

# **Study: Watching nature videos on social media supported mental wellbeing during COVID-19 lockdown**

October 14 2021

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

The first national COVID-19 lockdown that started in March 2020 presented an opportunity for researchers to investigate how people engage with nature via social media and whether there are associations between this form of simulated nature engagement and well-being.

In a paper published by the journal *Frontiers in Psychology-Environmental Psychology*, researchers analyzed a total of 143,265 publicly available comments in response to videos on two Facebook pages: Chris Packham's live-stream videos and clips from BBC Springwatch, posted on Facebook from March to July 2020.

This [video content](#) was some of the earliest in the UK to proactively support public engagement with the [natural](#) world at a time where COVID-19 regulations dramatically limited access to outside spaces for the general population. To date, the content has collectively received over 25 million views.

Researchers identified three wellbeing-related themes from publicly available comments shared on [social media](#); [emotional reactions](#), cognitive and reflective responses, and using nature-based social media to cope with stress during lockdown.

The research showed that people who commented on the videos also reported that engaging with nature virtually had helped them cope with and process stress and mental fatigue which they were experiencing as a result of the pandemic. Engaging with this content also helped to give them a sense of meaning, as well as an increased sense of connectedness

to nature and other people.

Comments suggested that watching these videos elicited [positive emotions](#) such as feeling calm, relaxed, joyful, moved, uplifted and inspired. Videos of this nature also afforded viewers the opportunity to express negative emotions and, in turn, may have helped to combat loneliness and feelings of isolation. Thus, engagement with nature-based social media may support wellbeing in multiple ways and could aid as a coping mechanism during restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19.

Dr. Shi (Tracy) Xu, leading author of the study and Senior Lecturer at University of Surrey's School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, said: "This is an important piece of research that gives us an insight into the impact of the pandemic and associated lockdowns on mental wellbeing. We know that poor mental wellbeing is a major issue for many people and has a significant impact on public health services. This study has deepened the understanding of the link between engaging with nature virtually via social media and wellbeing, and our analysis suggests that these experiences may be related to wellbeing on a broader level."

**More information:** Shi Xu et al, #Springwatch #WildMorningswithChris: Engaging With Nature via Social Media and Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Lockdown, *Frontiers in Psychology* (2021). [DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.701769](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.701769)

Provided by University of Surrey

Citation: Study: Watching nature videos on social media supported mental wellbeing during COVID-19 lockdown (2021, October 14) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-nature-videos-social-media-mental.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.