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Benefits of Connecting with Nature

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What is Nature Connectedness?

- Different to contact and exposure to nature.
- An internationally recognised psychological construct.
- A person's sense of their relationship with nature.
- Measurable & malleable.
- Gallup World Wellbeing Poll.



UN Convention on Biological Diversity recommended increased focus on nature connectedness to achieve strategic plan and biodiversity targets

Why Nature Connectedness Matters - Nature



“strong & robust association between nature connection & PEB,
as well as evidence that nature connection **causes** PEB”

75 Studies, n = 27,120

Mackay, C.M.L., Schmitt, M.T., (2019).

Why Nature Connectedness Matters - People

- Systematic review of 50 studies (n = 16,396) shows nature connection related to **feeling good & functioning well.**

Vitality

Meaning & Purpose

Life Satisfaction

Happiness

Personal Growth

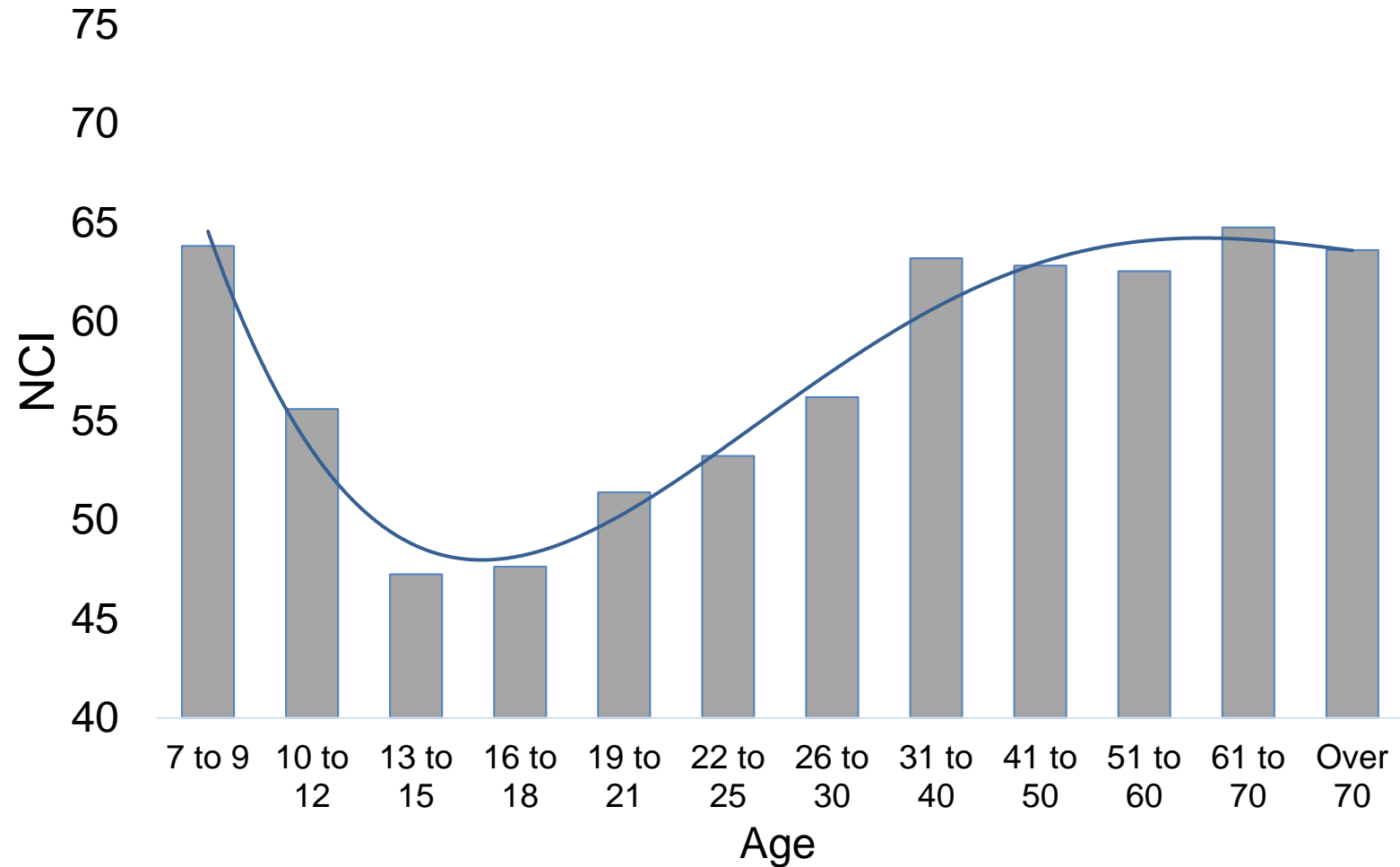
