

Conservation Biology of
AMPHIBIANS
OF ASIA

*Status of Conservation and Decline of Amphibians:
Eastern Hemisphere*

Edited by

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CHAPTER 8

Status and Decline of Amphibians of India

Indraneil Das and Sushil K. Dutta

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Abbreviations in text and references: asl = above sea level; CITES = Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; GAA = Global Amphibian Assessments; IUCN = International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources/The World Conservation Union; PA = Protected Areas.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of India (Fig. 1), with a total land area of 3,387,539 km², of which as much as 61% is arable, is home to the world's second largest human population, after the People's Republic of China. It is a country of exceptional biotic diversity and is listed among one of the top ten countries for biodiversity (Myers 1988, 1990). It also houses two major centres of biotic diversification (or 'hotspots'), which are known areas of amphibian diversification: the Western Ghats (Biju *et al.* 2008) and northeastern India, which lies within the Eastern Himalaya (Chanda 1994; Kamei *et al.* 2012). In terms of its amphibian fauna India is the 11th most diverse country, after Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, México, Indonesia, China, Venezuela, United States, and Papua New Guinea (IUCN 2009; see also Stuart *et al.* 2004). This diversity is attributed to the variety of ecological conditions and a complex geological history. India touches the Himalayan range and extends south to cover the entire Indian peninsula. Its political boundaries include the islands of the Bay of Bengal (Andaman and Nicobar Archipelago) and of the Arabian Sea (Lakshadweep Archipelago). The amphibian fauna of the Indian peninsula

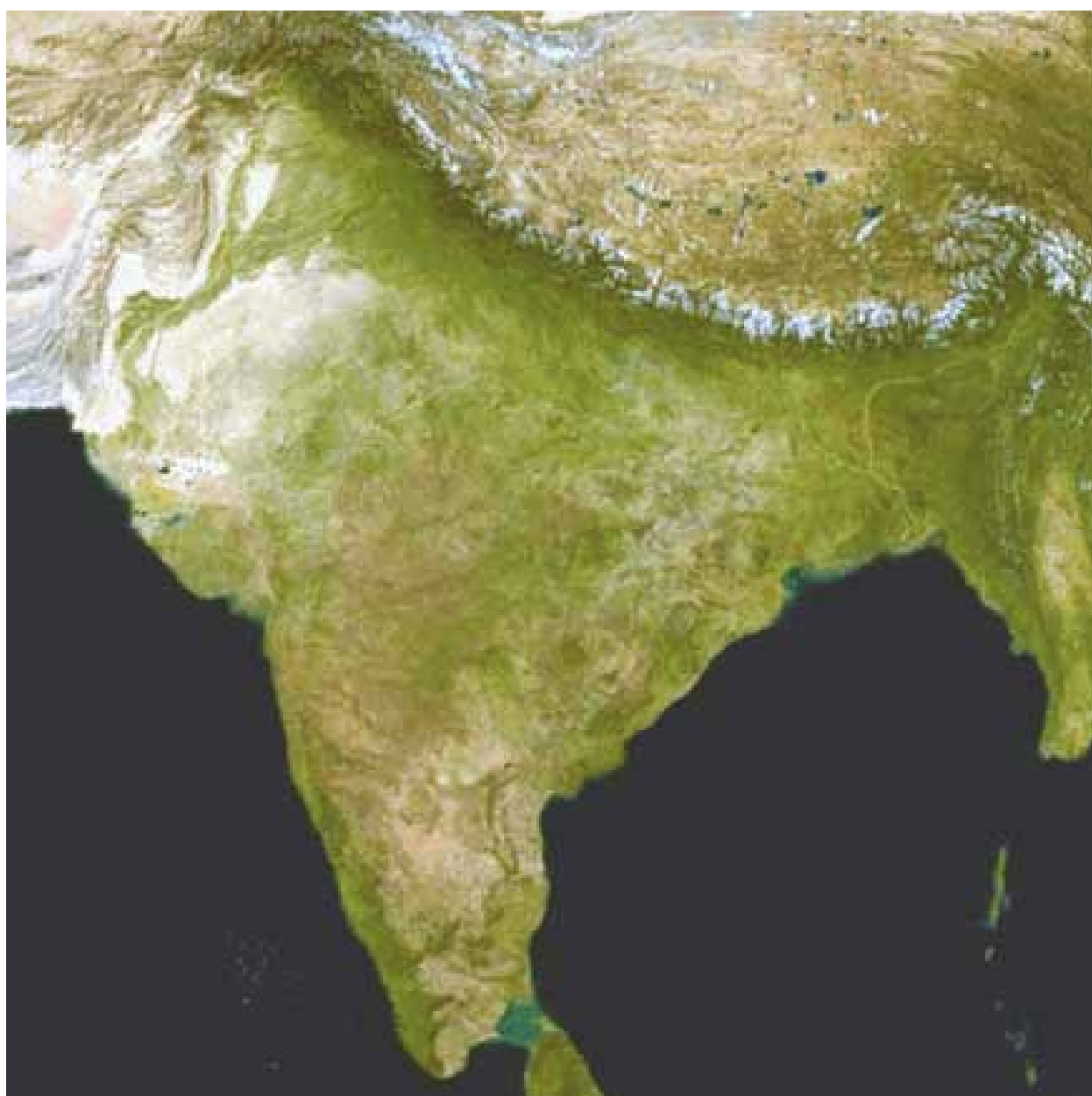


Fig. 1. Relief map of India and adjacent countries of southern Asia, showing biogeographical regions.