

30 Days Wild

A Five Year Review



UNIVERSITY
of DERBY

What is 30 Days Wild?

30 Days Wild is the UK's one and only month-long nature challenge from The Wildlife Trusts. It invites everyone to do something wild every day in June, connecting us all with the beauty and wonder of our natural world.

The Wildlife Trusts believe that everyone should have the opportunity to experience the joy of wildlife in their daily lives. Evidence shows that people with nature on their doorstep are more active, mentally resilient and have better all-round health. So, a deeper connection with the natural world not only means we care for it better; nature cares for us in return.

The Wildlife Trusts created the national challenge, 30 Days Wild, in 2015 and it has since become an annual event. The aim of 30 Days Wild is to be inclusive and promote activities that are suitable for all abilities, ages and experience levels. These Random Acts of Wildness, developed alongside the University of Derby, range from simple activities such as walking barefoot on grass, reading a book outside or following a bumblebee, to more time-intensive activities, such as building an insect hotel or visiting a special place for wildlife.

The Wildlife Trusts have the expertise and knowledge to help those that want to start getting outdoors more, but aren't sure where to begin, and to inspire those who want to tune into nature and share the joy with friends, family and wider society through social media.

30 Days Wild aims to:

- Enable people to build a connection to the natural world
- Increase the health and wellbeing of participants
- Increase pro-nature behaviours, to benefit wildlife as well as people.

Studying the impact of 30 Days Wild

Over the past five years, the University of Derby has been analysing data from 30 Days Wild to measure the impact of the challenge on participants.

On sign-up, participants were asked to complete a 'Wildness quiz'. This survey collected data on age and gender, and measured the participants' connection to nature, health, happiness and the extent to which they engaged in pro-nature behaviours. Those who completed the Wildness quiz survey were then sent a follow-up survey at the end of 30 Days Wild, and again two months later, to enable researchers to analyse whether the impacts of participating in 30 Days Wild lasted beyond the lifetime of the challenge.

For the purpose of this challenge, nature connectedness was measured using the Inclusion of Nature-in-Self scale, which asks people to indicate how strongly their sense of self includes nature [Figure 1].

This summary combines five years of data, tracking over 1,000 participants, and specifically looks at the impact of improving nature connectedness, through 30 Days Wild, on health and happiness.

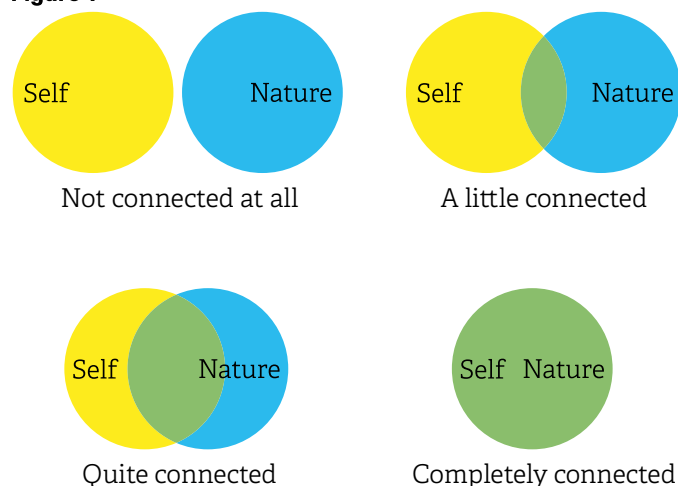
Key findings

- Participation in 30 Days Wild results in increased nature connectedness, pro-nature conservation behaviours and wellbeing during June and for at least a further two months beyond the challenge;
- Those participants with the lowest connection to nature before 30 Days Wild gained the greatest benefits by taking part in the challenge;
- Participants reported feeling happier after taking part in 30 Days Wild.

