

NATURE PERCEPTION REPORT

2025



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Preface

This report presents the results of the first Danish edition of the study, **Nature Perception Report 2025** – a new, recurring survey assessment of the population's relationship with nature, both in Denmark and globally. The report is prepared by Upstream Partners P/S for the Planetary Responsibility Foundation.

The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of how Danes understand and value nature – as well as how they relate to their behavior towards nature, and attitudes towards who bears responsibility for the state of nature. This applies to both nature in Denmark and the global responsibility for protecting vulnerable natural areas and biodiversity.

The target group for the report's results is especially companies, organizations, foundations, authorities, and politicians who have direct or indirect influence on the state of nature – and who wish to understand how their initiatives and communication about what good nature is are received by the public. The target group also includes Danes themselves, who can use the report's results to reflect on their own view of nature, gain insight into common challenges, find inspiration for concrete actions in everyday life, and strengthen their basis for actively participating in the debate on nature and biodiversity.

Our goal with the report is especially that decision-makers use the new knowledge in their activities and decisions. It can, for example, be companies that listen to consumers' wishes regarding nature considerations, politicians who put nature on the agenda, or foundations that can help clarify what good nature is.

The study focuses on the Danes' own perspectives, including their personal view of nature, their sense of responsibility, and their daily actions. Instead of starting from a specific definition of nature, it is up to each respondent to assess what nature is and why it matters. This makes the study particularly suitable for highlighting the breadth of Danes' perceptions – and any changes that occur over time.

The ambition with Nature Perception Report is that the survey will be repeated every year, making it possible to follow the development of Danes' relationship with nature over time – and in relation to societal changes, public debate, and new political initiatives.

Enjoy the reading!

Jens Böhme
CEO, Planetary Responsibility Foundation

01 Summary

02 Danes' understanding of nature

03 Danes' appreciation of nature

04 Danes' behavior in relation to nature

05 Danes' attitude towards nature responsibility

06 The way forward

07 References and foto credits

08 The method behind the study



A field of red poppies with a large white '01' and the word 'Summary' overlaid on the right side.

01

Summary

Danes support nature but not always with the same view or effort

In June 2025, Upstream Partners and the Planetary Responsibility Foundation conducted a representative study of Danes' nature perception.

The study shows that nature is very important to most Danes. For many, *good nature* is associated with types of nature and landscapes with high biodiversity, such as untouched forests, wetlands, and the sea. At the same time, the population is divided on whether there is a lack of good nature in Denmark, and especially uncertain and split when it comes to the question of whether agricultural fields can be considered good nature.

65% would like to see more wild nature without human intervention, and half believe they have sufficient knowledge about the loss of biodiversity and *rewilding*. However, a large part of the population is still uncertain about the meaning of these concepts.

Danes also generally agree that nature must be protected – especially to stop the loss of biodiversity and to ensure human health and well-being.

The responsibility for Danish nature is placed broadly, but the Parliament, consumers, and companies top the list. Many Danes also take responsibility through changed consumption habits – by buying less, choosing second-hand, or avoiding products that harm nature. But almost

one in five have not changed anything, and few taken bigger, structural steps such as changing pension schemes or supporting a political party with a green profile. Despite good intentions, Denmark still ranks among the EU's 5 largest consumers of natural resources per capita. Only 4% of material consumption is recycled – compared to a global average of 7.2% – and Danes have one of the world's largest deforestation footprints per capita.

There is also broad support among Danes for protecting the world's most vulnerable natural areas such as rainforests and coral reefs. Nevertheless, Danes predominantly place the responsibility with local authorities in the affected countries, followed by international organizations such as the UN. At the same time, there is broad agreement that nature considerations should not stop at Denmark's borders: 57% believe that Danish authorities and companies should take responsibility for environmental destruction abroad caused by our consumption.

02

**Danes'
understanding
of nature**

The perception of what constitutes "good nature" varies from person to person and reflects cultural, social, and individual aspects.

This section examines how Danes understand nature, including which types of nature and landscapes they consider important.

The study does not rely on a fixed definition of 'good nature' but instead lets participants determine what the concept means to them. The answers should thus be understood as reflections of individual views of nature.

In addition, the population's own assessment of their knowledge about biodiversity loss and familiarity with the concept of *rewilding* is highlighted – in order to understand the attitudinal and knowledge-based prerequisites that shape Danes' relationship with nature.

Danes define good nature as both wild and accessible

The respondents have described - in their own words - what they associate with good nature. A thematic analysis shows that seven main themes recur in the responses.

Forest, trees, and green areas are mentioned most frequently ($\approx 23\%$). The forest is described as a setting for experiences – for example "a large forest where you can go for a walk" – while others simply highlight "green areas with trees" as the epitome of good nature.

Untouched and wild nature ($\approx 17\%$) is for many about nature that takes care of itself – “without human intervention.” Several also mention the desire for balance, where “human activity is only visible to a limited extent.”

Clean and without waste ($\approx 13\%$) is important for many. This applies to surroundings, air, and water. The statements include, for example: “Free from toxins and plastic” and “clean water and fresh air.”

Wildlife and fauna ($\approx 11\%$) are associated with vibrant and healthy nature. Many highlight “rich bird and animal life” or the joy of “encountering animals and hearing birdsong.”

Water and wetlands ($\approx 10\%$) play a central role. Both sea, lakes, and streams are mentioned as valuable elements – for example, “walking along a stream or coastline.”

Biodiversity and species richness ($\approx 8\%$) are mentioned directly in many responses, often simply as “biodiversity” or “diversity,” but also in phrases such as “good mix of plants and wild nature.”

Calm and peaceful surroundings ($\approx 8\%$) are highlighted as an essential quality. Good nature is a refuge from noise and activity – for example, “peace and quiet without people and noise.”



What do you personally associate with good nature?

Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

Note: ≈ 11% of the answers are categorized as "other"

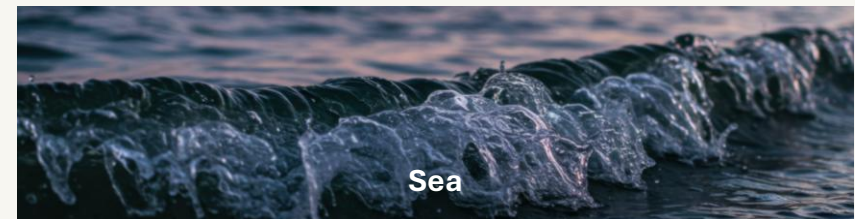
For Danes, wetlands, untouched forest, and the sea are considered as good nature

Beyond providing their own descriptions of what Danes associate with 'good nature,' respondents were also asked to evaluate a range of nature and landscape types.

They were asked to evaluate to what extent seven different types of nature and landscapes, illustrated with the images to the right, reflect what they themselves consider to be good nature

The results show a strong preference for more natural and wild landscapes. 94% consider **wetlands** to be good nature, closely followed by **untouched forest** (93%) and **sea** (89%). This indicates broad support for types of nature and landscapes that are often associated with high biodiversity and a low degree of human intervention.