Lower Anxiety

Body Image

Pro-social Behaviour



Nature Connection Across the Lifespan



Why the Adolescent Dip Matters

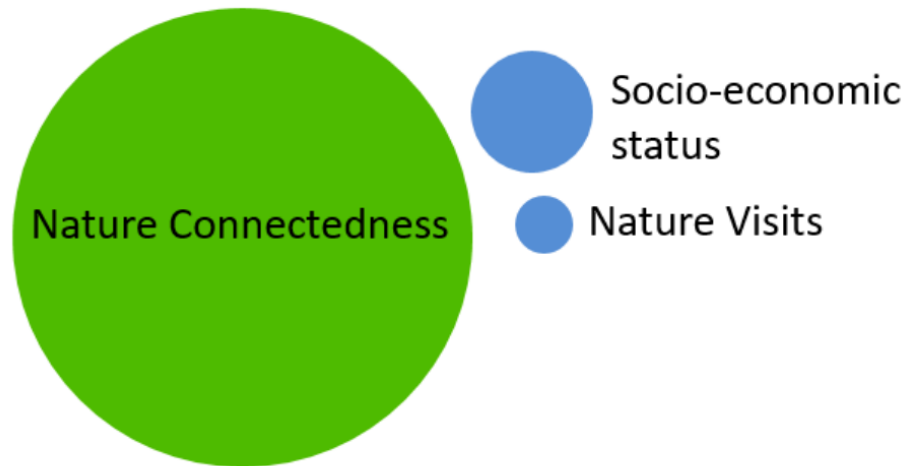
- A national analysis of 29,784 Canadian adolescents.
- Connection to nature 'important' - associated with a 25% reduction in high mental health symptoms
- Adolescent engagement with nature 'protective for their psychological well-being'.
- Connection to nature drops 30% from age 9 to 15

Piccininni, C., Michaelson, V., Janssen, I., & Pickett, W. (2018). Outdoor play and nature connectedness as potential correlates of internalized mental health symptoms among Canadian adolescents. *Preventive medicine*, 112, 168-175.

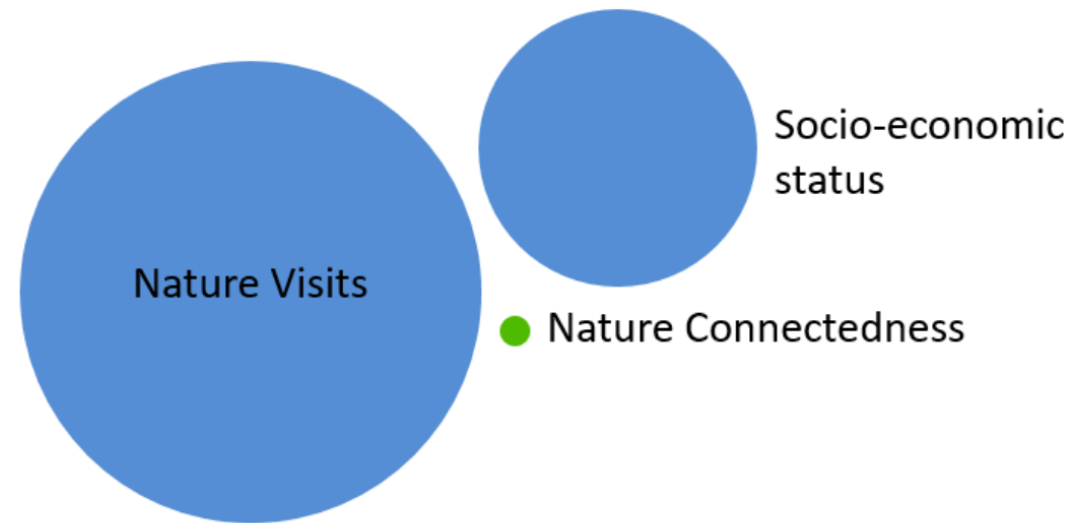
Nature Connectedness & Wellbeing: Establishing the Relative Contribution (MENE data)

- Three separate national surveys (n = 4960, 4206 & 2096) now found that nature connectedness and noticing nature explain variance in mental wellbeing (& pro-nature behaviours) to a greater degree than time or visits.

