



Ymddiriedolaeth  
Natur  
**Gwent**  
Wildlife Trust



# **Nature Reserves Neighbours Survey 2022: Findings, Data and Conclusions**

# Introduction

We are at a tipping point for nature's recovery in Wales. It seems that people are at last waking up to the biodiversity crisis which has been unfolding for decades.

Welsh Government has recently declared a nature emergency alongside the climate emergency, there is greater participation in environmental activism, TV documentaries (Blue Planet, Extinction) have mass appeal. But are we in an echo chamber? Are we bringing everyone in Gwent along with us? And is concern backed up by knowledge and translating into action? With the GG State of Nature Report hot off the press, we need similar insights into the human state, to inform and focus future engagement activity.

With input from LNP partners, we developed a short survey to better understand people's knowledge, attitudes and practises – starting with those living within [1km] of a Nature Reserve. People living in these locations have been selected as they can play a vital and fairly immediate role in supporting our

aim of creating bigger and more joined up places for nature.

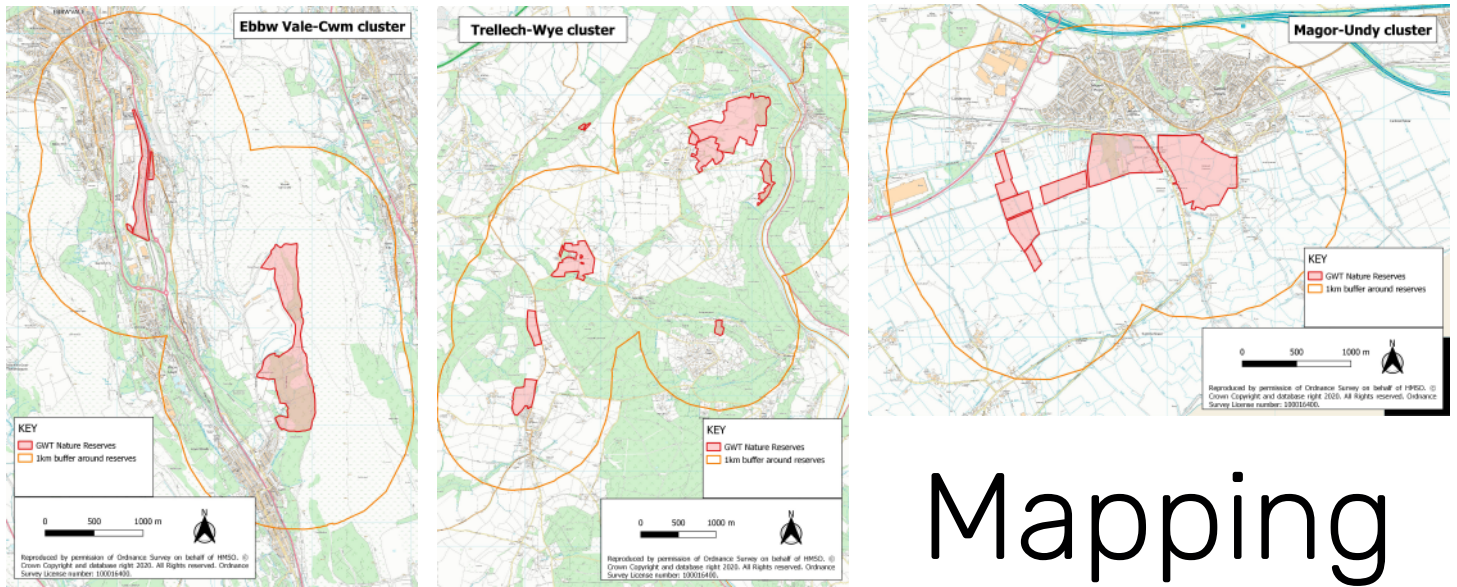
Survey responses indicated Gwent people's awareness of the crisis, key species and habitats in their locality, what they think the causes are and best approaches to aiding nature's recovery at a local level. (This might, for example, include understanding and attitudes towards changing cutting regimes or woodland maintenance).

We hoped it would give us greater insights into what action people can or would like to personally take (from recording to planting) and what might motivate them to take more effective action, (for example by identifying local species and habitats people care most about).