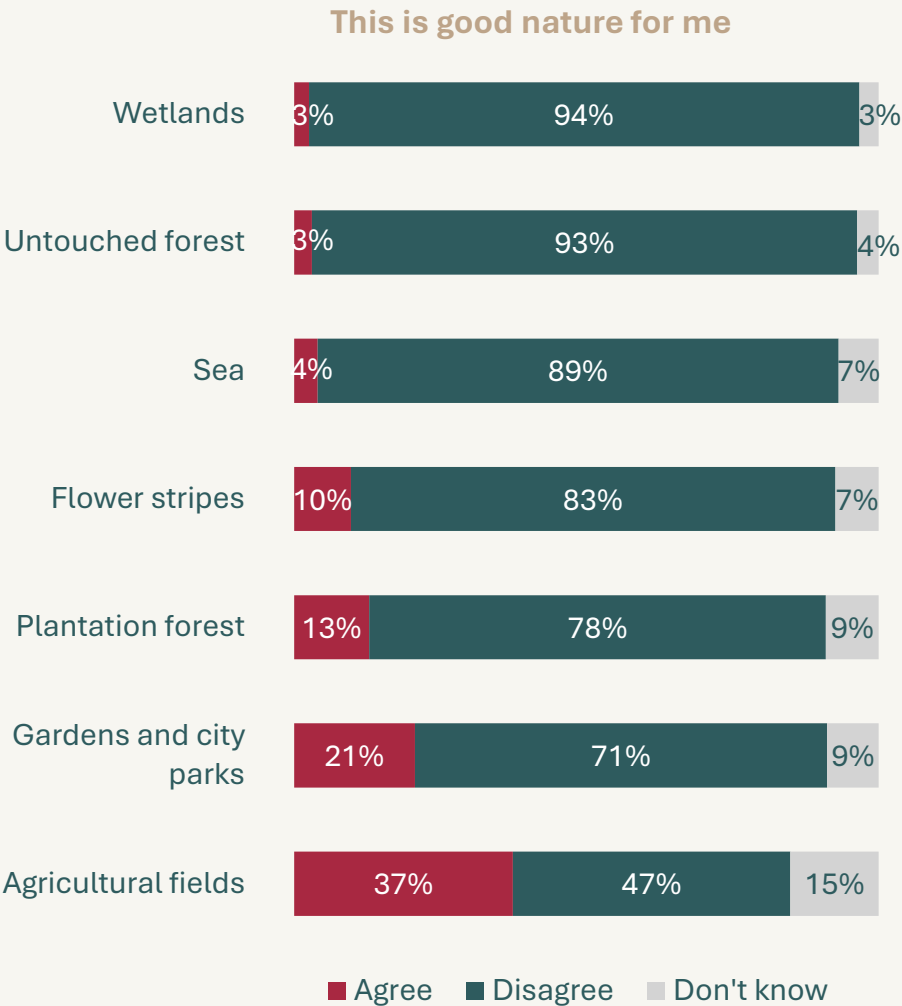
Flower strips (83%) and **plantation forests** (78%) are also considered good nature by quite a few, even though they to a greater extent represent man-made or managed elements in the landscape. **Gardens and city parks** are considered good nature by 71%, indicating that many also see the nearby and cultivated as valuable.



The most divided opinions are on **agricultural fields**. Here, 47% say it is good nature, while 37% disagree – and 15% answer “don't know.”

Compared to the other types of nature and landscapes, there are more Danes who do not know whether they think agricultural fields are good nature. This uncertainty may be due to the fact that the agricultural landscape for many appears as a natural part of Denmark, but at the same time is associated with low biodiversity and intensive land use. This indicates that the understanding of agriculture's role in nature is complex and perhaps marked by conflicting perceptions.

A closer analysis of the **significant regional differences** shows that the proportion of residents who do not consider agricultural fields to be good nature is significantly higher in the Capital Region (44%) compared to Region Zealand (31%), Southern Denmark (34%), and Central Jutland (35%).



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

Perception of agricultural fields depend on whom you ask

A deeper analysis of respondents' answers to the question of whether they see agricultural fields as good nature (page 13) reveals substantial variation in the perceptions across population groups.

Some are significantly more likely to consider agricultural fields as good nature, while others are more likely to reject it. The analysis shows that these differences are related to education level, geographic location, and occupational affiliation.

There are also groups that are significantly more likely to answer “don't know” than other groups in the study. Here, people aged 60+, pensioners, and the non-working stand out.

Other variables such as gender, household income, and degree of urbanization have also been tested. But here, no significant difference is found.

It is listed on the next page which groups deviate significantly from the general population.

Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

**Skilled refers to having vocational training in e.g., office management, craftsmanship, service area.*





Who has specifically indicated that...

... they think agricultural fields are not good nature?

- **Those whose most recently completed education was a long higher education** (50% state that agricultural fields are "not good nature")
- **Residents in the Capital Region** (44% state that agricultural fields are "not good nature")

Compared to 37% for the general population.

... they think agricultural fields are good nature?

- **Skilled/Unskilled*** (63% indicate agricultural fields as "good nature")

Compared to 47% for the general population.

... they do not know whether agricultural fields are good nature?

- **Non-working individuals** (23% answer "don't know")
- **Pensioners** (24% answer "don't know")
- **People aged 60+** (20% answer "don't know")

Compared to 15% for the general population.

Half of Danes believe they have sufficient knowledge on the loss of biodiversity - A quarter consider their knowledge insufficient

The issue of biodiversity is central in today's nature debate – but Danes are not unequivocally sure how well they actually understand the biodiversity problem.

13% state they strongly agree and 33% agree that they have sufficient knowledge about the loss of biodiversity. This means that about half of the population (46%) assess that they know enough about the topic.

Conversely, 24% disagree or strongly disagree, and a further 28% answer that they are neither in agreement nor disagreement. This indicates a significant degree of uncertainty about their own knowledge of the loss of biodiversity. Only 2% answer "don't know".

The results suggest that there is great potential for communication and information. Although biodiversity is more present in the public sphere, many still feel that their knowledge of the topic is limited – or uncertain. This can affect, for example, how people engage in nature issues, change their own behavior, or support political initiatives.

In a major recurring EU study called "Attitudes of Europeans towards biodiversity", Europeans have been asked about their knowledge of the concept of "biodiversity".

In 2015, 23% of Danes stated that they knew what biodiversity was, 29% had heard of biodiversity but did not

know what it was, and 47% had neither heard of it nor knew what it was.¹

In 2019, 32% of Danes stated that they knew what biodiversity was, 30% had heard of biodiversity but did not know what it was, and 38% had neither heard of it nor knew what it was.²

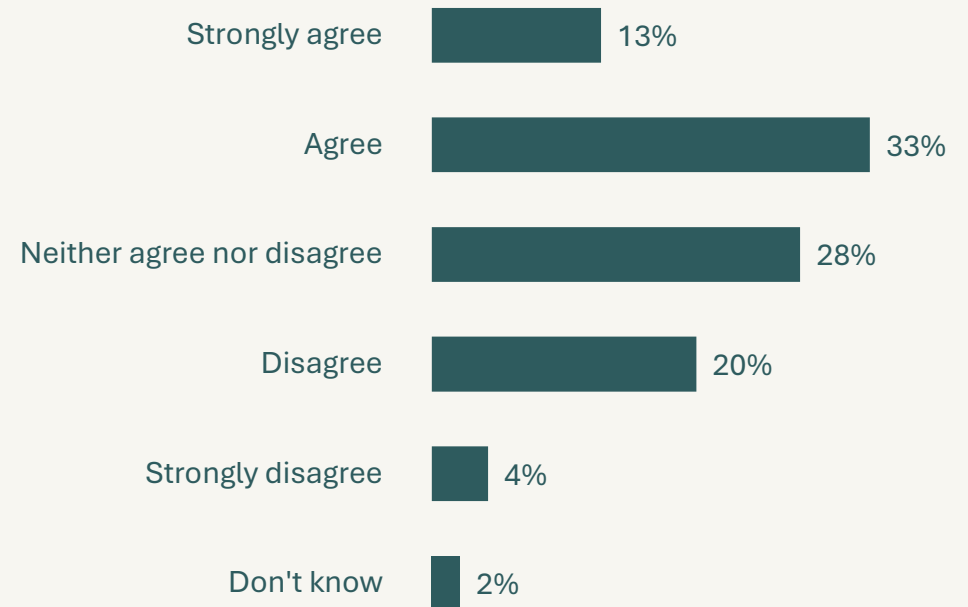
Relative to the results from Nature Perception Report 2025 - where 46% strongly agree or agree that they have sufficient knowledge about *the loss of biodiversity* – there appears to be an upward trend in Danes' familiarity with what biodiversity is, which can be related to an increasing exposure on the topic from media etc.

But data from Nature Perception Report 2025 also shows that about every fourth Dane still feels they lack basic knowledge. This is significantly more than our Swedish neighbors, who according to the EU study already in 2019 only had 5% of the population who had never heard of the topic.²



I have sufficient knowledge about the loss of biodiversity

Note to the question: Loss of biodiversity should be understood as the disappearance of species of animals, plants, and other living organisms, or the destruction or degradation of their natural habitats. This can lead to less variation in nature and a weakening of ecosystems' ability to function.



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

WHAT DOES NATURAL SCIENCE SAY ABOUT BIODIVERSITY LOSS?

The five main causes of biodiversity loss according to WWF's Living Planet Report 2024 are:

Loss and degradation of habitats – driven by, among other things, unsustainable agriculture, deforestation, infrastructure, and energy expansion.

Overexploitation of natural resources – through unsustainable hunting, poaching, harvesting, overfishing, and unintended bycatch.

Pollution – makes habitats uninhabitable or degrades species' food sources and reproduction over time.

