

Biophilia

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Biophilia is Edward O. Wilson's most personal book, an evocation of his own response to nature and an eloquent statement of the conservation ethic. Wilson argues that our natural affinity for life-biophilia-is the very essence of our humanity and binds us to all other living species.

Edward O. Wilson is Pellegrino University Professor, Emeritus, at Harvard University. In addition to two Pulitzer Prizes (one of which he shares with Bert H. Olden), Wilson has won many scientific awards, including the National Medal of Science and the Crafoord Prize of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. "There's more to this unbuttoned and intellectually playful book than its plea for a conservation of ethic and the preservation of animal species in all their diversity. We get, for example, several autobiographical glimpses into the background of Professor Wilson... We see Professor Wilson as a boy growing up in the Florida panhandle... Elsewhere he astonishes us with a description of the mating dance of the male Emperor of Germany bird of paradise, and the degree of genetic congruity between pygmy chimpanzees and Homo sapiens."-Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, New York Times

"E. O. Wilson is the entomologist Curator of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. His science writing for the general public has won him the Pulitzer Prize and his scientific publications have won him the highest honors American science can bestow. He is well equipped to engage a subject dear to nature-lovers which until now has not been identified as a species trait-biophilia. The freshness of Wilson's approach lies in its freedom from the obsessions of the environmentalist movement... While he shares the conservationist ethic of environmentalists, and seeks to impart its practical imperatives, he eschews cultism... Let this highly readable book then be commended to all biophiliacs and technocrats."-Hiram Caton, Times Literary Supplement

"Biophilia is an immensely readable book. Wilson is a master storyteller, skillful at evoking exotic scenes."-Washington Post Book World

"A fine memoir by one of America's foremost evolutionary biologists...erudite, elegant, and poetic. E. O. Wilson defines biophilia as "the innate tendency [in human beings] to focus on life and lifelike process. To an extent still undervalued in philosophy and religion, our existence depends on this propensity, our spirit is woven from it, hopes rise on its currents.' Scientifically demonstrating this human propensity would be a task beyond the scope of today's biology, and Wilson wisely eschews that course. Instead, he relies on his own experiences and feelings as a field biologist, cleverly interweaving them with the facts, history, and philosophy of evolutionary biology and an eclectic set of cultural observations."-Paul R. Ehrlich, Natural History

"Wilson's own empathy with things illuminates these essays with fresh perceptions of everyday matters... They are masterpieces of prose style... Wilson moves fluidly among minute observations of life forms ranging from leaf-cutter ants to birds of paradise, artfully pausing for a philosophical reflection here and a folksy anecdote there."-John Wilkes, Los Angeles Times

Other Books

Biophilia in the Neighbourhood, This research focuses on children's connection with their

natural environment by the agency of outdoor activities. It emphasises on nearby nature as a setting that triggers the children's sense of unstructured play. Outdoor activities offer children the chances to interact with nature and to nurture their sense of biophilia. Biophilia can be described as the affection for living things or nature. Thus, a positive environment for the children's development needs to consist of biophilic design in order to encourage contact with nature on a daily basis. Hence, this study aims at establishing the preferences of children in their natural environment, accompanied by an understanding of the sense of biophilia in their urban neighbourhood settings. Three objectives are formulated: (i) to examine the types of nearby nature that middle childhood children are connected with within their neighbourhood settings, (ii) to identify the children's perception of nature (preference or otherwise) and their sense of biophilia, and (iii) to determine the physical characteristics of nearby nature that connect the children to Biophilia. The scope of this study highlights on middle childhood children in an urban neighbourhood with various socio-demographic backgrounds in Taman Melati, Kuala Lumpur. Accordingly, in order to reveal the children's behaviour and thought, a mixed-method research design was conducted through questionnaire survey, semi-structured interview and observation. A review of literature was also carried out in the study. Data obtained from the data collection stage were analysed by descriptive statistics and content analysis. The finding shows that most of the children are familiar with places that are dominated by natural elements, while mixed elements of man-made and nature prevails in the preferred places. Due to children's limited independence mobility, both of the places are close-proximity to home. The familiar places afford children with unstructured activities, while the preferred places govern balanced types of children's activities. Children value the preferred places because the places make them happiest, afford a sense of privacy and rich in natural affordances. In general, children prefer mixed elements, with more inclination to the natural elements of the settings. Besides, parental restriction, availability of social interactions, structured lifestyles, accessibility and maintenance are the influential factors that influence children's opportunity to be outdoors. It is important to eliminate existing physical problems in children's environment since they usually lead to other social problems. Furthermore, the majority of them have positive views about nature. Notably, regular direct connection with nature developed children's sense of biophilia. Environmental knowledge supported by the sense of biophilia is a strong indicator for their willingness to protect the environment. In brief, the findings are valuable and useful in for designing children's environment that nurtures their sense of biophilia.

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