Photo: Tom Marshall

# Survey Design Process



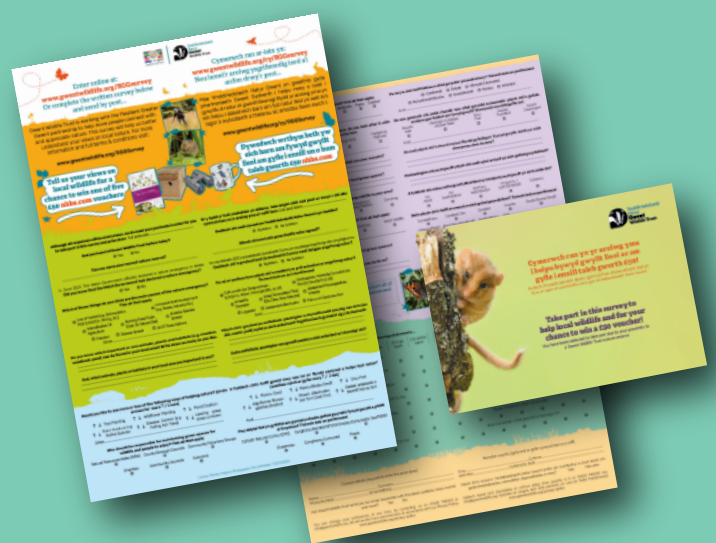
## Mapping

Using our Graphical Information System (GIS) and spatial data of our own reserves, we identified 3 main clusters within Gwent where there was a high density of Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT) reserves.

It must also be noted that each of these areas has different types of population such as predominantly rural (Trellech-Wye Cluster), predominantly suburban (Magor-Undy Cluster), and predominantly urban (Ebbw Vale-Cwm Cluster).

With further GIS mapping we then created boundaries, in order to give an idea of where to target the printed version of the surveys. Upon submission of the survey, we

requested postcodes so that we can cross-reference a location against our findings.



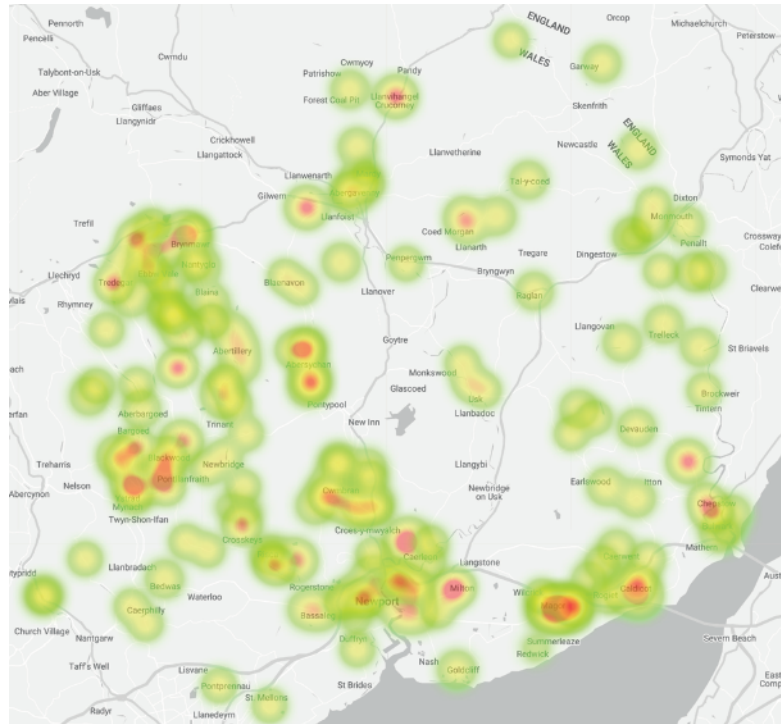
The printed version of the survey was sealed in a colourful printed envelope. It folded out from A5 to A3 with Welsh and English parallel throughout.

# Response numbers

The survey was well received with a coverage across Gwent, including concentrations around our nature reserves clusters, where the door drop was focused.

There was a total of 239 participants - 236 responses in English, 3 responses in Welsh.

The average response time was about 13 minutes.