Climate change – forces species to shift their distribution and creates "mismatches" in annual cycles (e.g., breeding and migration times).

Invasive species and diseases – non-native species can alter food webs and competition as well as spread new types of diseases.³

These activities and their consequences have had a serious impact on nature and biodiversity. According to the Living Planet Report 2024, the size of wild animal populations has, in just five decades, fallen by an average of 73%.³ Therefore, biologists state that we are in the sixth mass extinction of the planet's history. Such drastic changes in nature have not been seen since the dinosaurs went extinct 63 million years ago.⁴





Over half of Danes state, they are familiar with the concept of rewilding

Rewilding – that is, the idea of letting nature develop freely with minimal or no human intervention – has increasingly found its way into the public debate. This is, for example, about letting wild animals such as horses or cows roam without fencing and without daily human care as part of recreating natural ecosystems.

In the study, 13% answer that they strongly agree, and 39% that they agree, that they are familiar with the concept of *rewilding*. This means that 52% of Danes feel that they know the concept. 20% are neutral (neither agree nor disagree), while 25% disagree or strongly disagree about knowing the concept of *rewilding*. This shows that a large part of the population is still uncertain about the meaning of the concept.

The respondents who do have particular knowledge of the concept are residents in the capital area, in towns with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, and residents in rural areas. There are – for example - significant differences between these respondents and residents in towns with 10,000-50,000 inhabitants.

The relatively high degree of familiarity may be due to the fact that *rewilding* in recent years has been the subject of great media attention – among other things in connection with the Agreement on a Green Denmark (Grøn Trepert)* and the release of large grazers for the benefit of

biodiversity.

However, this debate has also led to concern and criticism – especially regarding animal welfare and the boundaries of human responsibility in nature management. The issue has been the subject of both support and opposition, especially among farmers and local communities.

The results indicate that *rewilding* is a well-known but complex and partly polarized concept, where there is still a need for more information and nuanced debate.

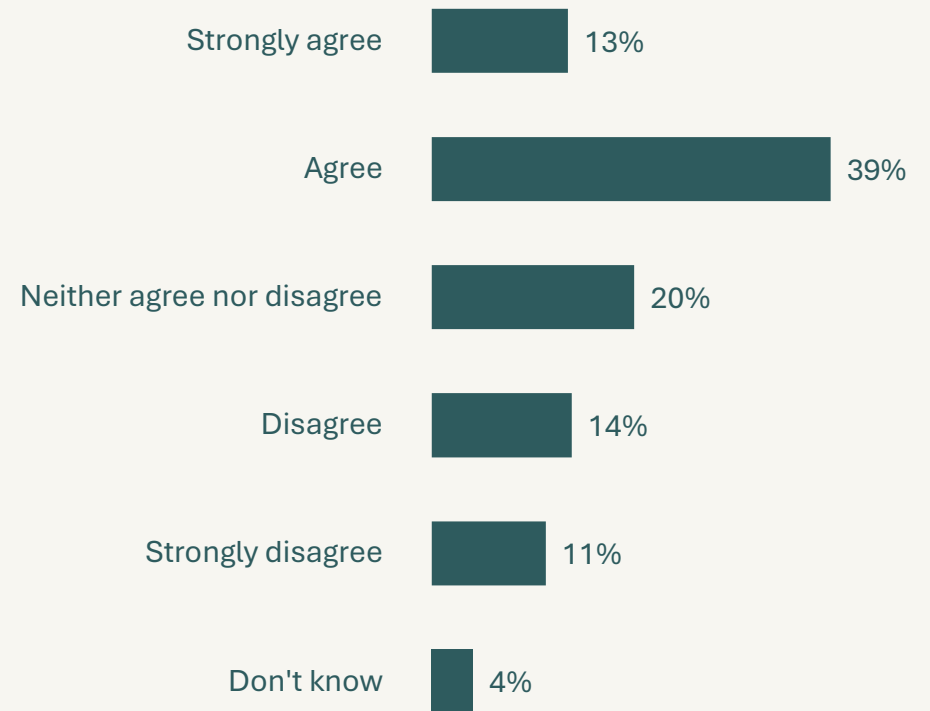
*The Agreement of Green Denmark is a historic collaborative framework established between the Danish government and key stakeholders in the agricultural and environmental sectors in 2024.



European bison
Bison bonasus

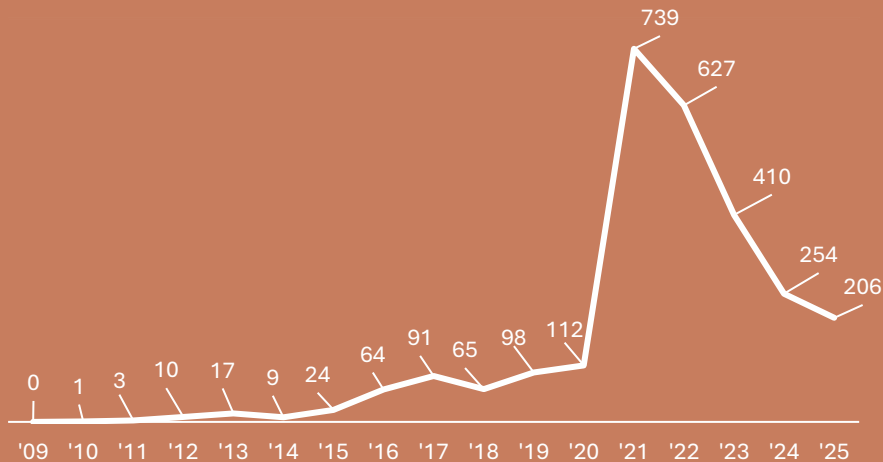
I am familiar with the concept of *rewilding*

Note to the question: *Rewilding* means allowing natural areas to develop freely with minimal or no human intervention. This involves, for example, letting animals take care of themselves without human care and protection.



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

HOW PROMINENT IS REWILDING IN THE MEDIA?



A supplementary analysis conducted by Upstream Partners shows a boom in Danish media coverage of *rewilding* from 2021 onwards (see the graph above). Whereas in the years leading up to 2021, an average of 41 articles about *rewilding* were published annually, the number rose to a total of 739 articles in 2021. Since then, the number has decreased but has remained at a level higher than before 2021 – on average 508 per year between 2021 and 2024.

A significant part concerns the debate about the Mols Laboratory's release of wild horses, as well as the government's initiative to establish nature national parks, where a number of stakeholders have expressed their concerns publicly.

Data: Infomedia

Domestic horse, Exmoor pony
Equus ferus caballus





” WHAT DOES NATURAL SCIENCE SAY ABOUT REWILDING?

Danish nature has evolved in interaction with large grazing animals through evolution. In prehistoric Denmark, rhinoceroses and elephants roamed the Danish landscape, and in more recent times it has especially been aurochs, bison, deer, and wild boar that have shaped our landscape.

The animals' behavior has a dominant effect on the shape and color of the landscape – and consequently, the biodiversity that has developed in the animal-dominated landscape. The animals keep the vegetation down and allow sunlight to reach the ground, where small herbs, flowers, and insects thrive.

Without large animals and without human activity, Denmark today would be covered by dense oak and beech forest. But when the animals graze on new shoots, root around in the mud, and knock down trees, favorable conditions are created for an incredible number of species and thus a higher overall biodiversity. Biologists call this "functional diversity," because the animals fulfill a function in the ecosystem that biodiversity depends on to thrive, and which is crucial for the health and cohesion of ecosystems.

Therefore, many biologists work to restore these natural processes, where large animals once again have the opportunity to move freely and shape the landscape. The goal is a rich mosaic landscape with open spaces, meadows, thickets, and clearings – not just uniform, closed forest.

■ Anna Rex Elmgreen, Biologist at Upstream Partners

03

**Danes'
appreciation of
nature**

How we as a society and as individuals value nature is of great importance for which political and practical measures are perceived as legitimate and necessary. This section examines the significance respondents attribute to nature – both in relation to Danish nature and nature elsewhere in the world, where the raw materials and materials we consume come from. In addition, the section also examines how consideration for nature is weighed against other interests, such as economic growth or consumption.

By examining how people prioritize and justify the protection of nature, we gain insight into the values that shape the public's view of nature. This includes emotional, ethical, and societal dimensions.

