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# Society's Disconnect from Nature

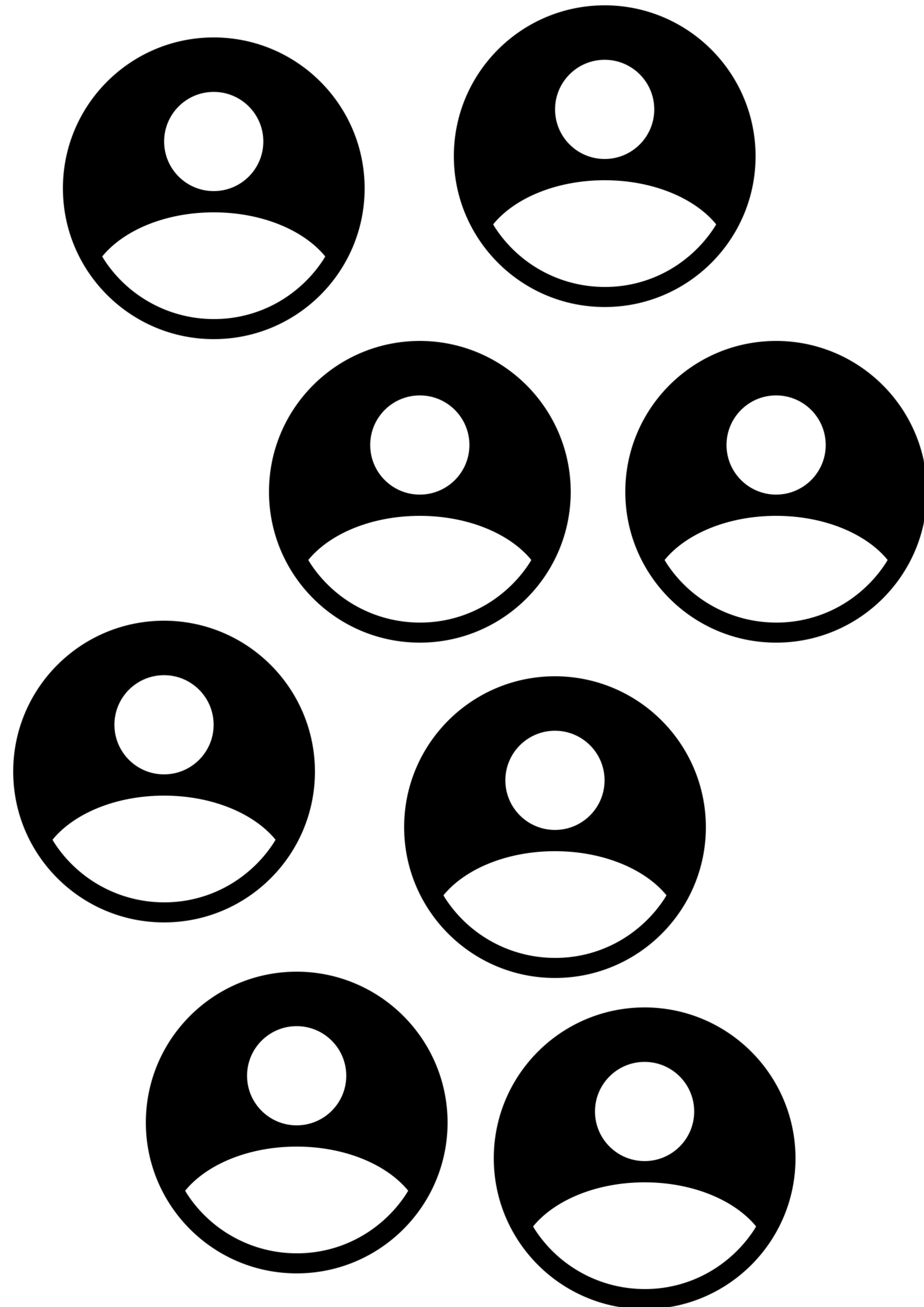
**mömo**

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# Interviews



## 8 interviewees

- 2 Swedish international students
- 2 working professionals
- 2 undergrads
- 2 grad students

# SAY

# Serena

# Think

"A lot of my... attitude towards nature is stemmed from my parents"

"I like animals"

"wildlife is a tangible way to see human actions - it's not obvious with plants"

"I'm supportive to things that benefit wildlife, like not using plastic straws but I'm a germaphobe so it's hard"

Nature is a place where wildlife exists w/o human intervention

"I don't feel like I learn about the environment. Last time was in elementary school"

"not that much of an activist"

"Was it worth the 1.5 hr drive + 2 hr climb?"

"animals are a very tangible way to see state of environment"

"Did you say outdoors or nature?"

partnership is successful, also it's hard to educate people on it eg. having pets

- Differentiate between outdoors & nature

Likes the environment, but from a distance

well-versed on the negative impacts affecting wildlife

- other people can get something out of nature, but neither

need better tech to avoid dangerous animals

• You can be healthy without going into nature

believes/trusts her parents' past exp. & advice

"nature" is a scary place... dangerous

- being outdoors has no influence on mental health

• turtles are dear enough to her to push aside her germaphobe side

# DO

# Feel

Recycles

went on a scary hike w/ Chi Alpha

- went to Florida for spring break; went to turtle rehab center

- doesn't use plastic straws because they hurt turtles

Goes into nature after PEER PRESSURE

uses practical apps & Google Maps

visits nature more now than when she was young

Grew up in a social city

- goes outside for class (12-1hr)

Goes into "nature" few times per year

listens to nature horror stories from parents

- doesn't feel the need to go "outdoors-outdoors"

