

# BIOPHILIA AND BUSHWALKING

*(From bushwalking to biophilia and beyond)*



## PUT YOURSELF INTO THIS SCENE

- *Imagine you are there*
- *What are you thinking?*  
*What are you feeling?*

**OR**

## TAKE YOURSELF TO A VIVID SCENIC MEMORY FROM YOUR BUSHWALKING

- *Recall feelings and thoughts  
you had then*

Photo : Jodi Griffiths YBC



## IMAGINE YOURSELF IN THESE PLACES

- *Feelings?*
- *Thoughts?*



## GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO BUSH (or nature) WALKERS

Walking → *Physical benefits*

Bush → *Mental, emotional, social and spiritual benefits*

- *Fun*
- *Enjoyment of beauty*
- *Relaxation*
- *Companionship*
- *Feeling a connection with nature*
- *Satisfaction/reward*
- *Sensory pleasure*
- *Stimulation of interests*
- *Creative inspiration*

**Does science have anything to say about the effects of bushwalking on the human mind ?**

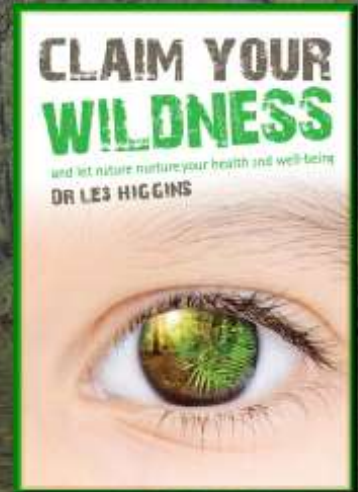
*It does – and about the wider importance of nature for human health and wellbeing*

**“In a short time, something important happens to all kinds of people in natural places”**

**CLAIM YOUR WILDNESS**

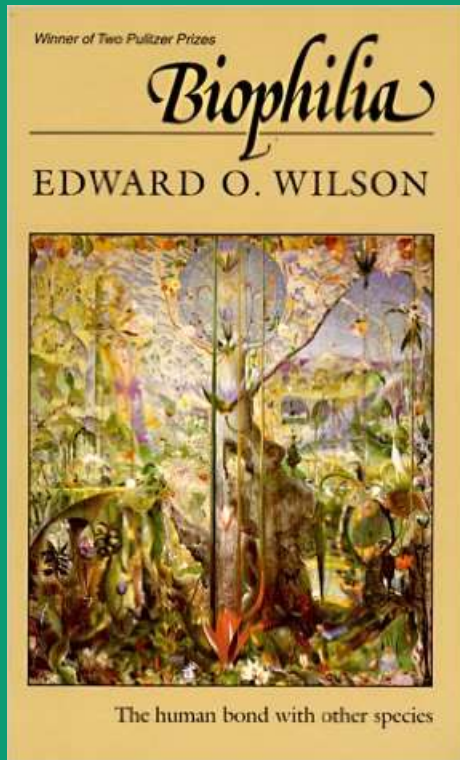
AND LET NATURE NURTURE YOUR  
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**DR LES HIGGINS**