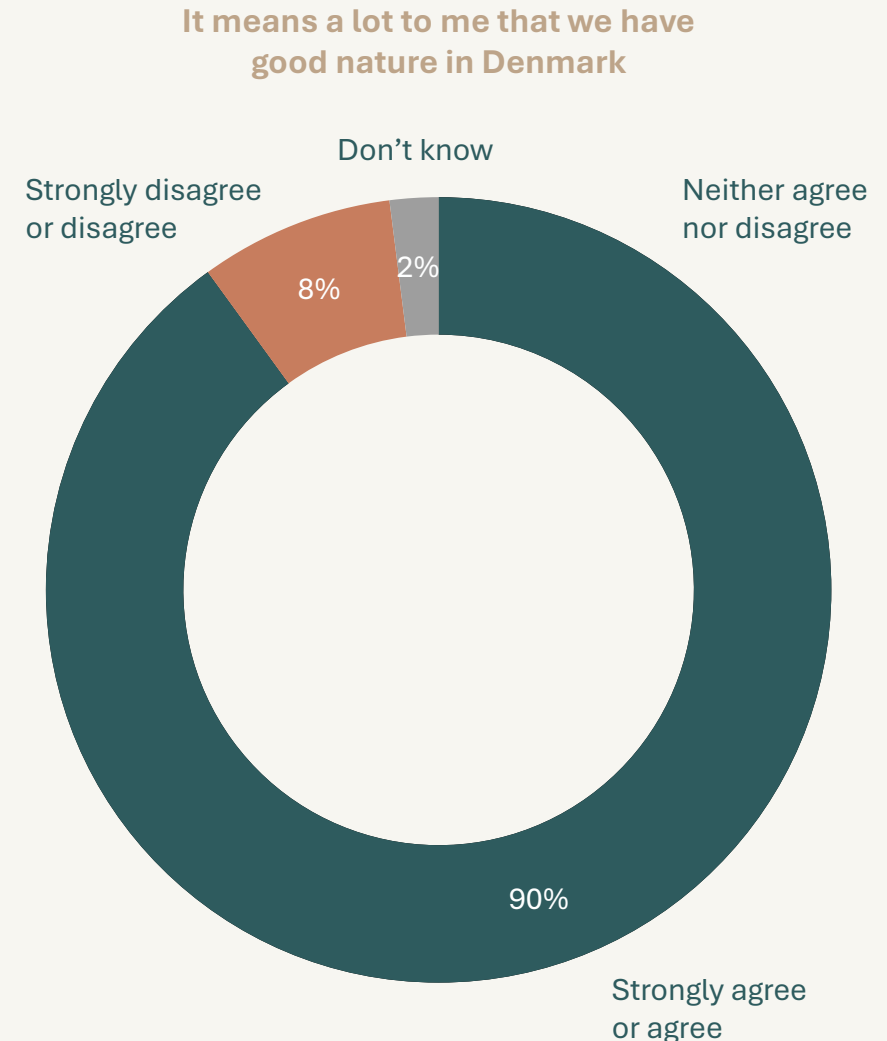
An understanding of how and why nature is valued is crucial for assessing public support for nature conservation/restoration – and for formulating political strategies based on broad societal values and priorities.

Nature means a lot to the majority of Danes

There is significant agreement among Danes that good nature in Denmark is important. A full 90% of respondents state that they agree or strongly agree with the statement "It means a lot to me that we have good nature in Denmark."

Only about one in ten Danes either disagree or remain neutral, which indicates a broad and almost shared understanding of the importance of nature in everyday life and for society.

The strong support therefore also suggests that the protection of nature has a popular mandate.



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

Danes are divided in their view on whether there is a lack of good nature in Denmark

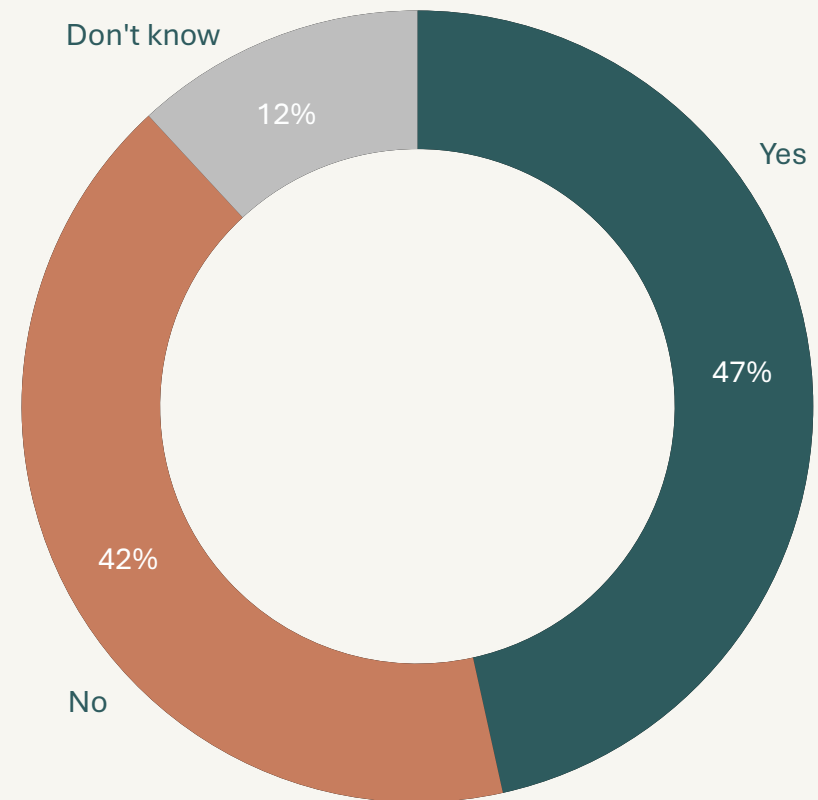
There is no consensus among Danes when it comes to the question of whether there is a lack of good nature in Denmark. 47% answer "yes," while almost as many – 42% – answer "no."

This shows that, for example, perceptions of the accessibility and quality of nature are highly divided, and that there is no single dominant perception in the population. The perceived lack of "good nature" may be related to how one defines the concept and which natural areas one has access to in daily life.

12% answer that they do not know, which may reflect uncertainty about what you think counts as "good nature," or a lack of experience in seeking out nature.

Overall, the results indicate that the question of, for example, the state and accessibility of nature is experienced differently across the population – and that there are both perceptions of insufficiency and satisfaction with the nature that exists in Denmark.

Do you think there is a lack of good nature in Denmark?



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

The experience of a lack of good nature varies across population groups

A deeper analysis of respondents' answers to the question about the lack of good nature (page 27) shows that the assessment of whether there is a lack of good nature in Denmark varies across certain population groups.

Some groups – including, among others, young adults (18-29-year-olds as well as 30-39-year-olds), students, and young families – are more likely to believe that there is a lack of good nature.

Conversely, there are also groups who are more likely than others to disagree that there is a lack of good nature in Denmark. This applies to people with short or medium-length higher education, people over 60 years old, and citizens in households with an annual income of 700,000 DKK or more.

It is listed on the next page which groups deviate significantly from the general population.

Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

** Students also include apprentices, trainees, and interns*





Who has specifically indicated that...

... they think there is a lack of good nature in Denmark?

- **Young families** (63% experience a lack of good nature)
- **18-29 year-olds** (56% experience a lack of good nature)
- **30-39 year-olds** (57% experience a lack of good nature)
- **Students*** (61% experience a lack of good nature)

Compared to 47% for the general population.

... they do not think there is a lack of good nature in Denmark?

- **Those whose most recently completed education was a short/medium-length education** (48% do not experience a lack of good nature)
- **People aged 60+** (48% do not experience a lack of good nature)
- **Those with a household income of 700,000 DKK or above** (49% do not experience a lack of good nature)

Compared to 42% for the general population.

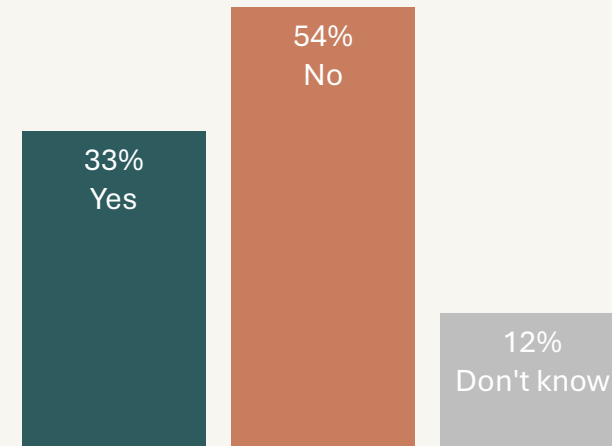
33% of those who perceive agricultural fields as good nature believe that there is a lack of good nature in Denmark

Among the 479 respondents (47% of respondents) who indicated that **agricultural fields are good nature**, 54% say they do not think there is a lack of good nature in Denmark. Considering the fact that about 60% of Denmark's area is cultivated - which places the country among the most intensively farmed in the world⁵ - it may not be so surprising that more than half do not think there is a lack of good nature.