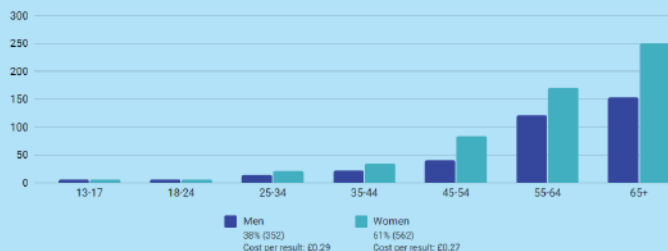
## Digital

The Social Media advert was successful in creating a steady flow of clicks on to the survey landing page throughout May, with Ad

spend directly correlating to page views. Overall, digital channels showed an effective return on investment, with a Cost Per Click of £0.28. The advert was focused to show specifically within Gwent, in English or Welsh depending on the user's language preference.

Demographics Platform

Age and gender distribution

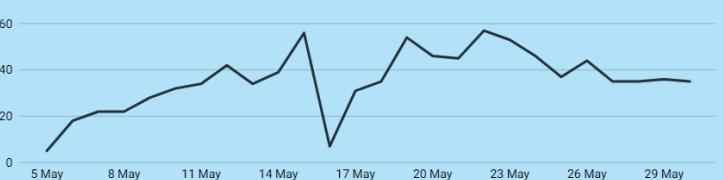


Link Clicks 928

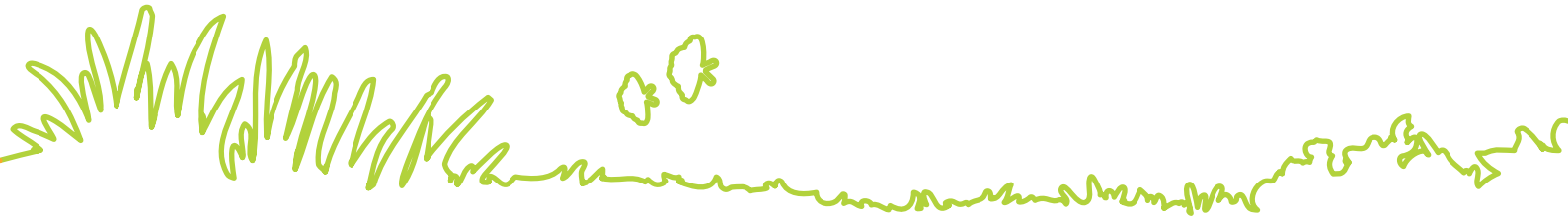
Per link click £0.28

Reach 29,832

Link Clicks



# Section 1: Knowledge



This section was added specifically to gauge how much knowledge of certain subjects varying around land management, conservation, climate change and wildlife each participant has.

2. Had you heard of Gwent Wildlife Trust before today?

● Yes	213
● No	25



3. Can you name your nearest nature reserve?

230  
Responses

35 respondents (15%) answered **Magor marshes** for this question.



# Section 1: Knowledge



4. In June 2021, The Welsh Government officially declared a nature emergency in Wales. Did you know that the Welsh Government had declared a nature emergency?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

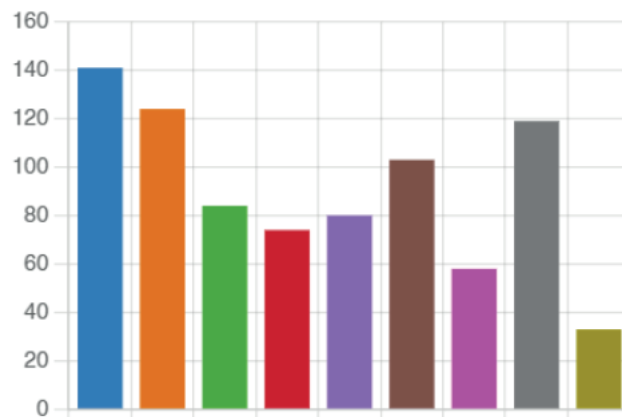
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Yes	89
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> No	148



5. Which of these things do you think are the main causes of the nature emergency? Tick all that apply

[More Details](#)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Loss of habitat (eg Deforestation...)	141
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Increased Built Development (e...)	124
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Intensification Of Agriculture	84
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Burning Fossil Fuels (Coal, Oil, N...)	74
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Invasive Species Spread	80
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> Pollution	103
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Disease Spread	58
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> All Of These Options	119
<span style="color: olive;">●</span> Other	33



'Other' responses included many themes and ideas, to highlight a few. Use of chemicals ranked fairly highly as well as local authority and government – generally in the context of inaction or incorrect methodology. Another common theme was the way people manage their gardens or land. There were also mentions of human attitudes, behavior, population and hunting.



