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Title:	"Mahseer on the internet": A Conservation Culturomics Study of the Emotion and Attitude of the People towards Mahseer, a Flagship Megafish
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Abstract:	<p>Mahseer is an iconic and magnificent fish species and is often referred to as 'the tiger of the freshwater'. For a long time, these fish have been a cultural symbol of economic, recreational, and conservation importance across their range, depicted and worshipped as gods by many communities. However, in recent years, these species have faced a catastrophic decline in population size mainly due to anthropogenic pressure. Therefore, the conservation of these iconic species not only requires the help of biologists and ecologists but also, the support of the public, since their perception, interest, and emotion towards these species can function as a determinant of conservation intervention programmes. With the dramatic growth of the internet and popularisation of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) around the world, nature-related content on the digital world is expanding. If systematically processed, such information may be of high value for a large-scale evaluation of species or ecosystems and hence the conservation. This line of research known as conservation culturomics is getting popularity all over the world. The current study analysed the trend of search conducted on the internet (Web, Image, News, YouTube), articles published (media attention) and scientific literature published on three species of Mahseers namely Golden Mahseer, Humpback Mahseer, and Deccan Mahseer. The sentiment analysis of comments received by the posts on Mahseer appeared on various social media was also carried out. Our results reveal spatial and temporal variation in interest in different Mahseer species across the last 10 years within India and across the world, with higher interest from countries like India and Bhutan, and states like Himachal Pradesh, where Mahseers are abundant. Analysis of public interest, perception, attitude, and emotions towards the species demonstrated that the general public was more inclined towards Golden Mahseer and Humpback Mahseer as they were the most frequent search queries across 10 years. However, the overall interest in Mahseer in online media decreased as indicated by the number of articles published by the media sector. Our survey of scientific literature illustrated that research publications regarding Golden Mahseer, Humpback Mahseer, and Deccan Mahseer focused on their conservation as the populations of these species are declining at a faster rate. We also found a strong correlation between social media data volume and online news volume concerning the extinction of the Humpback Mahseer, while other events regarding the other species only appeared in either social media or online news. Lastly, the sentiments of the public on social media demonstrated that there is a neutral sentiment of the people towards Mahseer. Hence, public interest in different locations and at different times varies across online platforms, and may be related to current events. Collection of such Culturomics data is rare in conservation studies, and can help nature conservation practitioners respond to cultural trends and revive their societal significance.</p>
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