Worthwhile Life



General Health



Relative percentage difference in wellbeing and health as a function of nature contact, nature connectedness and socio-demographic comparators.

Martin, L., White, M. P., Hunt, A., Richardson, M., Pahl, S., & Burt, J. (2020). Nature contact, nature connectedness and associations with health, wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviours. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 101389.

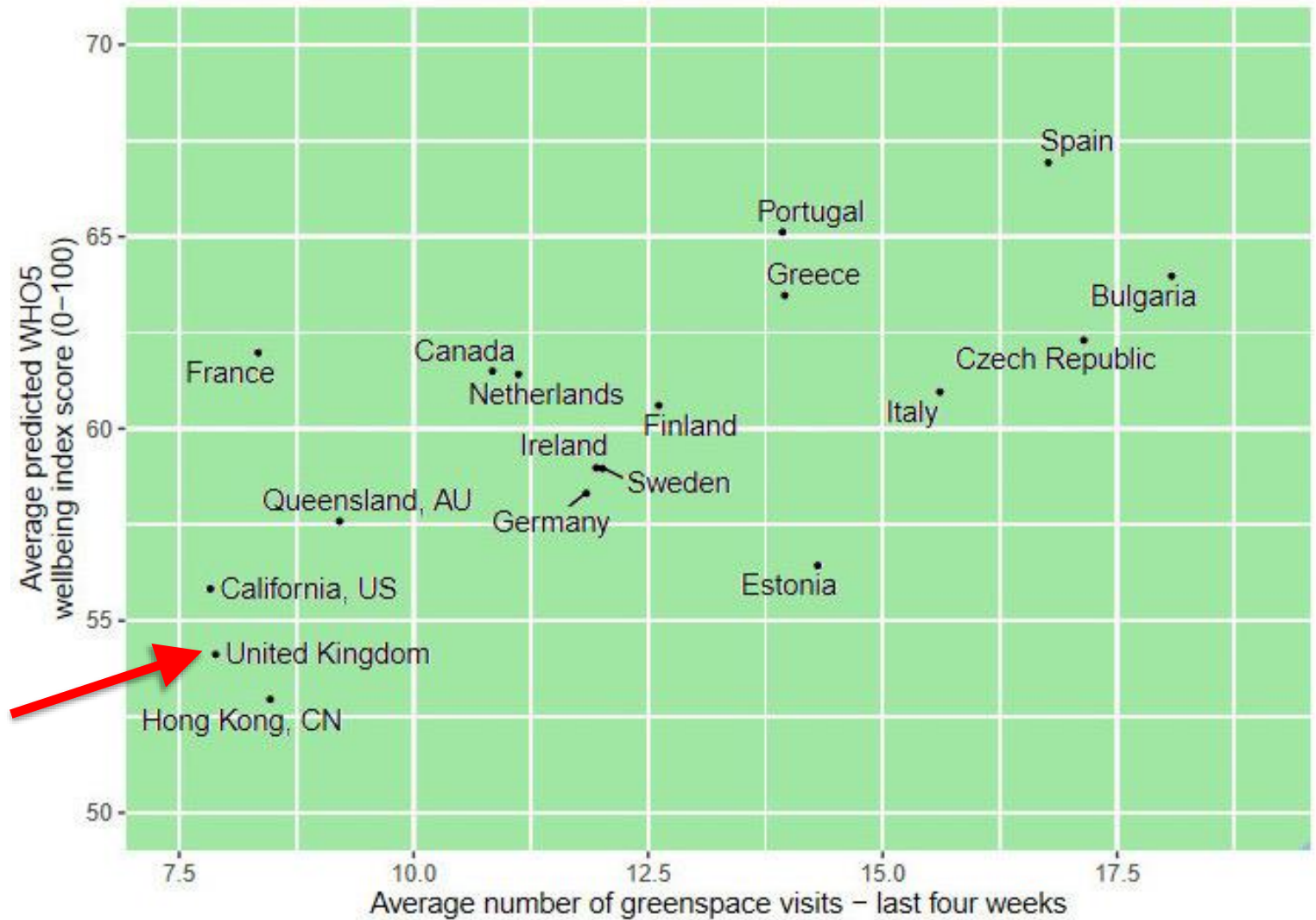
Impact of noticing nature during lockdown?