# Section 2: Attitudes and Practice



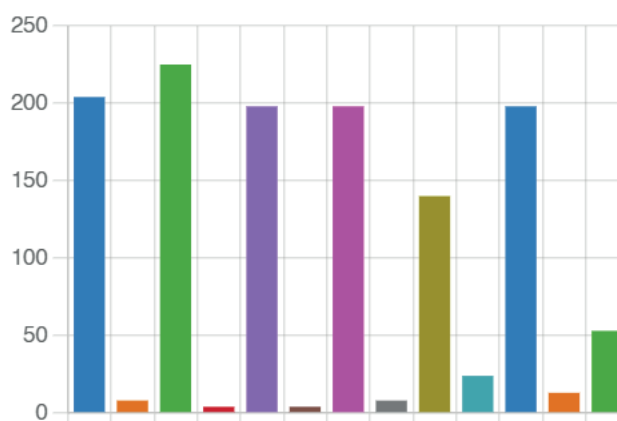
This section explores what preferences people have about how their local green spaces are managed, as well how the land they have access to is managed. Also included, are actions that people are currently able or willing to take for wildlife themselves.

A particular focus on public green spaces is highlighted in this section – honing in on activities / usage and observations, as well as giving room for participants to explain potential reasons as to why they don't partake in certain 'wildlife friendly' actions (if applicable).

8. Would you like to see more or less of the following ways of helping nature? (select more or less)

## [More Details](#)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> MORE: Tree Planting	204
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> LESS: Tree Planting	8
<span style="color: green;">●</span> MORE: Wildflower Planting	225
<span style="color: red;">●</span> LESS: Wildflower Planting	4
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> MORE: Pond Creation	198
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> LESS: Pond Creation	4
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> MORE: Reintroducing Native Sp...	198
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> LESS: Reintroducing Native Spec...	8
<span style="color: olive;">●</span> MORE: Disease Control (eg Felli...	140
<span style="color: teal;">●</span> LESS: Disease Control (eg Fellin...	24
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> MORE: Leaving grass areas unm...	198
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> LESS: Leaving grass areas unmo...	13
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Other	53



With an array of written feedback in the 'Other' section, it is clear there's a broad range of viewpoints. Not everyone supports felling of ash trees, particularly if they are perceived to be in a 'low risk' area. Water quality / pollution is frequently mentioned as well as farming and chemical use. Support for a range of diverse habitats, including trees but in the right place, as well as better education about the importance of protecting wildlife was another clear theme.



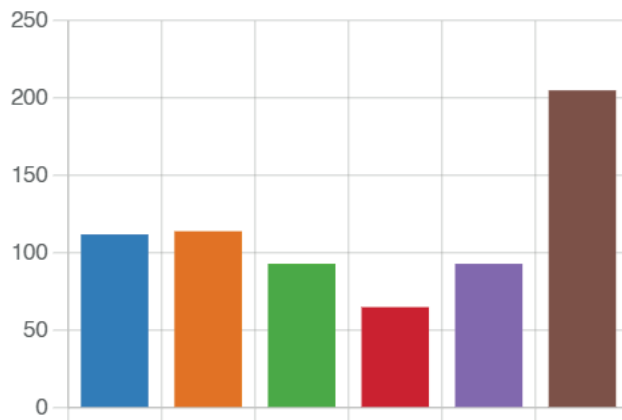
# Section 2: Attitudes and Practice



9. Who should be responsible for maintaining green spaces for wildlife and people to enjoy? Tick all that apply

[More Details](#)

● Natural Resources Wales (NRW)	112
● County Borough Councils	114
● Community / Voluntary Groups	93
● Charities	65
● Community Councils	93
● Everyone	205

