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ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management

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ENGAGING WITH NATURE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA AND WELLBEING

This study critically examined people's reactions to nature videos posted on Facebook during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. **Dr Tracy Xu**, **Prof Caroline Scarles**, and colleagues conducted a detailed analysis of the 143,265 comments using thematic analysis. The results suggest that nature-related social media content and associated commentary have supported wellbeing.

ENGAGING WITH NATURE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA AND WELLBEING DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

DR TRACY XU & PROF CAROLINE SCARLES

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 wellbeing. Dr Xu and colleagues analysed 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. Xu et al. identified three wellbeing-related themes from publicly

available comments shared on social media: (1) engaging with nature via social media is emotionally complicated, (2) cognitive and reflective reactions are generated from social media nature engagement and (3) engagement with nature-based social media as a mechanism for coping with stress during COVID-19. The research showed that people who engaged with the videos 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.



SOCIAL MEDIA

FURTHER READING:

Xu, S., Murrell, G., Golding, S., Brockett, B., Gatersleben, B., Scarles, C., White, E., Willies, C., & Wyles, K. (Accepted). #Springwatch #WildMorningswithChris: Engaging with Nature via Social Media and Wellbeing During the Covid-19 Lockdown. *Frontiers in Psychology-Environmental Psychology*.
Link: bit.ly/3oVB2v5

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. This research was funded by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) Covid-19 fund to help support the UK Government Green Recovery Strategy from the global Covid-19 pandemic.