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Perceptions, Use and Conservation of Amphibians by Indigenous People Worldwide

Humans and frogs, much like frogs and water, are inextricably linked. The association, thus, between early human consciousness and these largely aquatic organisms is substantial and widespread in many cultures. This paper explores both the antiquity of the human-amphibian relationship worldwide, synthesizing data from prehistoric and ancient historic textual sources (including bestiaries, herbals and pharmacopoeias), and more recent attitudes to amphibians. The sources of information were data from zoo-archaeological material or cultural artifacts; folklore and indigenous beliefs; ancient (including religious) texts, rhymes, and taboos; uses in societies for narratives of their social functions, pharmacological, culinary and agricultural researches; representations in advertisement and postage stamps, toys, models and other products; and for food and medicine by both Western and indigenous (non-Western) societies around the world. While the use of animal-derived drugs as superstition, some established local knowledge have been reported by scientists in recent times. Topically, the "new" data may range from the discovery of species, their ecological characteristics, to their potential use by man, especially as food, in traditional medicine, for enhancement of senses in hunting or for poisoning darts. It is therefore argued here that the tendency by practitioners of modern science to dismiss nativism as absurd and illogical, is not borne by the available evidence.