- During the restrictions people spent more time in nature (40%). Noticed nature more (74%).
- Looked at Natural England PANS data (n=4206)
- Nature connectedness explained pro-nature conservation behaviours and wellbeing better than time
- Recent nature visits didn't account for any increase in wellbeing.
- Increases in noticing nature did account for better wellbeing and more pro-nature conservation behaviours.

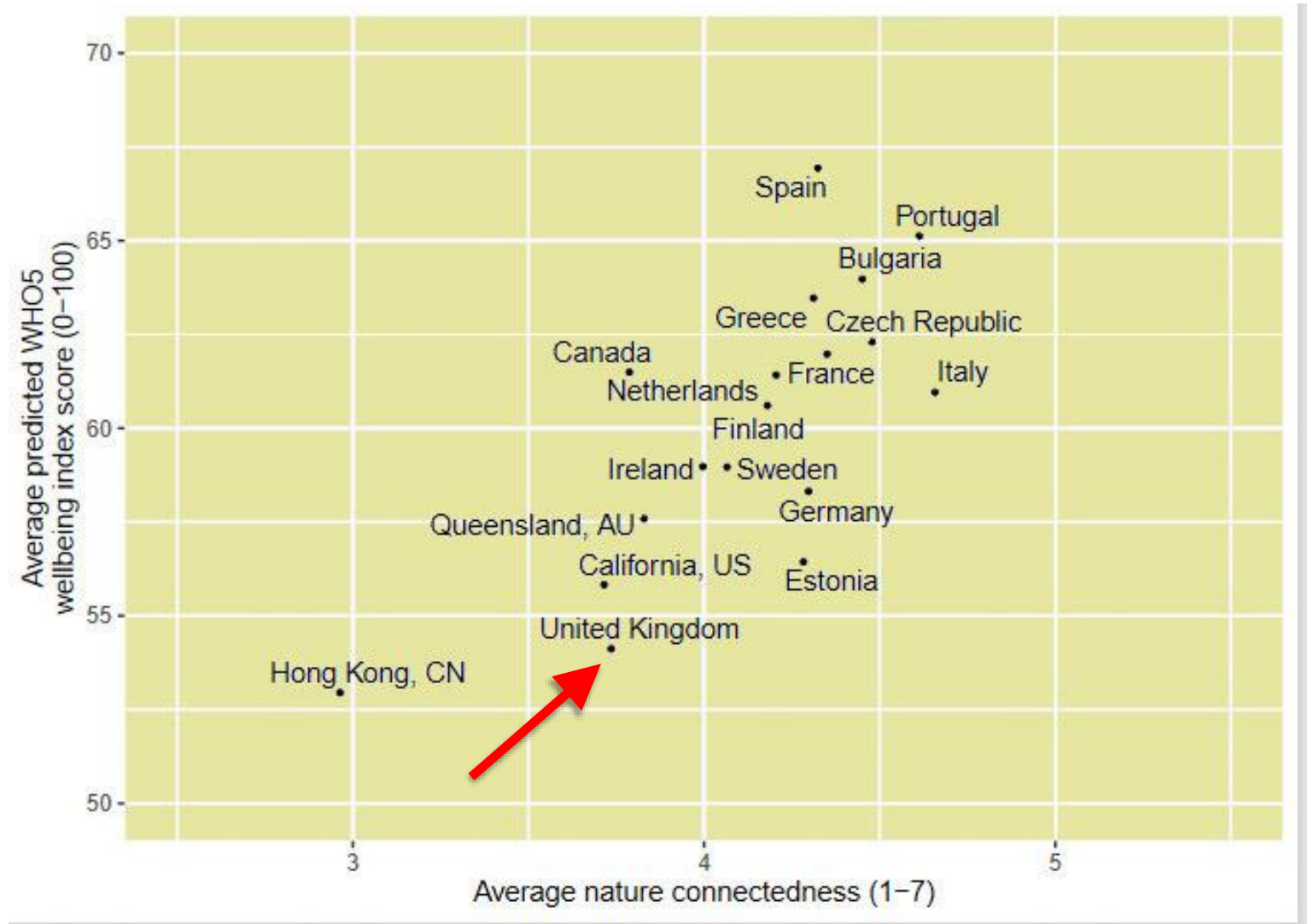
Nature & Mental Wellbeing: Moments or Minutes?