Nature connectedness, health and happiness

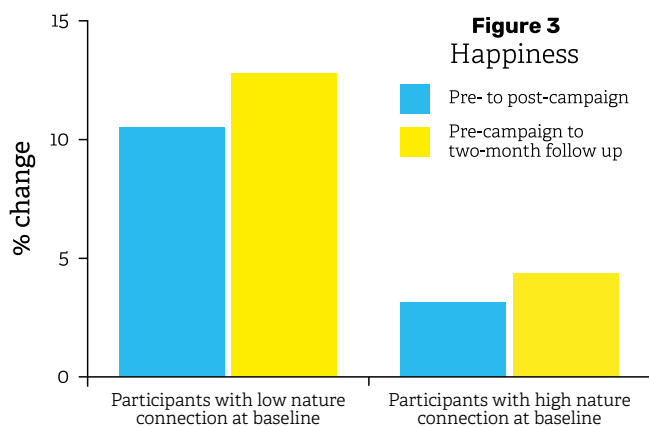
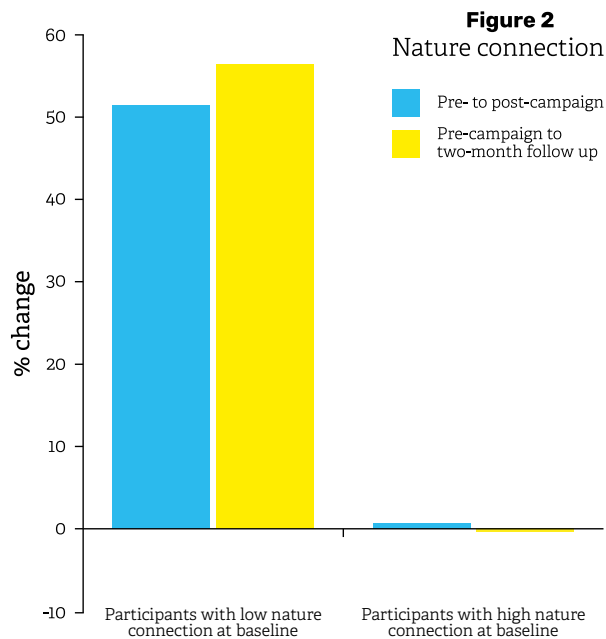
Nature connectedness refers to a person's relationship with nature and how emotionally close an individual feels to the natural world. Research has consistently shown that there are positive wellbeing outcomes from a close connection to nature. Furthermore, research also shows that improving knowledge of wildlife does not result in any discernable action to take care of wildlife; instead improving nature connection leads to more nature-friendly behaviours.

Figure 1

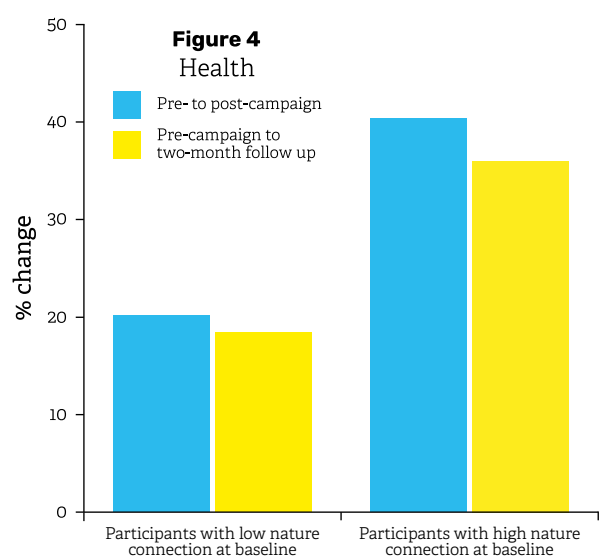


The results over five years show that taking part in 30 Days Wild brings sustained increases to nature connectedness, health and happiness.

The participants who began 30 Days Wild with the lowest sense of nature connectedness experienced the greatest increase in connection [Figure 2] and happiness [Figure 3].