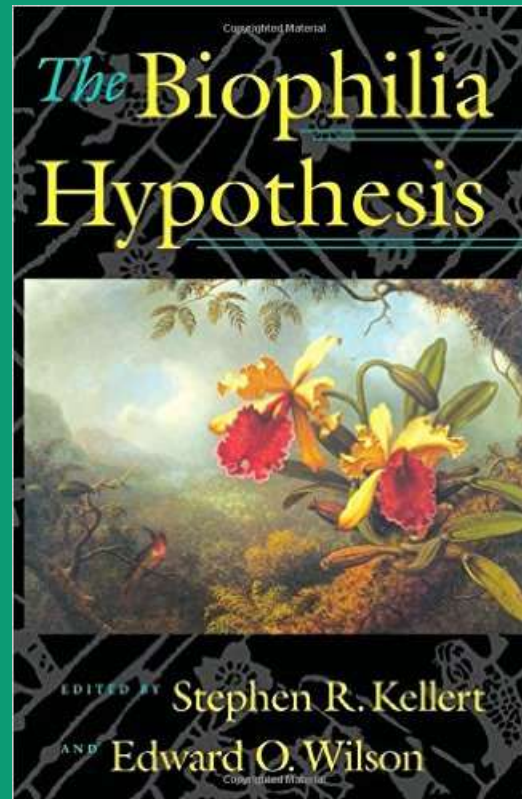


**BLOG: [www.ourgreengenes.wordpress.com](http://www.ourgreengenes.wordpress.com)**

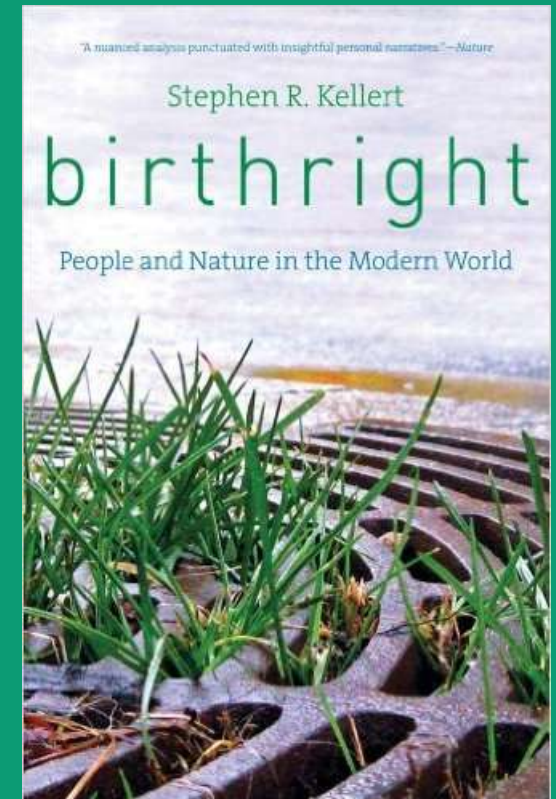
## SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION - *BIOPHILIA*



1984



1993



2012

# BIOPHILIA

*Basic definition : the **inherent** inclination to affiliate with the natural world*

***Inherent** – genetic basis (product of evolution/adaptation)*

***Inclination** – a disposition that has to be developed*

*What it is about:*

*How nature, particularly its living biota, has provided humans with the evolutionary basis for our species' physical, emotional, cognitive and even spiritual development*



**Its workings are to be found in our:**

- Senses** *colour /shape/ depth perception, movement detection, response to blue/yellow light, snake detection, preferences (e.g. for curves, moderate complexity, greenness, vistas)*
- Emotions** *love, pleasure, reward, happiness, wonder/awe, fear, disgust*
- Mental activities** *learning ,curiosity, interest, understanding, empathy*

# Biophilia lies behind all the ways we give meaning to, and derive benefit from, the natural world:

- **Attraction**                      seeking beauty /serenity/tranquillity/solitude
- **Reason**                            pursuing knowledge and understanding
- **Aversion**                          antipathy/fearful avoidance
- **Exploitation**                    utilizing/exploiting
- **Affection**                         connecting emotionally
- **Domination**                    striving to master or control
- **Spirituality**                    pursuing meaning/something beyond ourselves
- **Symbolisation**                representing nature in word, image, music etc

# Biophilia – the evidence (overview)

## 1. Cross-cultural behaviour

Which view do you prefer?



Beauty everyone, everywhere sees



Natasha Bieniek 's 2015 Wynne Turner Prize  
winning miniature “Biophilia”