Feels proud of herself after visiting nature

- feels sad learning about turtles getting caught in boat motor

does NOT feel "awe"

feels safer with experienced outdoorsy people

- feels peer pressured to go outdoors w/ friends

Seems to like apps/technical solutions to feel safer outdoors

Enjoys nature as a way to spend time w/ people

• Call to action for animals she cares (turtles); changes behavior

FEAR

Appreciation

• Feels reluctant to go out

NOT WORTH THE EFFORT (personally)

# Insights from Serena

- There is a **differentiation between outdoors & nature** (for some people)
- Views **wildlife** as the most important part of nature
- Cute animals (like turtles) can **motivate** people to change their behavior
- **Peer pressure** is a way to motivate people to get outdoors
- **Parents** can instill a love or fear of nature/the outdoors in their children
- Nature can be **fearsome** and **intimidating**
- Experienced guides make people feel safer when visiting nature
- Some people don't believe visiting nature is worth the effort... how can we **reduce this activation energy?**
- **Seeing firsthand effects** of humans on wildlife was a **catalyst** for her to change her behavior (visited turtle rehabilitation center → motivated to stop using plastic straws)
- Outdoor activities are also **bonding moments** with friends (for Serena, fostering relationships is more important than physical/mental health benefits)

# Ronja

## Say

"I know there is research about [the relationship between nature and health]"

"I am driven a lot by curiosity towards nature"

"The biggest challenge in nature today is getting humans to understand the problem"

[A big nature challenge is to...] "Get humans to understand the problem"

"Not often... can't even remember" (the last time she went outdoors)

## Think

Realizes she cares about nature but doesn't spend a lot of time outdoors

She could spend more time outdoors, but why doesn't she?

Bullet journals for spending time outside would be a good idea

Knows that there is research relating being outdoors + boost in physical & mental health

4ocean is an interesting eco-friendly brand she would support

Her appreciation for nature affects her behavior

She believes her individual acts make a difference

## Do

Cuts up old towels to use as makeup remover pads

Stopping in everyday life to appreciate nature

Doesn't use apps/tech related to nature

Reads about nature projects such as collecting plastic from the ocean and makes bracelets from them

Makes crafts /decorations out of stones + paint

Grew up playing in woods (running, hiding)

Last time truly outdoors was last Christmas

"micropauses"

Does an outdoor activity every other month

Uses Google & social media to learn about environment

Stopped using one-time use items; uses glass water bottle and metal straws; refillable shampoo

Gave a stone as a gift

## Feel

Is a nature-lover

Happiness spending time in a hammock with her dad as a kid

Feels emotional seeing the impact of humans on animals

Appreciates the little things in nature - such as a fascinating stone or a beautiful tree

Nature is beautiful

Feels sad and more interested in environment after seeing pics of animals trapped by plastic

Hates seeing trash in nature

Sees herself as a person who takes her responsibility towards nature

Does feel good after visiting nature

# Insights from Ronja

- Views herself as a person who has a **responsibility towards nature**
- Belief that **individual acts** can make a difference in the environment
- Someone can care a lot about nature yet spend little to no time outdoors
- Pictures of animals being affected by human actions are impressionable and motivating
- Existence of **beauty in the small details** of nature, e.g. a fascinating stone or pretty tree
- Gave a stone as a gift to someone before - values nature's uniqueness and beauty and wanted to share that experience
- **"Micropauses"** - a small break taken to appreciate nature
- Although she grew up playing in nature, she now only appreciates nature during her daily micropauses. Due to travel time, transportation, and planning, she visits the true outdoors much less frequently.

# Susanne

## Say

"We could persuade people that it is selfish to do what's needed for *our* survival on Earth"

"Humans are vulnerable, not the earth"

"My awareness of an issue goes in waves: I can watch a documentary and start caring a lot, then after 1-2 weeks I fall back"

"American people like the terminology of being "outdoorsy"

"As long as it's not convenient, I'll continue to take the car"

"With the climate changes, we'll make the earth uninhabitable for us humans"

## Think

People care about issues right after being educated on the topic

Thinks immediate reminders, personal feedback, daily routines are important to change behavior

Gamification of environmental issues could be a solution

Government should set up better incentives to be eco-friendly

It's possible to affect people with media

Not caring about the environment now will hurt humans in the end

Her individual actions matter

Sees benefit from educating herself on these topics

## Do

Tries not to waste food

Drives to work (Mountain View to Palo Alto) everyday

Spends <5% of her day outdoors

Purposefully lives close to work to lower carbon footprint

Grew up close to nature

Works at a media lab

Recycles at home & work

Watches documentaries about nature

## Feel

Currently, it's not easy enough to be "eco-friendly"

Interest in an issue fades over time

Wants to compost but doesn't have supplies to do so

Feels there's an expectation that you should enjoy being outdoors

If Caltrain had less issues, would choose that over driving

Waiting for government to set up restrictions

The climate changes are overshadowed by "more current" news

Empathetic for those unable to be "eco-friendly" due to cost issues

Feels that she's still connected to nature from growing up

# Insights from Susanne

- For some people there is a need of **political regulations** to incentivize behavior
- Talking about (or visualizing) things from a **new perspective** could be helpful. Instead of taking care of the environment for the sake of the planet, make it clear that we do it for ourselves.
- **Gamification** of environmental issues could be a part of a solution, since it can provide **personal feedback** and become part of a daily routine
- We need a way to tackle the issue where awareness of an issue goes in waves; like caring a lot for a short period of time ( after reading news or watching a documentary ) and then fall back into bad habits again.
- In the news feed, the climate changes are **constantly overshadowed** by “more current news that need more rapid actions (political elections, cases for the justice courts..)” - and how can we break throw the information overload?