Whereas the greatest increases in health were observed in those who started 30 Days Wild with the highest levels of nature connectedness [Figure 4].



This insight into how the challenge influenced an individual's nature connectedness has wider implications for environmental and societal policy as result of its link to pro-nature behavioural change.

Pro-nature behaviours

One of the key outcomes of this research was to measure how likely somebody was to undertake pro-nature behaviours after taking part in 30 Days Wild — behaviours that benefit wildlife, such as planting pollinator-friendly plants, helping wildlife in gardens, volunteering at a nature reserve, and other similar actions.

The findings showed that the number of these behaviours increased over the course of the challenge. Encouragingly, this increase continued after the challenge was over, showing that participants continued to want to help wildlife post involvement in 30 Days Wild. Generally, the lower a person's pro-nature score was before 30 Days Wild, the greater the increase they demonstrated as a result of it.

What are The Wildlife Trusts asking for?

The Wildlife Trusts are calling for the health service to work in partnership with their nearest Wildlife Trust (there are 46 individual Wildlife Trusts across the UK) to help people actively engage in their local, natural environment.

At least £15 billion a year is being spent on preventable illnesses associated with our lifestyles: 20 million adults in the UK are physically inactive and obesity is on the rise, along with mental ill health, dementia and social isolation.

Participation in 30 Days Wild has shown sustained increases in happiness, health, connection to nature and pro-nature behaviours. **Compared to figures collected before 30 Days Wild, after taking part participants reported that their health improved by 30%.** We must build on the 30 Days Wild approach.

Two months after taking part in 30 Days Wild, participants reported a sustained improvement in their nature connectedness of 17%. This report provides good evidence that engaging with nature in simple ways brings sustained benefits to health and wellbeing, which can reduce demand on our health services, while also improving pro-nature behaviours. In urban areas as well as rural, nature can provide a simple solution to help with complex problems.

Over 1 million people have taken part in 30 Days Wild so far. With more investment this number could grow to allow more people to enjoy the benefits.

More widely, prescribing green exercise and nature volunteering programmes will provide twin benefits: better health and wellbeing for those taking part; and enriched local communities who benefit from having wildlife-rich spaces on their doorstep.

What are The Wildlife Trusts doing?

Wildlife Trusts across the UK run 30 Days Wild every June and work to encourage even more people to take part. The challenge expands year-on-year to appeal to new audiences. For example, in 2019, resources targeted at care home residents were introduced for the first time, alongside individual and family, school and business packs. The Wildlife Trusts are continually looking for new ways to reach more people, groups and organisations and bring the joy of everyday wildlife to them! Learn more and sign up for 30 Days Wild: wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild

Wildlife Trusts across the UK also run many other initiatives to increase the health and wellbeing of people in their area, and benefit wildlife. Discover more about your Wildlife Trust: wildlifetrusts.org/find-wildlife-trust.

Who are The Wildlife Trusts?

The Wildlife Trusts believe that people need nature and it needs us. We are here to make the world wilder and to make nature part of everyone's lives. We are a grassroots movement of 46 charities with more than 850,000 members and 38,000 volunteers. No matter where you are in the UK, there is a Wildlife Trust inspiring people and saving, protecting and standing up for the natural world. With the support of our members, we care for and restore special places for nature on land and run marine conservation projects and collect vital data on the state of our seas. Every Wildlife Trust works within its local community to inspire people to create a wilder future — from advising thousands of landowners on how to manage their land to benefit wildlife, to connecting hundreds of thousands of school children with nature every year.

To see the references for this report, visit wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWildReport



The Wildlife Trusts
The Kiln
Mather Road
Newark
Nottinghamshire NG24 1WT
wildlifetrusts.org

e: enquiries@wildlifetrusts.org
t: 01636 670000
Registered Charity No. 207238

Cover images: Shutterstock. Back page image: Matthew Roberts.
Illustrations: Corinne Welch.