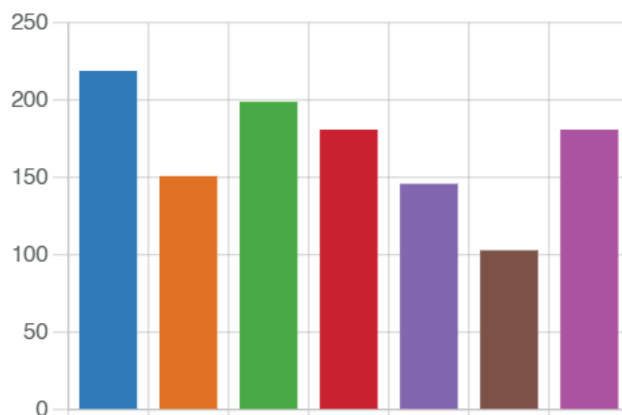


Many participants favoured multiple types of varying 'green spaces', however there are clearer favourites displayed below. 36 out of the 43 (83.7%) people who named Magor Marsh as their nearest reserve named Wetlands as one of their favourites. Those who did not name 'Magor Marsh' as their nearest reserve were far less likely to name Wetlands at around 110 of 195 (56.4%).

10. Which are your favourite types of green spaces to visit? Tick all that apply

[More Details](#)

● Woodlands	219
● Meadows	151
● Rivers / Lakes	199
● Mountains / Hills	181
● Wetlands	146
● Parks	103
● Coastal	181

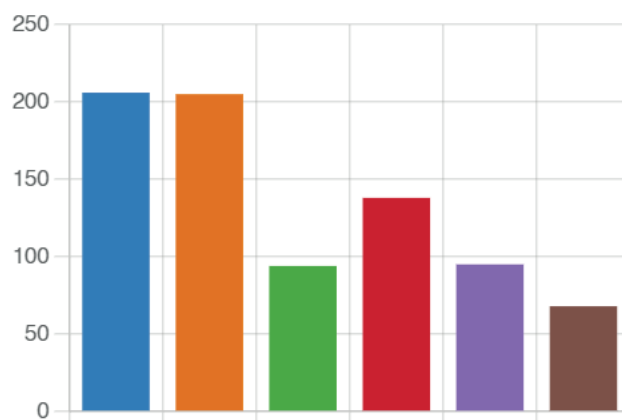


# Section 2: Attitudes and Practice

11. If you have a garden, allotment or community green space, do you look after it with wildlife in mind? Please select or describe how

[More Details](#)

● Feeding Birds	206
● Pollinator-Friendly Plants	205
● Pond Creation	94
● Bug Hotel	138
● Hedgehog Highway	95
● Other	68



Themes from the 'Other' text box were very much centred around a 'wilding' approach with numerous mentions of leaving dead wood, allowing wildflowers, nettles, shrubs and overgrowth as well as other techniques such as avoiding pesticides, poisons and no dig gardening.

12. If you don't manage in a wildlife-friendly manner, what are your reasons?

For comparison, those who gave (50 people in total) reasons for not managing their gardens in a wildlife friendly manner were mostly concerned about encouraging unwanted rats to bird feeders as well as cats preying on them or other issues relating to wildlife and pets.

Some participants were not previously aware of many of the actions they could do. Another clear issue was lack of choice, e.g. renting and not managing their own gardens as well as simply not having enough space.

# Section 2: Attitudes and Practice

13. What plants and wildlife have you noticed in your local green spaces?

61 respondents (31%) answered **birds** for this question.



14. Would you want to support a local organisation helping wildlife in your area?

[More Details](#)

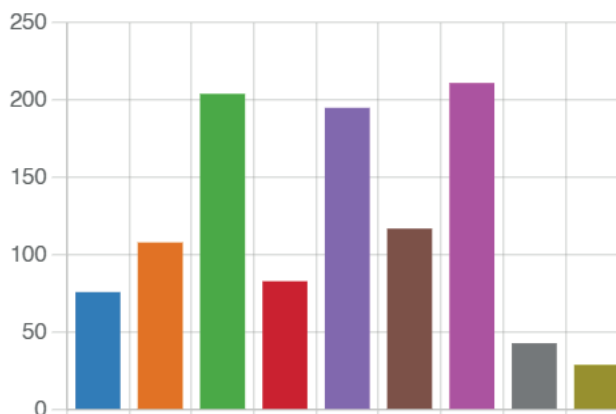
As a Member	106
As a Volunteer	132
Staff or Board Member	40
Campaigning / Signing Petitions	72
Donating	59



