRATIVES ABOUT WILDLIFE

These stories serve as windows into the natural world's wonders, but they are not based on scientific reality (Spencer, 2019). They are, rather, manifestations of our deep connection with the wild, a reflection of our yearning to comprehend and connect with the creatures and plants that share our earth (Iseke and BMJK, 2011; Rao, 1985). Stories may show that wildlife species that resemble humans are present and have unique qualities that are surely not present in animal species (Ali et al., 2023). However, it is important to point out that, while these stories have no either positive or negative impact on humans (Adil et al., 2022; Altaf et al., 2017; Iqbal et al., 2023). In essence, narratives are mirrors that reflect our connection to the wild and our shared responsibility to maintain and conserve it. They remind us that, while the stories may not be true, the need to protect the real-life creatures e.g. of *jalpri* (human-head-like fish) and *Nagan* (cobra changed into a human).

WILDLIFE IN DREAMS

Dreams are mental experiences that occur while sleeping, and they include a wide range of vibrant images, emotions, thoughts, and sensations. They may perform a variety of functions, including memory processing, problem-solving, emotional management, and scenario simulation. While their specific purpose is unknown, they have fascinated and inspired human curiosity for millennia, frequently being understood through psychological, cultural, or symbolic perspectives (Krippner et al., 2012; Schredl et al., 2000).

Dreams about wild animals have many beliefs across cultures; they can represent both good luck and omens. Different cultures have different perceptions about wildlife in a dream; which impacts how people interpret their dreams, and personal beliefs also indicate a good omen or a communication from the spiritual realm. In contrast, certain animals, such as snakes, are frequently understood as symbols of danger or deception in dreams, suggesting vigilance. Cultural traditions influence how people view these dream interactions. Wild animal dreams are viewed as links between the physical and sacred territory in spiritual traditions, with each animal holding distinct spiritual significance, stressing the enduring link between humans and the natural world even in the domain of dreams.

CONCLUSION

This study reflects how people behave toward animals. Superstitions are based on usually wrong thinking. People believe that animal presence and absence in real or in dreams may impact negatively and positively so they use animals for wrong purposes. This study gives us a way how we can conserve animals.

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