

The Phantom Chorus: Birdsong Boosts Human Well-Being in Protected Areas

that it only takes a few minutes of exposure to birdsong for people to feel better. Go outside – it is good for you."

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Time spent in nature can help us feel happier and healthier, but it's not *just* from the fresh air and exercise. All of our senses are involved in the experience—sight, touch, smells and sound. In a world of changing natural environments, scientists are working hard to pinpoint how, exactly, natural environments feed our senses.

[In a recently published paper](#), researchers Danielle Ferraro, Dr. Zachary Miller and others showed that the sound of birdsong increased perceived psychological restoration – a type of mental well-being – for hikers. They used a "phantom chorus" of birdsong consisting of hidden speakers to artificially increase the audible bird biodiversity on two trails. Hikers exposed to a more biodiverse sound reported higher levels of restorative effects compared to others. These findings add to a growing body of evidence linking human well-being to natural experiences and suggest that natural soundscapes are an important way that outdoor recreation helps people feel "restored" after an experience in a natural environment.

"Maintaining or improving natural soundscapes within protected areas helps provide essential well-being services to people," said Miller. "Even more amazing is