# Biophilia – the evidence (overview)

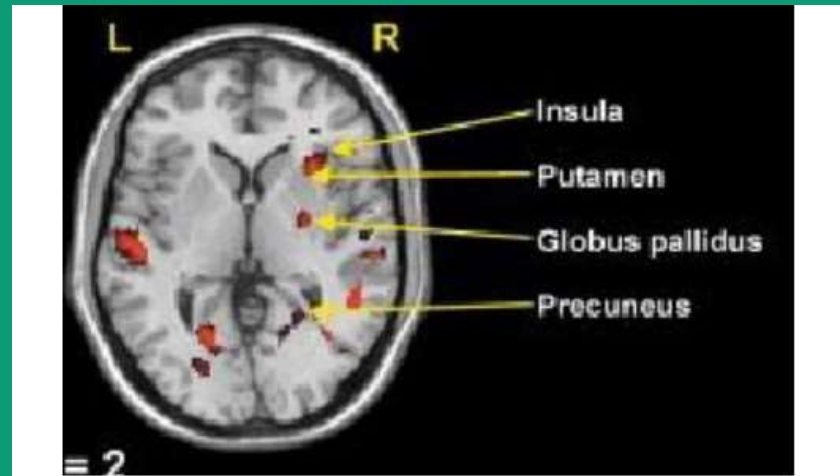
## 2. Unlearned behaviour



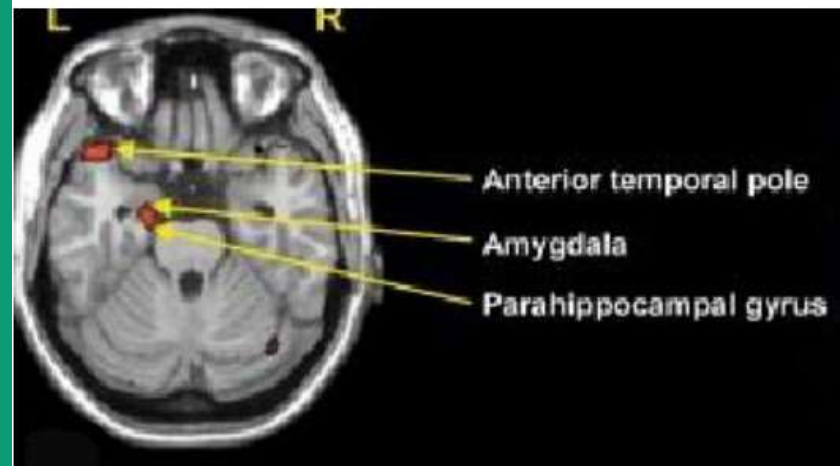
# Biophilia – the evidence (overview)

## 3. Neurological (brain) studies

*Viewing nature scene*



*Viewing urban scene*



# What's the message?



*As we are still “wild” creatures, we need nature in our lives.*

**Without it , we are like battery chickens:**

*Not fully the creatures we are meant to be*





# BUSHWALKING : a great way to put nature in your life



# Some of the personal benefits (gifts of biophilia)

## Immediate

- Stress recovery (replacing flight or fight with rest and digest)
  - Recovery from attention fatigue
- Improved concentration and working memory
  - Lower risk of anxiety disorders and depression
- Enhanced vitality
  - Positive mood states (pleasure, joy, reward, awe)
- Mental stimulation (curiosity, interest)
  - Tranquillity and reflection
- Heightened empathy and other-centredness

## Some of the personal benefits (gifts of biophilia)

**Long term** (depending on kind and extent of involvement with nature)

- **Better physical and mental health**
  - **Decreased risk of stress-related illnesses**
- **Strengthened immune function**
  - **Greater self-awareness**
- **Strengthened self-esteem and resilience**
  - **Richer social connections**
- **Enriched spirituality**
  - **Intellectual and creative interests**
- **Environmental and pro-nature values**

So why aren't people going bushwalking in droves?

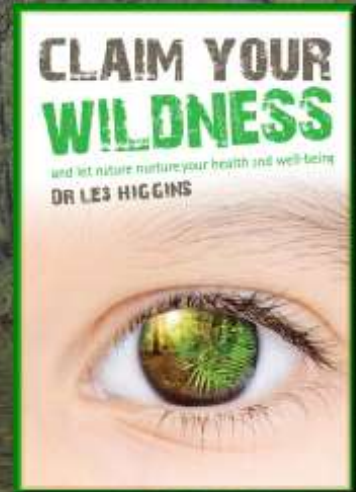
Not enough time Kid's sport Not fit enough  
**Videophilia** Lack the knowledge and skills etc

*What could you, your club and Bushwalking NSW do to promote bushwalking – as a “biophilic activity” leading to better health and wellbeing?*

**CLAIM YOUR WILDNESS**

AND LET NATURE NURTURE YOUR  
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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**<http://hikingresearch.wordpress.com>**