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Let nature be your story

# NCI Phase 3: The Pathways to Nature Connectedness Training Slides



UNIVERSITY OF  
**DERBY**

Nature Connectedness Research Group  
[derby.ac.uk/NCxRG](http://derby.ac.uk/NCxRG)



# Part 1: What is Nature Connectedness and what is it good for?

# What is your Nature Story?

Recall your favourite experience with nature:

- What could you see?
- How did you feel?
- What could you smell, touch or hear?
- How important was the experience to you?
- Did you feel that you and nature were similar? Did it inspire you to help it?



# Nature Connectedness

- More than simply exposure to, and contact with nature
- A person's sense of their relationship with nature
- All of nature has value beyond its use by humanity with people part of a wider natural community but not superior to it



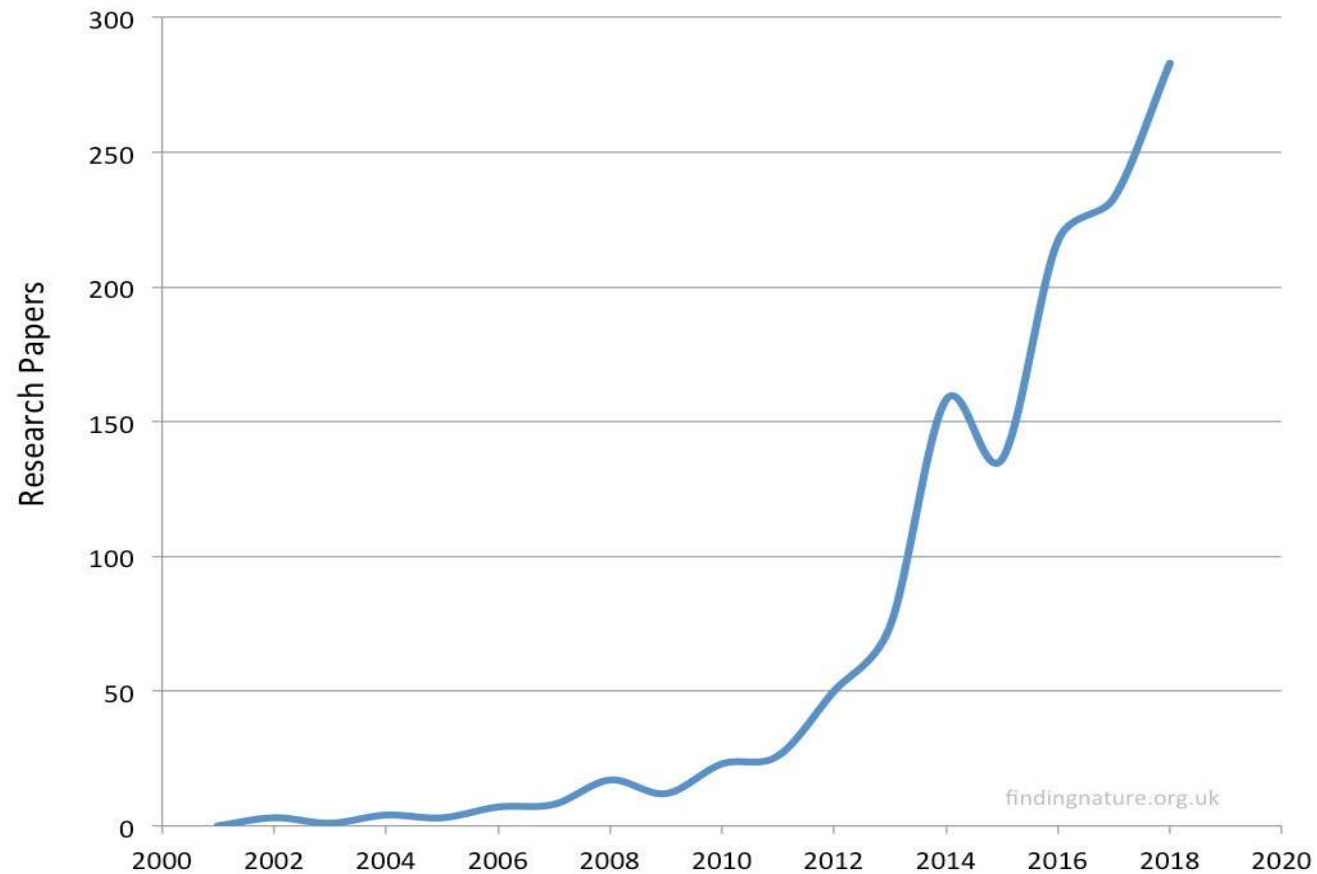
# Nature Connectedness

- Comprised of our thoughts, emotions, personality and experiences
- An internationally recognised psychological construct
- Measurable & malleable

