



Estimated reading time: 6 minute(s)

What comes to mind when you hear the term “snake”? Most people would say, “I want to kill it”, “I am scared” or “it is a poisonous”.

There are many fallacies on snakes around the world, and often snakes are killed without cause.

In today’s edition we focus on the effects of stigmatization towards snakes and what is the real extent of the phenomenon.

Approximately, **3600 species of snakes** exist in the world, and a small portion are known to be highly venomous.

A lack of understanding on snakes in communities has resulted in a **rampant rise of human-snake conflict**: research has shown that attempts to kill snakes even increases the risk of snakebites.

Moreover, the elimination of snakes results in an **imbalance in the ecosystem** which indefinitely affects biodiversity.

Effect of societal perceptions on snake biodiversity

Lack of knowledge and misguided perceptions on snakes greatly **threatens snake populations** in the world.

- Migration of snakes due to habitat destruction.
- Subsequent decline in snake population which may hamper



extinction if unnoticed.

- **Imbalance in ecosystem**, as each species significantly contributes to the ecosystem.
- Elimination of snakes may result in the **accumulation of rodents** on the environment.

Pandey et al. (2016) illustrated that snakes are used in many different ways by diverse cultures, such that human activities may influence snake populations and communities both directly and indirectly.

- Medicinal purposes, for example the production of anti-venom
- Food industry, as snake meat is considered a delicacy
- Production of goods such as belts and bags
- Recreational purposes, for instance showcase in zoos or snake parks

Snake Bites

What happens if you unluckily encounter one of them venomous snakes and it bites you?

Some snakes are surely to stay away from, and some of them are counted among the most dangerous animals around the world:

- Belcher's Sea Snake (*Hydrophis belcheri*)
- Blue Krait (*Bungarus candidus*)
- Black Mamba (*Dendroaspis polylepis*)
- Death Adder (*Acanthophis antarcticus*)

Early symptoms to look out for immediately after a snake bite

- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain



- Vomiting
- Headache
- And subsequently collapsing

First aid tips after a snake bite

- The site of the bite should be cleaned but not incised as incisions result in increased bleeding.
- Provide aspirin or alcohol, which helps ease the individual.
- The bitten limb site must not be moved frequently as this suppresses the spread of venom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, even if envenomation is a serious public concern, misconception poses a serious threat to snake populations and **there is need to protect these snakes in the ecosystem**. A balance in the ecosystem is vital **to suppress extinction** of different snake species.

Awareness creation and education to the public on different snake species, in particular venomous and non-venomous snakes, is crucial to **avoid the stigma on these animals** and respect them as part of life on the planet.

References

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/how-many-species-of-snakes-are-there.html>

Pandey, D. P., Pandey, G. S., Devkota, K., & Goode, M. (2016). Public perceptions of snakes and snakebite management: implications for conservation and human health in southern Nepal. Journal of



The perception of snakes in society

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