



THE PEOPLE AND NATURE SURVEY IN ENGLAND

Research on how people experience and think about the environment

[Around 9 in 10 people surveyed by Natural England in May 2020](#) agreed that natural spaces are good for mental health and wellbeing. More than 40% noticed that nature, wildlife, and visiting local green and natural spaces have been even more important to their wellbeing since the coronavirus restrictions began. These percentages have remained stable throughout the pandemic.

Main findings

- During the period 1st–31st May, 60% of adults in England said that they had spent time outside in green and natural spaces in the previous two weeks. This is an increase in comparison to [April](#) (up from 49%).
- A further 32% of adults reported that they had not spent any time in these places in the previous two weeks. This is a decrease in comparison to [April](#) (down from 46%).
- Just over a fifth of adults (22%) reported that they had not visited *any* green and natural space in the *previous month* (down from 26% in [April](#)).
- Since the coronavirus restrictions began, 36% of adults reported spending more time outside.
- The main reasons reported for not spending free time outdoors were staying at home to stop coronavirus spreading and/or related to Government restrictions (63%) and poor physical health/illness (11%).
- Of the adults who are not getting outside: half (50%) were worried about contracting or spreading coronavirus while visiting green and natural spaces; 39% were prevented from getting outside because of concerns about over-crowding and not being able to keep a safe distance from others; and, almost a fifth (18%) reported concerns about lack of facilities such as public toilets, baby changing areas or benches.
- The large majority of adults agreed that green and natural spaces should be good places for mental health and wellbeing (89%) and places that encourage physical health and exercise (83%).
- The large majority of adults (85%) agreed that 'being in nature makes me very happy' with 74% taking more time to notice and engage with everyday nature, such as listening to birdsong or noticing butterflies.
- Forty one per cent of adults have reported that 'nature and wildlife is more important than ever to my wellbeing'; 41% reported visiting local green and natural spaces has been even more important to their wellbeing.
- Adults partaking in wildlife watching while in green and natural spaces increased in May (23%) compared to [April](#) (16%).
- Since coronavirus restrictions began almost three quarters of adults (72%) reported reducing the amount that they drive or travel by car, 40% reported reducing the amount of food their household throws away.