More surprising is that a third of those who perceive agricultural fields as good nature think that there is a lack of good nature in Denmark.

It should be emphasized, however, that the respondents do not necessarily use a consistent understanding of "good nature" in the two questions. Agricultural fields may in one question be perceived as good nature from a personal, sensory, or aesthetic perspective, while the assessment of the sufficiency of nature later in the questionnaire may be influenced by a more ecological or societal view.

The remaining 12% answer "don't know".



There is a lack of good nature in Denmark

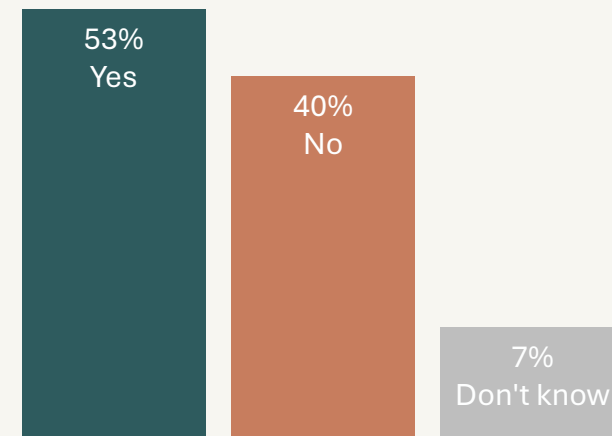
Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 479)

40% of those with sufficient knowledge about biodiversity do not believe there is a lack of good nature in Denmark

Among the 464 Danes who themselves assess that **they have sufficient knowledge about the loss of biodiversity**, 53% say they believe there is a lack of good nature in Denmark. 40% reject this, while 7% answer "don't know".

From a biodiversity perspective, however, there is no doubt: Denmark today has too little and too fragmented nature to halt the loss of species. When 4 out of 10 in a group who themselves assess that they have sufficient knowledge do not believe there is a lack of good nature in Denmark, it may reflect that their understanding of biodiversity's needs differs from the professional assessment - or that the concept of "good nature" is understood differently. This points to a continued need for communication - not just about biodiversity as a concept, but about the actual state of nature in Denmark.

It should also be emphasized that there may be a difference between what the population perceives as "good nature" and what nature actually requires to thrive. A personal assessment that there is sufficient nature is not necessarily an expression of a professional or ecological assessment.



There is a lack of good nature in Denmark

Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 464)

WHAT IS GOOD NATURE ACCORDING TO NATURAL SCIENCE?

According to the Biodiversity Council, there are three basic prerequisites for "good nature" – thus, nature that benefits biodiversity:

Size and connectivity: There is a need for larger and more connected natural areas. Small and isolated areas do not support stable populations. The Biodiversity Council recommends natural areas of at least 5,000 hectares.

Untouched nature and natural processes: High biodiversity requires that nature is allowed to develop without human management - with free grazing, disturbances, and gradual natural changes in plant and animal life over time.

Effective protection against threats: Nature must be protected against pollution, nutrient loading, invasive species, drainage, and physical disturbance. Denmark currently has no areas that meet the IUCN's highest protection categories.^{6 7}

These criteria make it clear that significantly more space and better protection are required if nature in Denmark is to be restored as a real habitat for species - and not just experienced as "good nature" in a human sense.





65% of Danes want more wild nature where humans do not intervene

There is broad support among Danes for the idea that nature should to a greater extent be allowed to take care of itself. 65% agree or strongly agree with this. This indicates a general understanding and acceptance that a certain degree of "wild nature" may be desirable - and perhaps necessary - to protect biodiversity and ecosystems.

A study from Danish Society for Nature Conservation (2020) with similar questions showed that 83% of Danes thought there should be larger areas where nature could develop freely, and 77% thought nature could well be wilder.⁸

A cautious comparison between data from the Danish Society for Nature Conservation from 2020 and data from Nature Perception Report in 2025 therefore suggests a decline among Danes in support for larger areas without human intervention in Denmark.

24% remain neutral and answer that they are neither in agreement nor disagreement. This may reflect uncertainty about what it actually means to give nature more freedom - and whether it comes into conflict with other interests such as outdoor recreation or agriculture.

Only 7% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that there should be larger areas in Denmark that are allowed to develop without human intervention. The fact that so few express disagreement suggests that the idea of

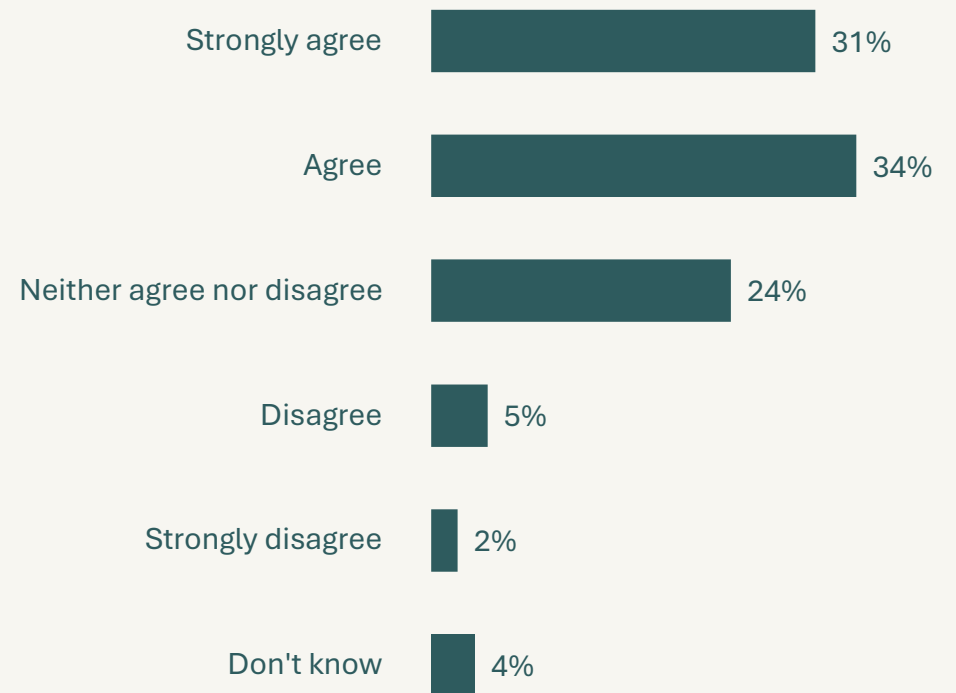
less control and more space for natural processes has become more widely accepted in public perceptions of nature.

Looking more closely at the group of respondents who believe they have sufficient knowledge about biodiversity loss, as well as those familiar with the concept of rewilding, it appears that 73 percent of respondents in each of these groups answered that they agree or strongly agree that there should be larger areas in Denmark allowed to develop without human intervention. This suggests that greater knowledge about biodiversity is linked to greater support for initiatives such as *rewilding* and untouched nature. The result underscores that professionally based knowledge can lead to changes in attitudes and increased understanding of what nature actually needs. It strengthens the argument for intensifying communication and information so that more people understand what nature needs - and thus support concrete initiatives.

For those who answered "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree," there is also a significant difference between respondents from rural areas and those from the capital region. Clear support for larger areas without human intervention is seen among the capital region population (38% compared to 22% in rural areas), and clear opposition is seen to a greater extent in the rural population (6%) compared to the capital region (1%).



There should be larger areas in Denmark that are allowed to develop without human intervention



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

Pollution, agriculture, and climate change are seen as the biggest threats to Danish nature

Respondents especially see **pollution** (62%) as the biggest negative impact on nature in Denmark. After that, **agriculture** (41%) and **climate change** (40%) are mentioned, indicating that both local pollution threats and global climate effects play a major role in the population's perception of the state of nature.

