

**IC - (20980) - WILDLIFE PRESENCE AND THE RESTORATIVE POTENTIAL OF NATURE SETTINGS**

Maria Johansson<sup>4</sup>; Anders Flykt<sup>3</sup>; Jens Frank<sup>2</sup>; Terry Hartig<sup>1</sup>

1 - Uppsala University, Sweden; 2 - Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden; 3 - Mid Sweden University, Sweden; 4 - Lund University, Sweden

**Background and objectives**

The presence of wildlife may contribute to or hinder people's opportunities for psychological restoration. This study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of people's appraisals of a potential wildlife encounter and opportunities for restorative outdoor activities in local natural settings. The research is based on recent frameworks connecting biodiversity with human health and well-being outcomes (Marselle et al., 2021; Johansson et al., 2021).

**Process and methods (for empirical research)**

The research combines qualitative content analysis of focus groups discussions and a quantitative analysis of a scenario study systematically varying species densities (ongoing). The focus is upon four mammalian species present in Sweden, two controversial (wild boar, wolf) and two less so (squirrel, roe deer). Participants are from three regions with different species composition.

**Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)**

Content analyses of the discussions reveal that the participants adapt to potential wildlife encounters in their choice of recreational setting and activity. This adaptation includes both avoidance and approach behaviour. Moments of direct interaction between a person and an animal are reported as vivid memories. In an encounter, people seem to be attentive to animals' movements in the landscape, specific species features and sounds, and their behaviour. This applies to all four of the investigated species. However, personal appraisal of an animal as threatening or unthreatening to humans and human activity appears to affect restorative potential. The role of animal density will be further analysed.

**Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution**

The presence of wildlife should be considered in discussions of the availability of green spaces and their recreational value. The research integrates research on restorative qualities of nature settings and human dimensions of wildlife. The results will inform wildlife management and public health strategies with regard to potential synergies and trade-offs on species conservation and management close to the built environment.

**Palavras-chave : wildlife, appraisal, emotion, restoration,**