


# Nature engagement & wellbeing pre, during and post Covid-19: Supporting the UK (green) recovery


August 2020


On 23rd March 2020, the UK went into lockdown in response to the Covid-19 threat. As a result, many people's engagement with natural environments will have changed substantively, something which is likely to have had significant impact on their wellbeing. We aim to understand these changes in nature engagement and wellbeing in the UK before, during and after lockdown and help understand what Government and Statutory Bodies can do to ameliorate the impact of Covid-19 on wellbeing now and as part of the Green Recovery from Covid-19. Specifically, this project aims to:


1. Examine how wellbeing during and post lockdown has changed and to what extent this is associated with changes in access to- and engagement with- different natural environments. We will explore questions such as: To what extent is wellbeing associated with differences in access to natural environments? How are vulnerable groups affected? Have people established new habits and perceptions of nature during lockdown?
2. Create a mapping of different wellbeing outcomes associated with different types of natural environments and the use of these environments for different activities. We will explore the role of the activities conducted in these environments (passive versus active, alone or with others) as well as specific environmental features (size, biodiversity).
3. Contribute to theory development through improved measurement and examination of "a sense of being away". We will examine where people find a sense of being away during lockdown. We will examine how perceptions of "being away" change during and post Covid-19 and how this affects the attractiveness of different natural environments (near and far) to get away.

To address these aims, four studies will be conducted:

 **Study 1: Longitudinal survey** - A questionnaire examining wellbeing and the use and perceptions of different natural spaces during lockdown. The longitudinal survey will compare data from a nationally representative sample of UK households immediately post lockdown and one year later.  
Lead: Birgitta Gatersleben

 **Study 2: Social media analysis** - Secondary text analysis on public comments posted on social media in response to videos during the pandemic by Chris Packham and BBC Springwatch.  
Lead: Tracy Xu

 **Study 3: In-depth Interviews** - An interview study with adults from up to 30 UK households will explore the use of natural environments during lockdown, exploring family dynamics and changes in implicit and explicit (intentional) engagement with natural environments for leisure.  
Lead: Caroline Scarles

 **Study 4: National secondary data analysis** - Using the Natural England People and Nature survey, cross-sectional changes in use of and benefits from nature will be derived.  
Lead: Kayleigh Wyles

## University of Surrey Project Team

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