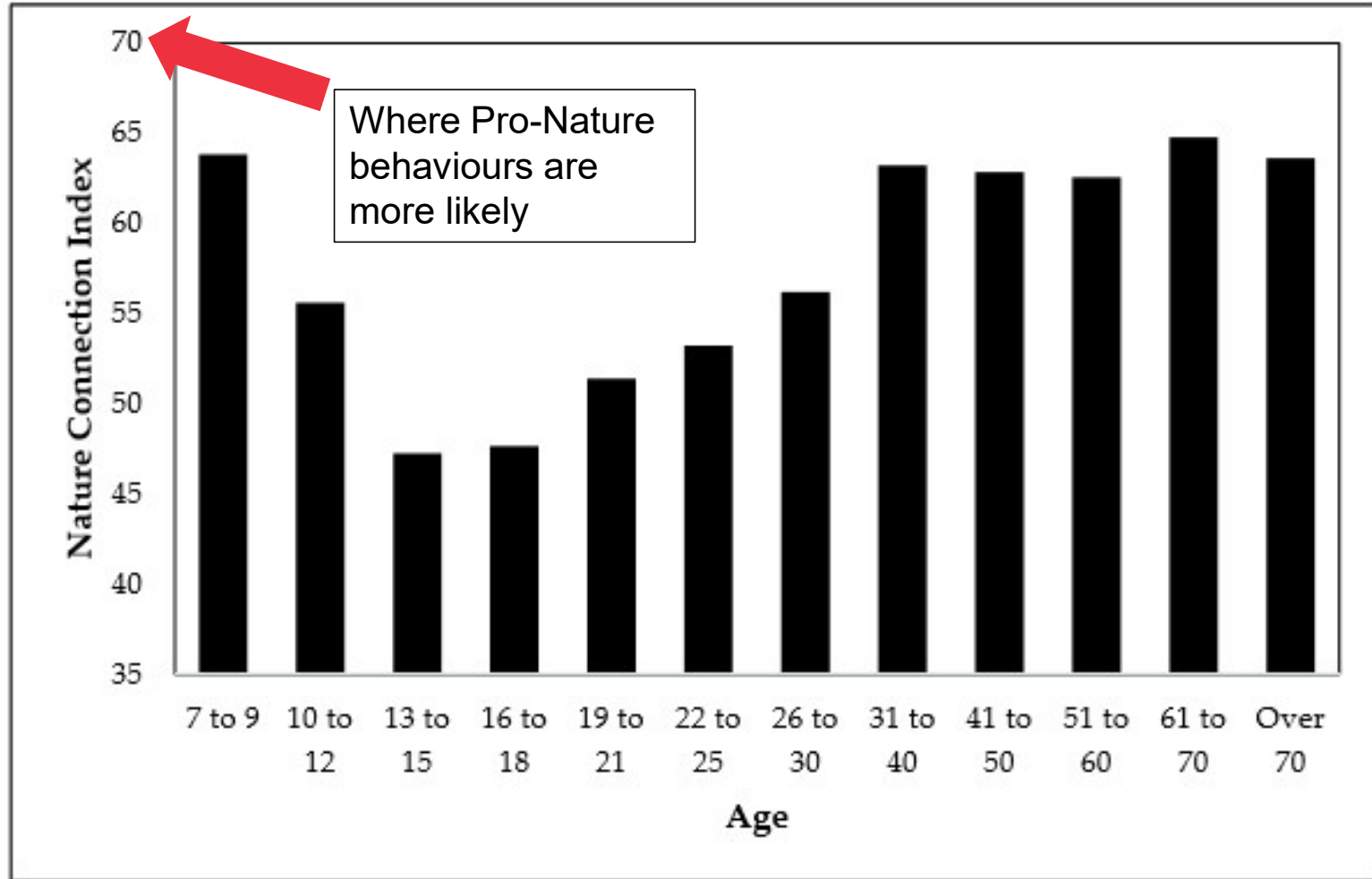


# Nature Connectedness

The Growth of Nature Connectedness in Research



# The Teenage Dip



# Why does this matter?



Health



Wellbeing



Pro-nature  
outcomes

**Nature Connectedness is good for the wellbeing of all of  
nature (humanity included!)**



# Health

- If you are connected, you are more likely to spend time in nature so you can gain direct benefits to your health
- Nature Connection has been linked with the ability to cope leading to better immune system functioning that is suggested to account for many health-related benefits from nature



# Wellbeing

- Independent (and better) predictor of well-being than exposure – NCI Project
- Systematic review of 32 studies shows nature connection related to **feeling good & functioning well.**

Vitality

Meaning & Purpose

Life Satisfaction

Happiness

Personal Growth

Lower Anxiety

Pro-social Behaviour

Body Image



# Pro-Nature Behaviours

Study of children's environmental education found that *environmental knowledge* explained **2%** of ecological behaviour.



