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Concerns and breaking points in natureculture: Our anthropocene

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The article compares birdwatchers' experience of nature with the natural environment as conveyed in literary fiction. The source materials comprise, first of all, interviews conducted with (mostly amateur) Estonian birdwatchers and, secondly, contemporary Estonian and Swedish literary fiction: Maarja Pärtna's prose poetry collection "The Living City" (*Elav linn*, 2022), Andrus Kivirähk's book "Flight to the Moon" (*Lend Kuule*, 2022), Tõnis Tootsen's novel "Pâté of the Apes: One Primate's Thoughts and Memories" (*Ahvide pasteet*, 2022) and Kerstin Ekman's novel "The Wolf Run" (*Lõpa varg*, 2021; Estonian translation 2022). The focus is on whether and how the concerns of nature observers relate to anxiety about changes in the natural environment as expressed in contemporary literature. Amateur environmental

science projects aim to draw attention to concerns about the natural environment and climate change and thereby strive for a smaller personal environmental impact. Eco-fiction, in turn, puts environmental issues into words, setting them into a fathomable, although perhaps altogether unexpected scale: hence, eco-prose and -poesy are essential ways of perceiving that also serve to interpret the ongoing changes.

Environment-oriented literary culture has responded to issues with the natural environment before. Now, too, it can be concluded that environmental concerns have made a forceful entry into literature. All of the above-mentioned authors have found their unique way of conceptualizing our home in an era of environmental crises. Their recently published works tell stories about our surroundings and interpret the present situation; they discuss the anthropocentric viewpoint or depict the human focus from an unexpected perspective; they draw attention to our alienation from nature; they reposition the reader and thereby seek solutions to environmental issues. Among other things, they highlight environmentally friendly ways of living and experiencing the world or look at the world through non-human eyes, thus bringing the narrator closer to other forms of being. The writers share with bird-watchers the post-humanist idea of the equality of species as well as a sharp eye for their subject.

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