15. What do you like to do in your local green spaces? Tick all that apply

[More Details](#)

Socialise	76
Walking Dog	108
Walk	204
Exercise	83
Watch Wildlife	195
Photography	117
Enjoy Scenery	211
Volunteer	43
Other	29



# Section 2: Attitudes and Practice

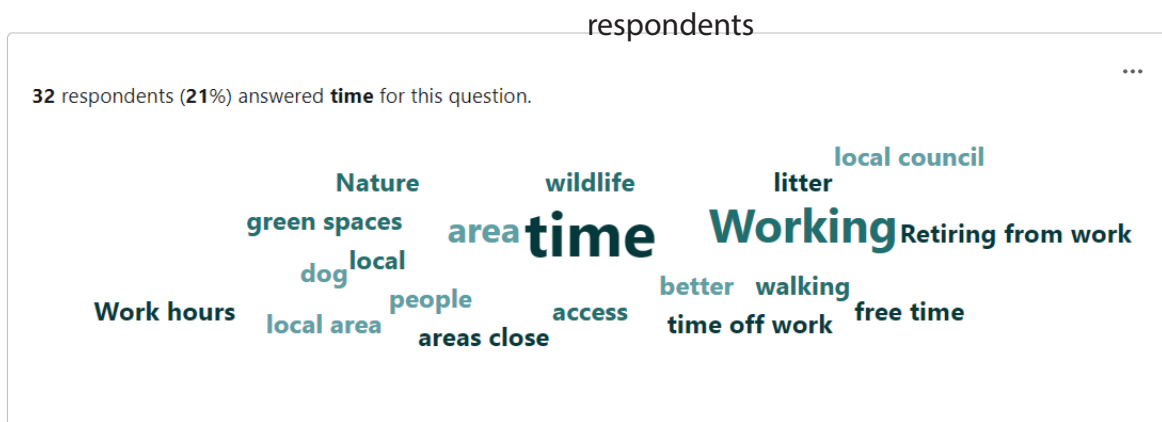
16. Would you like to spend more time outdoors in green spaces?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	223
● No	11



17. If yes, is there anything that would help you to do so?



Overwhelmingly, the main barrier participants had about not spending more time outdoors was having the free time itself: This was mostly down to work commitments but also other commitments such as children or being a carer were clear obstacles.

Location and access was another major reason given. Many participants claim they do not have adequate spaces within walking distance, or reasonable public transport to the green spaces. Other participants cited limited mobility as an obstacle that restricted their access to within green spaces.

There were some comments about off road vehicles being out of control amongst other safety concerns. There were also a few responses centred around better organisation of activities by local authorities and/or charities, be that volunteering or other types of events.