*Nature connectedness* explained **69%**

*Otto & Picini, 2017*

# 80% Mammals Lost – 60% of Wildlife Since 1970!



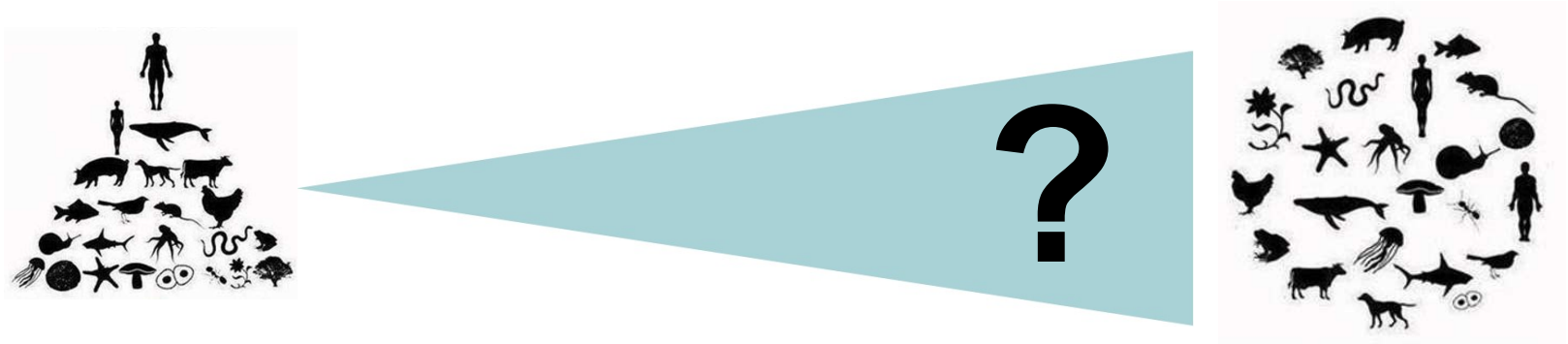


**So how do we get there?**



## Part 2: Pathways to Nature Connectedness

# Pathways to Nature Connectedness



- Based on Kellert's values of Biophilia
- 3 year programme of research (PhD)
- Five studies in total (Quantitative & Qualitative)

# Pathways Research

- Two questionnaire surveys
  - Investigating what people said they did in nature and related this to nature connectedness Identified five pathways that explained up to 64% of why people are nature connected
- An experiment
- Three groups of people:
  - Those walking in nature,
  - Those walking in nature and engaging with pathways
  - Those walking in an urban setting (indoors) and engaging with pathways
- Only walking in nature while engaging with the pathways led to significant increases in nature connectedness from before to after