31% point to **corporate activities** as a significant threat. Thus, only about one in three see the overall impact of the business sector – e.g., through emissions, resource extraction, or land use – as a primary cause of nature degradation. This may possibly reflect low visibility regarding the role of businesses in nature destruction, or that respondents include business pollution of nature under the answer category "Pollution".

Other sources of problems receive more limited attention: **Invasive species** are mentioned by 21%, while **fishing** (17%), **lack of large natural areas** (12%), **forestry** (8%), and **hunting** (3%) are mentioned by significantly fewer.

6% of respondents indicate "don't know".

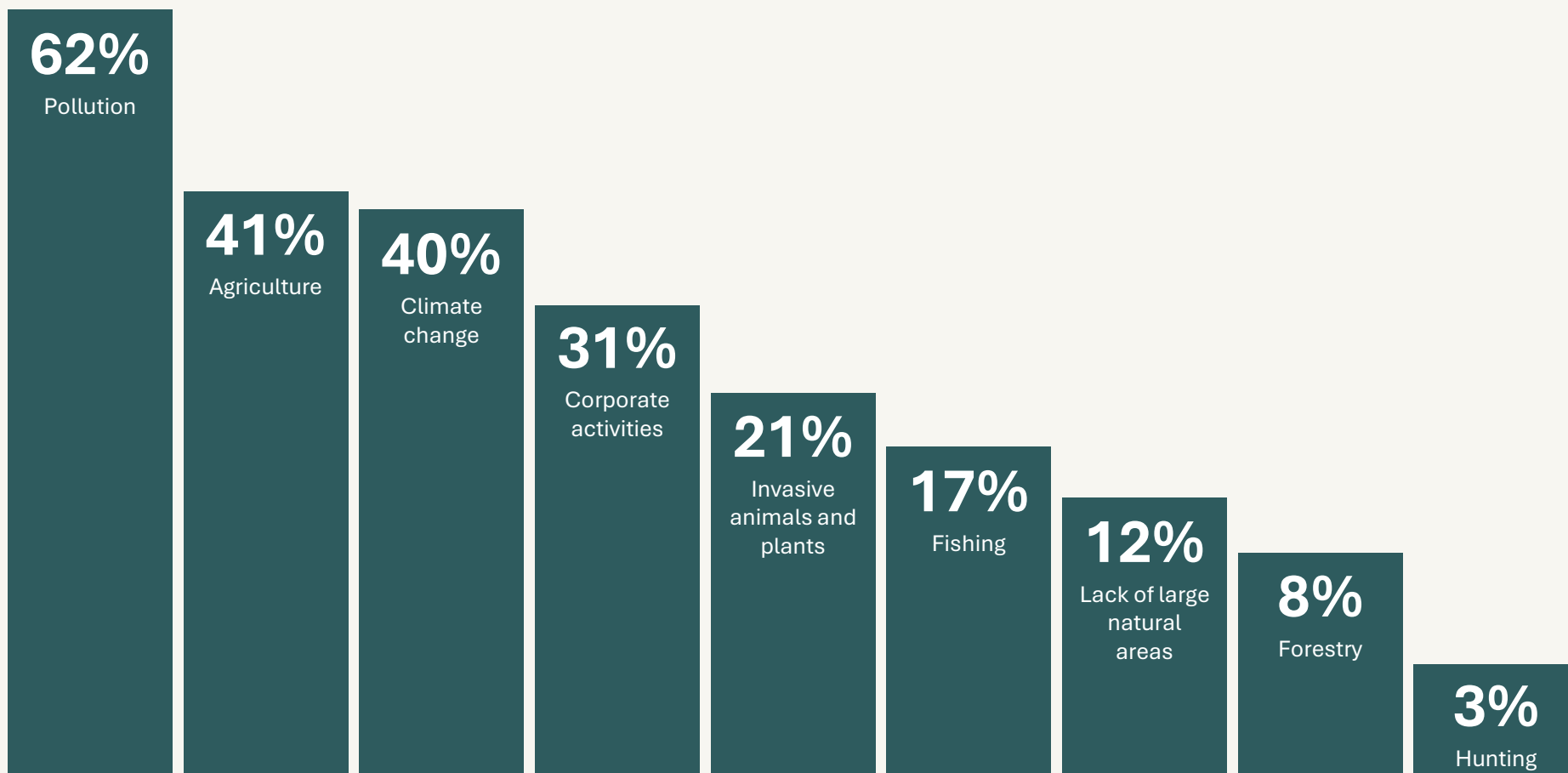
4% have exclusively used the "other" category. The respondents' own answers are thematized and described on page 38.

Overall, the results indicate that Danes primarily focus on pollution- and land use-related threats – but to a lesser extent associate these with the role of businesses, which may influence where the population wants regulation and responsibility to be placed.

Looking more closely at **regional significant differences** it appears that especially the Capital Region (48%) differs from the Zealand Region (29%) and Southern Denmark (38%) by indicating that agricultural fields have the greatest negative impact on nature. Zealand also stands out as the region where the fewest believe this.

The Northern Jutland Region (27%) differs significantly from the Capital Region (17%) when it comes to views on invasive animals and plants as threats to nature.

In the Zealand Region (11%), the most people believe that forestry is a threat, and people from Zealand also differ significantly from Southern Denmark (5%) here, where the fewest see it as a threat.



What do you think has the greatest negative impact on nature in Denmark? [You can select up to three answers]

Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

Note: 6% have indicated "don't know". 4% have indicated "other"

Some Danes believe nature is threatened by other factors

4% of Danes indicate that they believe other factors, besides those previously highlighted, are threats to Danish nature. Of these, 43 respondents have described the threats:

Construction, infrastructure, and land use: A dominant theme among the 43 respondents is criticism of construction and physical intervention in the landscape. Several mention that construction of homes, roads, and urban development threaten nature – especially in and around major cities.

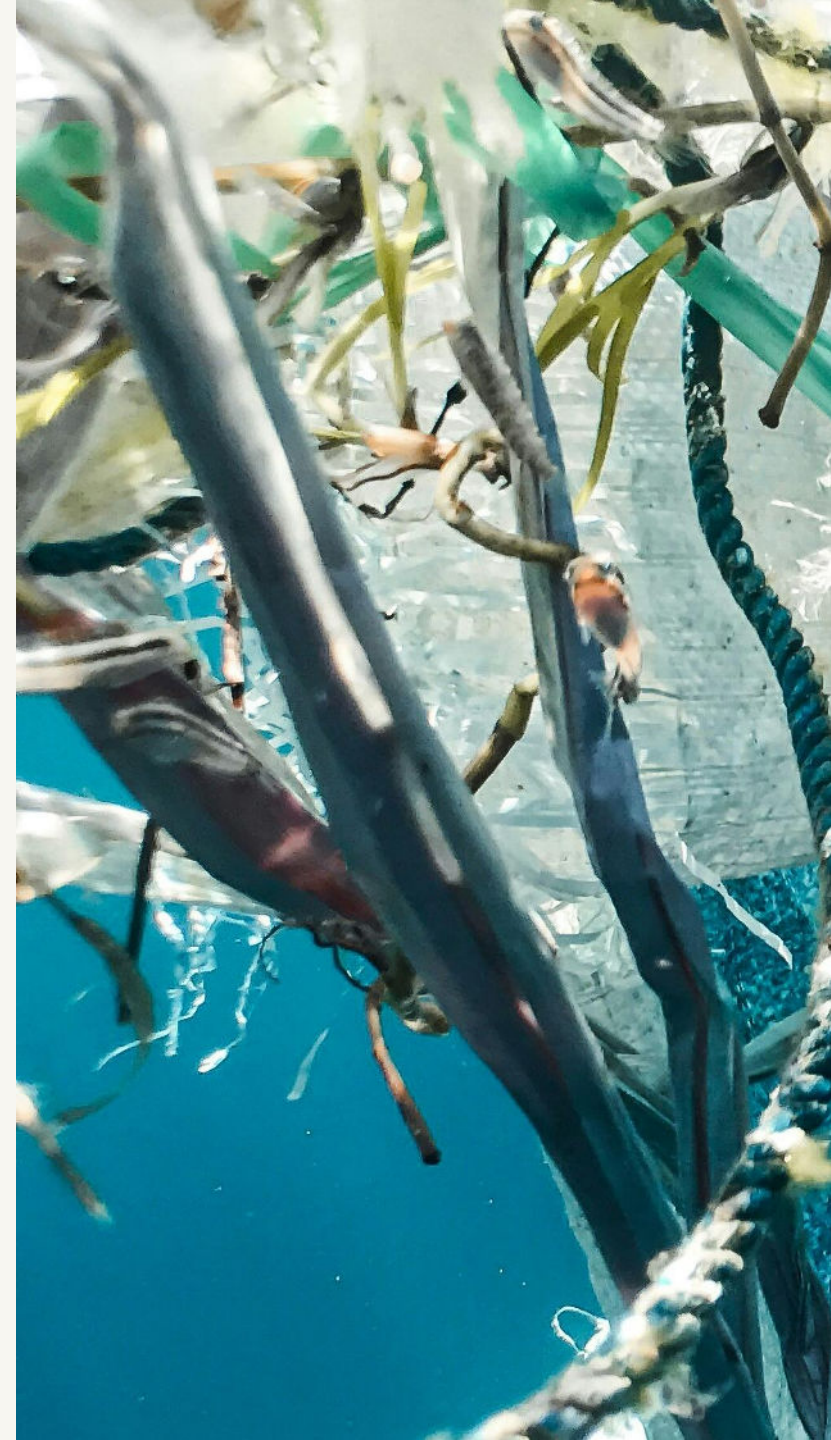
Humans and behavior: Another theme revolves around humans as the problem – both in general and in specific actions.

