

Seeing, Listening to Birds Can Improve Mental Health

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Mental (Adjective) /'mentl/ relating to the brain or thinking
Example: It is a test to gauge your mental capacity.
2. Mood (Noun) /mu:d/ how a person feels at a particular time
Example: He easily changes his mood from happy to angry and sarcastic.
3. Depression (Noun) /di'preʃən/ a mental health condition in which people often feel very sad, have trouble eating and sleeping, lack energy, etc.
Example: They never knew that she was undergoing depression for she seemed to always be happy.
4. Specific (Adjective) /spɪ'sɪfɪk/ clearly identified; exact and clear
Example: She didn't tell me a specific time and date on when we're going to meet.
5. Account for (Phrasal Verb) /ə'kaʊnt fɔ:r/ to think about or consider
Example: The scientists didn't account for variations in salary among the subjects.
6. Prescribe (Verb) /prɪ'skraɪb/ to advise or allow a patient to receive a particular drug, treatment, etc.
Example: She was prescribed that medicine when she visited the doctor.



A new study has found that seeing or hearing birds could be good for people's mental health. The study, which was published in Scientific Reports, found that seeing or hearing birds improved the mood of both people with good mental health and people with depression. Previously, studies have shown that nature can have a positive effect on mental health. However, this study is different, because it focuses on one specific part of the natural world: birds.

Between April 2018 and October 2021, the study's authors used a smartphone app to collect data from almost 1,300 participants around the world. Three times a day for 14 days,

participants would be asked by the app to give information about where they were, how they were feeling, and whether they could see or hear birds.

The researchers found that participants' feelings improved when they saw or heard birds, and that the positive effect was stronger when participants were outdoors. This was still true even when the researchers accounted for the positive effect of just seeing trees, plants or water. They also found that birds had a lasting positive effect that continued for some time after seeing or hearing them, and that these results were true both for people with good mental health and for people with depression.

The study's authors suggest that doctors could prescribe visits to places with many birds for people who have mental health problems. They also say the natural environment should be managed and protected, so that birds can be heard and seen in towns and cities as well as the countryside.

DISCUSSION

1. Is your country home to any rare or unique birds?
2. Do you find it surprising that seeing or hearing birds may have a positive impact on our mental health?
3. Are there a lot of birds where you live? Do you often see or hear them?
4. What animals are people likely to come across in the wild in your country?
5. Who are the biggest animal lovers you know?
6. Do you have pets? If so, what effect do they have on your mental health?