# Section 3: Connection to Nature



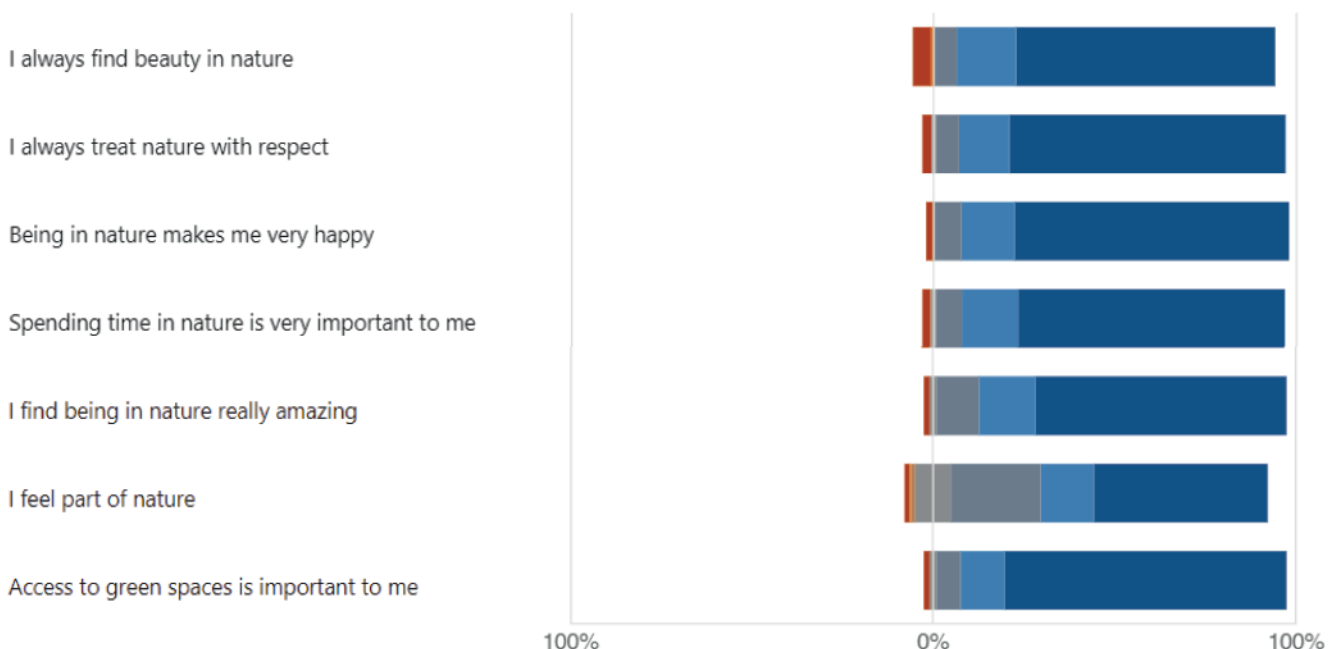
Section 3 is the Connection to Nature Index, apart from the final question “Access to green spaces is important to me” which was an addition added for the survey. This simple but comprehensive index was driven, funded and delivered by a wide collaboration of partners, including The Wildlife Trusts, in the Nature Connection Working Group between 2013 and 2019. The vast majority of participants had a very high rating on the index.

You can read more about the Connection to Nature Index here: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6005041314136064?category=6663557926354944>

18. Please tell us how much you agree with the following statements...

[More Details](#)

■ Completely Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree or disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree  
■ Completely Agree



# Section 3: Connection to Nature



For scoring the Connection to Nature Index, we have used the agreed weighted index scoring system. This has been found to deliver more evenly distributed results, than a simple mean calculation of scores based on equally weighted scores. See below graph for how the scoring system is calculated and attributed for each question:

Statement	Rating						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I always find beauty in nature	0	1	2	3	5	9	15
I always treat nature with respect	0	0	1	2	4	6	10
Being in nature makes me very happy	0	1	2	3	6	10	16
Spending time in nature is very important to me	0	1	2	3	6	11	19
I find being in nature really amazing	0	1	2	3	6	10	17
I feel part of nature	0	1	2	4	7	13	23
Index	0						100

Source: Natural England

You can view more results, averages, demographics, breakdowns as well as methodological development of the Connection to Nature Index in the following publication:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5337609808642048>

Total Mean  
Score:  
**81.01**

# Conclusions



The survey has reached a broad range of locations that mainly stayed within Gwent, alongside concentrations within our chosen areas. A possible consideration of the sample set is that the incentive may skew the types of people who responded, seeing as the prize was quite specific to people who are already interested in or engaged with conservation and wildlife.

We are pleased with the results and findings - there are some very clear themes outlined. This could be attitudes towards land management as well as species that people see as priorities. Although demographic segmentation and data capture were not a priority for the survey itself, using the postcode data there's more that can be extracted from this.

An anonymised Excel spreadsheet copy of the results can be found on Gwent Wildlife Trusts landing page for the survey, or accessed using the following link: <https://www.gwentwildlife.org/media/4793>

This survey report was produced by Gwent Wildlife Trust as part of the Resilient Greater Gwent project.

The Resilient Greater Gwent project is being funded by Welsh Governments Enabling of Natural Resources and Well-being Grant. The programme runs until summer 2022, and demonstrates a landscape wide approach and connectivity across South East Wales; to create and enhance resilient ecological networks, providing sustainably managed natural resources and principles for communities to value their landscapes and wildlife.

The Sustainable Communities work stream is led by Monmouthshire The Sustainable Communities work stream is led by Monmouthshire CC's Sustainable Communities Officer. It takes a community and place based approach, engaging with communities and supporting people to: become increasingly connected with and appreciate nature, and adopt sustainable lifestyles which will enhance their physical and mental wellbeing.