Political and systemic actors: Several mention insufficient regulation as a threat.

Cultural and ideological frustrations: A fourth theme deals with opposition to certain trends in views on nature and social debate, suggesting criticism of *rewilding*, species introduction, and an ideologically driven view of nature.

Specific sources of problems and sectors: Some mention specific sectors or impacts: Fishing, horticultural farms, chemical emissions from companies, removal of shelterbelts, and cultivation of grain fields are mentioned as direct causes of nature degradation.

Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 43)





”

WHAT DOES NATURAL SCIENCE SAY ARE THE BIGGEST THREATS TO NATURE?

Lack of large natural areas: It may sound contradictory, but the biggest threat to nature in Denmark is *the lack* of nature. There simply are no large, untouched natural areas in Denmark that can maintain self-sustaining ecosystems and support high biodiversity. Denmark is – together with Bangladesh – the most cultivated country in the world.⁵ Our landscape has been thoroughly modified – right down to the last blade of grass. To ensure biodiversity, the Biodiversity Council recommends contiguous natural areas of at least 5,000 ha.⁹

Nutrients: Nutrients are necessary – but in excessive amounts they become a threat. Natural ecosystems are nutrient-poor, and species adapt to a balance where nutrients are shared. When we add much more nutrients today, a few fast-growing species outcompete the others. On land, tall perennials take over, to the detriment of low-growing flowers – in the sea, algal blooms lead to oxygen depletion. The nutrients primarily come from agricultural manure, which is washed into the aquatic environment via rain and leaching.

Bottom trawling: Bottom trawling is a destructive fishing method – which also takes place in protected marine areas – where heavy nets are dragged across the seabed. But in the pursuit of certain species, the seabed is destroyed and the rest of the catch dies and is discarded. Bottom trawling tears up kelp forests and bottom-dwelling animals, crushes stone reefs, and rips holes in the complex structures of the seabed – habitats that are crucial for everything from breeding grounds to food sources for fish and marine mammals. When they disappear, the sea's ability to maintain biodiversity is reduced.





Danes agree that the world's most vulnerable nature should be protected

There is almost unanimous support among Danes that the world's most vulnerable natural areas – such as rainforests and coral reefs – should be protected. 68% of respondents strongly agree, and a further 25% agree with this statement.

This means that 93% clearly support global nature protection – even when it involves sacrifices or compromises regarding economic growth and consumption.

This indicates a high willingness to let considerations for nature weigh heavily, even when it may have consequences for the other interests of society or the individual.

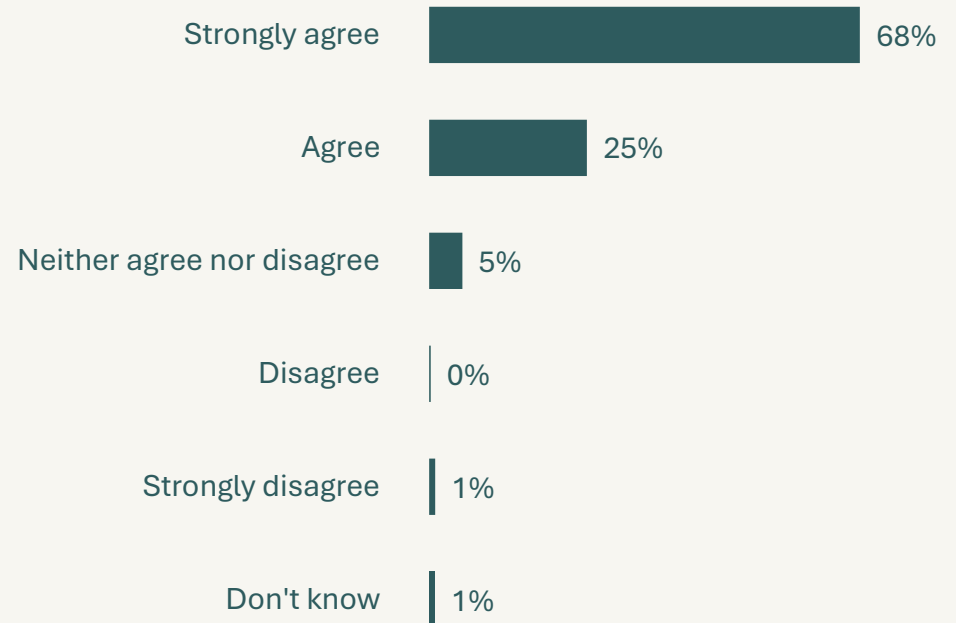
Only 5% respond that they neither agree nor disagree, and just 1% strongly disagree.

This shows that there is a very broad popular consensus that protection of threatened nature on a global scale is an important and legitimate priority.



It is important to protect the world's most vulnerable natural areas (e.g., rainforests and coral reefs)

Note to the question: Please note that protecting nature in some cases may mean that we as a society and as individuals must prioritize nature considerations over other needs, such as economic growth or consumption.



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR VULNERABLE NATURE?

As part of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework – adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in December 2022 – the world's countries have committed to an ambitious goal: At least 30% of the Earth's land areas, freshwater ecosystems, and coastal and marine areas must be effectively protected and managed by 2030. In everyday language, the goal is known as: **the 30x30 targets**.

The goal is particularly aimed at biologically important areas that support high biodiversity and provide essential ecosystem services – e.g., clean drinking water, carbon storage, and protection against climate change. The protection must be real and long-term, not just exist on paper, and it must be carried out with respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

The 30x30 target is a key step in the fight against the global loss of biodiversity. The UN estimates that it requires both national efforts and international cooperation – as well as significant investments – to achieve the goal.¹⁰





Danes believe we must protect nature to halt the loss of biodiversity and ensure human health and well-being

When Danes are asked to assess *why* it is important to protect nature – both in Denmark and globally – it is especially the concern for animals, plants, and human health that weighs most heavily.

The statement “**to prevent wild animals and plants from becoming extinct**” ranks highest, with 84% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Right after comes the desire to protect nature “**for our health and well-being**,” which also has 84% support.

A similar EU study in 2019 found that 94% of Danes were fully or partially in agreement that the loss of biodiversity should be stopped to ensure our health and well-being.¹¹

A cautious comparison between the EU study and data from Nature Perception Report 2025, indicates that there has been a decline in Danes' support for the idea that nature protection is important to ensure our health and well-being.

Next comes **climate**: 76% state that they agree or strongly agree that nature protection is important to counteract climate change, which shows that many also see nature as an active part of the solution to other global challenges.