- YouGov survey of 2096 - how wellbeing explained by:
- nature connectedness, time in nature, noticing, indirect (e.g. nature TV and books), knowledge and study of nature.
- Time was not a significant predictor of wellbeing – nor were indirect contact with nature or knowledge/study of nature.
- *Time in nature uniquely accounted for only 1% of the explained variance in each of happiness, a worthwhile life, and lower illbeing*
- Nature connectedness and simple engagement were the significant and prominent factors in explaining mental wellbeing
- After considering two basic components of a good life, the need for autonomy (i.e., a sense of control over one's life) and relationships (via relationship status).
- Nature connectedness itself—tuning into nature—is a core psychological need and basic component of wellbeing – Gallup Poll

We're not a nation of nature lovers - visits



We're not a nation of nature lovers - connection



If not time & visits how to increase nature
connectedness?



For human and nature's wellbeing...

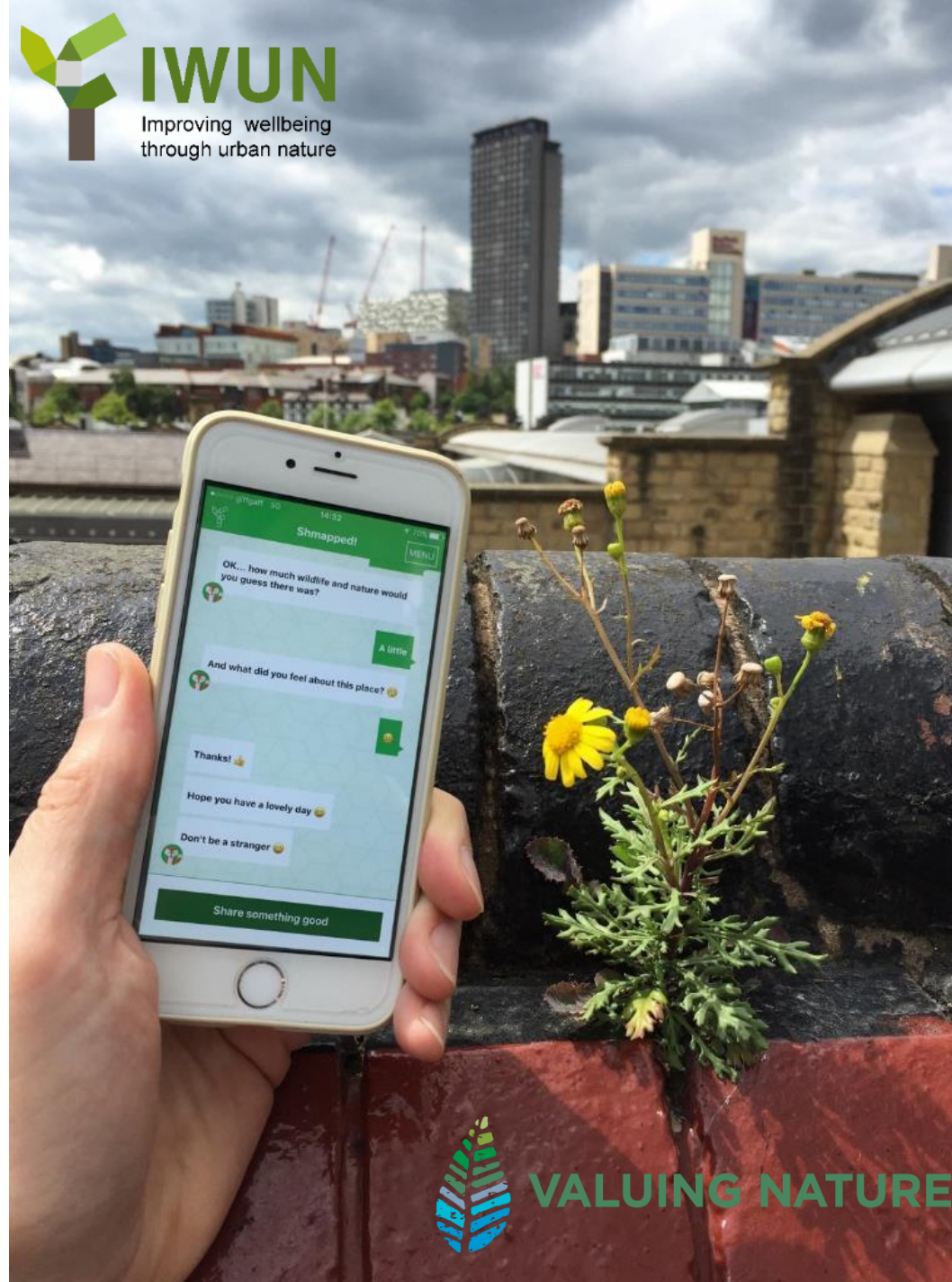
People don't tend to notice nature...