# The Five Pathways



# Contact (Senses)

- What is it?
  - Going beyond passive interactions with nature
  - Tuning in to nature through the senses by noticing and fully engaging it
- Things you can try:
  - Listening to birdsong
  - Smelling wild flowers
  - Watching the breeze in the trees
  - Going barefoot
  - Tasting the fruits of nature

# Emotion

- What is it?
  - Not just thinking in nature but **feeling**
  - Feeling alive through the emotions nature brings by engaging emotionally with it.
- Things you can try:
  - Finding joy in wildlife at play
  - Taking a moment to feel calm in nature
  - Finding wonder in a spiders' web
  - Reflect and share your feelings about nature with others

# Beauty

- What is it?
  - Going beyond passive viewing of nature
  - Noticing the beauty in nature and appreciating it every day
- Things you can try:
  - Create some wild art
  - Paint the amazing colours of insects
  - Take a photo of a flower
  - Visit a place with a wonderful view

# Meaning

- What is it?
  - Moving away from isolating nature as something we are in
  - Nature bringing meaning to our lives; celebrating the mystery, signs and cycles of nature
- Things you can try:
  - Create a story about a tree
  - Map the journey of a bee
  - Celebrate the longest day, the first swallow of summer or the first fall of leaves
  - Letting nature be your story

# Compassion

- What is it?
  - Moving beyond a purely anthropocentric focus
  - Caring and taking action for nature by embracing our similarity with our natural family
- Things you can try:
  - Feed the birds
  - Plant some wildflowers
  - Take part in a beach clean
  - Put up a nest box
  - Watch a wild family grow
  - Support conservation charities or buy eco-friendly products

## What are not Pathways

- Using nature purely for survival needs
- Controlling or dominating nature
- Studying nature for facts and figures
- Avoiding nature or being fearful of it

# What is your Nature Story?

Recall your favourite  
experience with nature:






- What could you see?  
(**Beauty**)
- How did you feel? (**Emotion**)
- What could you smell, touch  
or hear? (**Contact**)
- How important was the  
experience to you?  
(**Meaning**)
- Did you feel that you and  
nature were similar? Did it  
inspire you to help it?  
(**Compassion**)



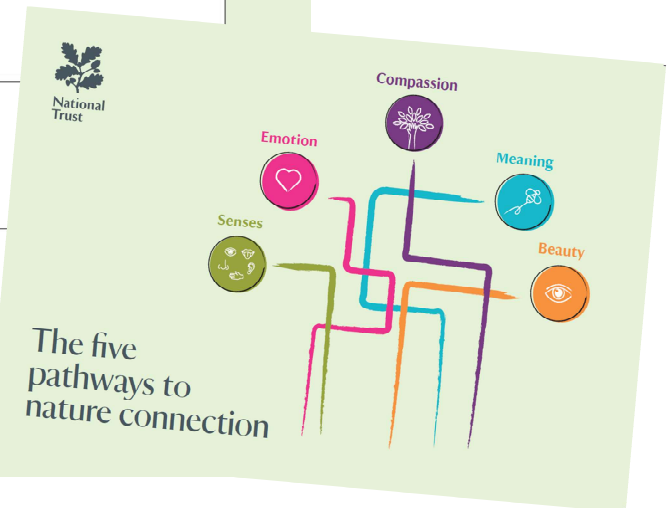


# The Pathway Framework

## My nature connection experience is:

- 
**Senses** Engaging with nature through the senses for pleasure, for example listening to birdsong, smelling wild flowers, touching the bark of a tree or watching the sunset.
- 
**Emotion** Emphasising an emotional bond with a love for nature, or reflecting on the positive feelings nature can inspire, such as calm and happiness.
- 
**Compassion** Looking after nature as you would look after yourself, and developing a moral and ethical concern for nature. This could include making ethical product choices or being concerned with the welfare of animals.
- 
**Meaning** Emphasising traditions, such as seeing the first swallow or smelling the first bluebell, or reflecting on language and symbolism, such as 'busy as a bee' or 'heart of oak'.
- 
**Beauty** Engaging with the aesthetic qualities of nature, such as appreciating natural scenery or engaging with nature through poetry, music or art.

Search 'Nature Engagement' on Acc



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Thanks for Listening...

Any  
questions?