- 80% of people rarely or never watch wildlife, smell wild flowers or photographed nature.
- 62% of people rarely or never listen to bird song or notice butterflies.
- Those people that do have a higher level of nature connectedness, feel better and do 40 to 50% more for nature.



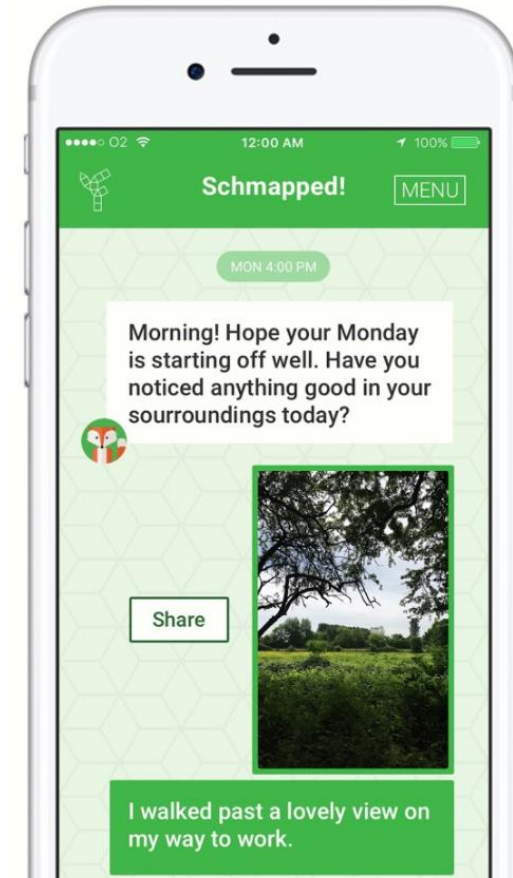
Noticing the Good Things in Nature

- Prompts to notice the good things in nature (intervention condition) or built spaces (control) each day for a week.
- Randomised controlled trial, 582 adults (mainly 18 to 38), including those with a common mental health problem ($n=148$).
- Measured mental wellbeing and nature connection at baseline, post and follow-up.

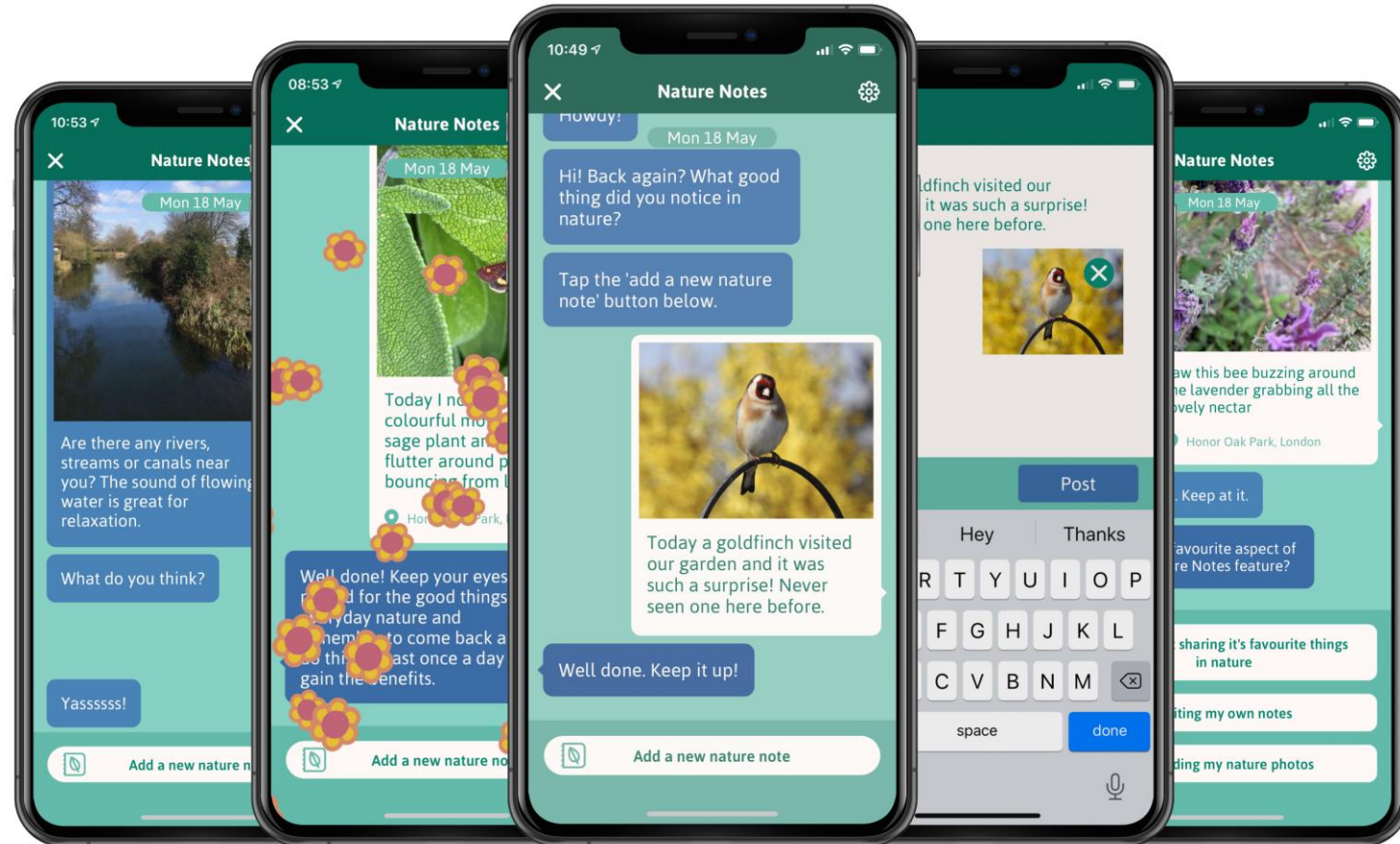


Results

- Significant increases in mental health & nature connectedness - sustained at 1 month
- Improvement in quality of life reached clinical significance in adults with a mental health difficulty (n=148)
- Wellbeing improvement partly explained by changes in nature connectedness and positive emotions
- First experimental evidence of strong clinical potential as a wellbeing intervention
- People who gained most were those who had spent less time outdoors and were less connected to nature.
- Good at spotting biodiversity & that related to positive emotions.



Incorporated into Go Jauntly on iOS





Design Your Own



Pathways to Nature Connectedness



Senses



Emotion



Beauty



Meaning



Compassion



Applied Pathways to 30 Days Wild

- Activities informed by pathways
- 1,000,000+ participants over 5 years
- Tracked 1105 participants
- Improvements across all measures
- Improvements sustained for 2 months
- Those who have lower NC show greater improvement
- Although attracts those with high nature connection & females.
- How to reach those who don't watch Springwatch?



Summary

- A close relationship with nature is important for wellbeing *and* pro-nature behaviours.
- It can be targeted and improved to benefit mental health.
- For a new relationship with nature create moments using the pathways to nature connectedness.

Let nature be your story