The 2019 EU study also found that 95% of Danes believed

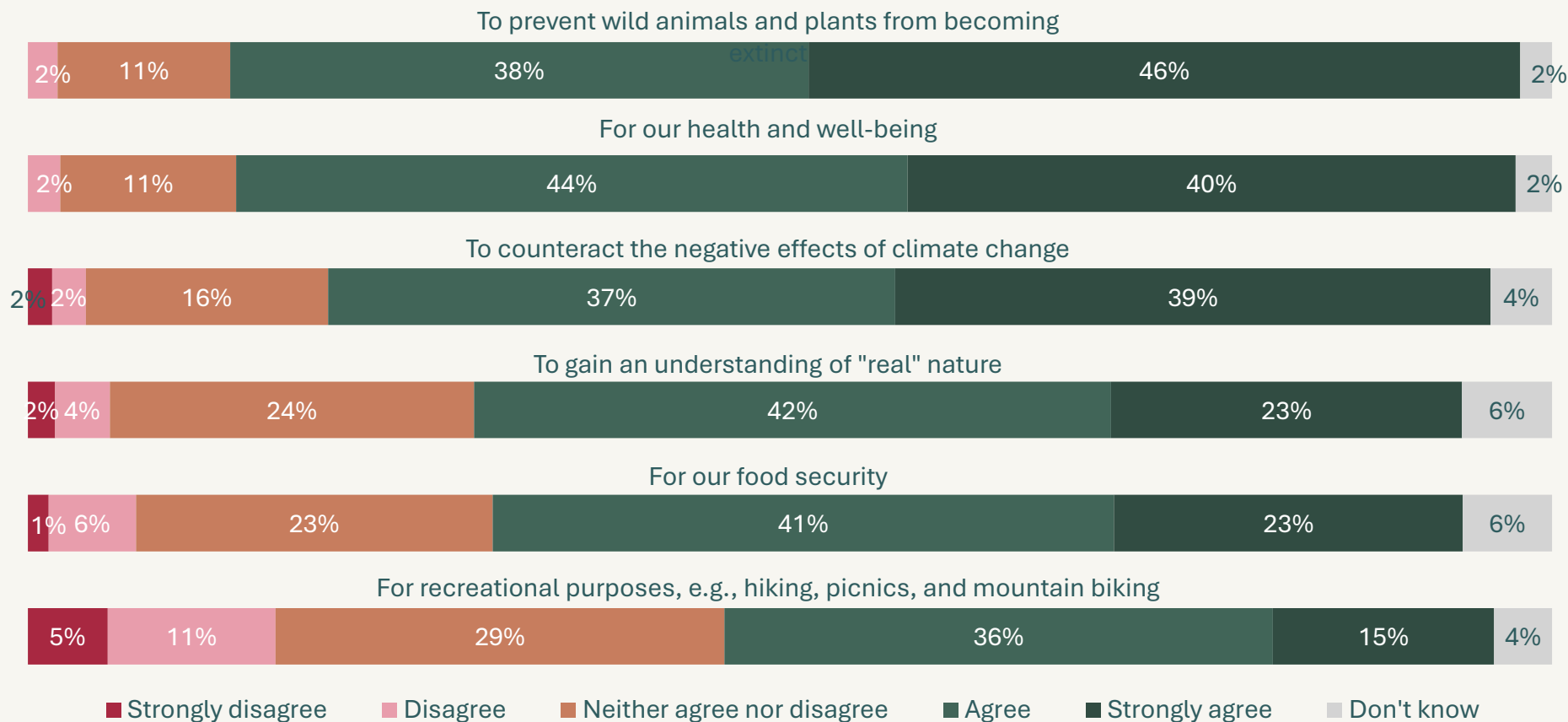
we should stop biodiversity loss to counteract climate change.¹¹

A cautious comparison between the data suggests that there has been a decline in Danes' support for the idea that nature protection is important to counteract climate change.

Purposes such as **understanding of “real” nature, food security, and recreational purposes** receive less unequivocal support. Especially the recreational purpose stands out with the lowest support (50%), which suggests that Danes to a lesser extent see nature protection as merely a matter of outdoor recreation.

Overall, the results show that the value of nature in the eyes of the population is primarily about life and survival – both for humans and for the richness of species around us.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about why it is important to protect nature, both in Denmark and globally?



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n= 1009)

04

**Danes' behavior
in relation to
nature**

While attitudes and values influence how we perceive nature, it is through our actions that these perceptions are put into practice.

This section focuses on the concrete behavior of Danes in relation to nature – both in terms of their daily activities and their consumption choices.

The study looks, among other things, at how often Danes seek out nature in their free time, and to what extent they have changed habits to take greater account of nature and the environment. In addition, the population's willingness to pay more for goods and services if it leads to greater protection of nature is examined.

The section provides knowledge about how engagement with nature is expressed not only in attitudes but also in everyday practices and economic priorities – and thus whether there is alignment between ideals and actions.

More than 70% of Danes spend time in nature weekly or more often

Nature plays a significant role in Danes' leisure time. 31% spend time in nature daily, and a further 40% do so weekly.

This means that a full 71% have contact with nature at least once a week, which indicates a close and regular experience of contact with nature in everyday life.

15% spend time in nature monthly, while 9% do so less often than monthly. Only 1% respond that they never go out into nature in their free time.

The results indicate that nature is a fixed and active part of many Danes' lives – not only as an idea or value, but as a concrete framework for daily and weekly activities.

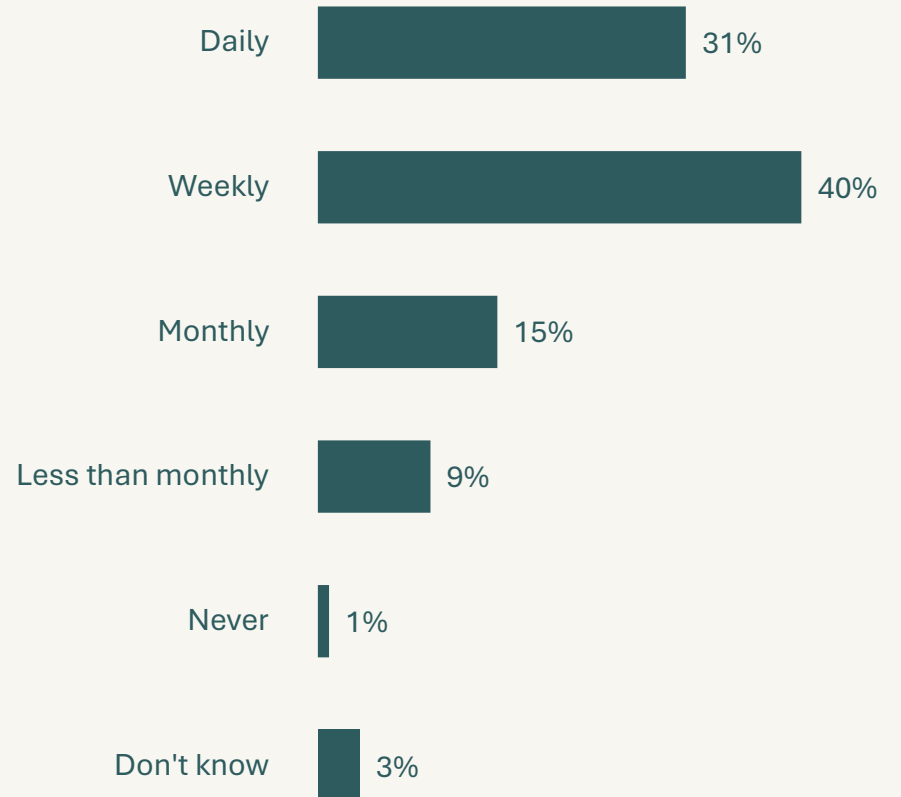
It should be noted that this is Danes' own understanding of nature, and how often they spend time in it. The data does not say whether Danes are in, for example, city parks or wild nature.

If we look more closely at the **significant regional differences**, it is seen that residents in the Capital Region spend the least time in nature daily (21%), while Region Zealand (41%) and Region Southern Denmark (39%) are significantly higher than the other regions and thus have the most residents who are in nature daily.

Not surprisingly, the data also shows that residents in towns with the fewest inhabitants or rural areas (40% and 56%, respectively) are significantly more in nature daily than residents in towns with higher populations (between 20-32%).



How often do you spend time in nature in your free time?



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

Danes state that they have changed their consumption habits for the sake of nature - and almost one in five have done nothing

When Danes change habits to take greater account of nature or generally live more sustainably, it mainly happens through their **consumption**. 45% state themselves that they have bought fewer products and consumed less, while 41% have bought more **second-hand instead of new**. In addition, 34% have **avoided products that contribute to the destruction of nature**, and 31% have eaten **more plant-based food**.

More structural or political actions are less widespread. 16% have **switched utility company** to a greener alternative, and 16% have supported a **political party with a green profile**. 14% have supported **nature protection** through donations or volunteer work, and only 8% have **changed their pension savings or investments**.

This indicates that precisely those actions that require system changes or engagement outside of daily life are harder to initiate – or are perceived as less tangible compared to consumption choices.

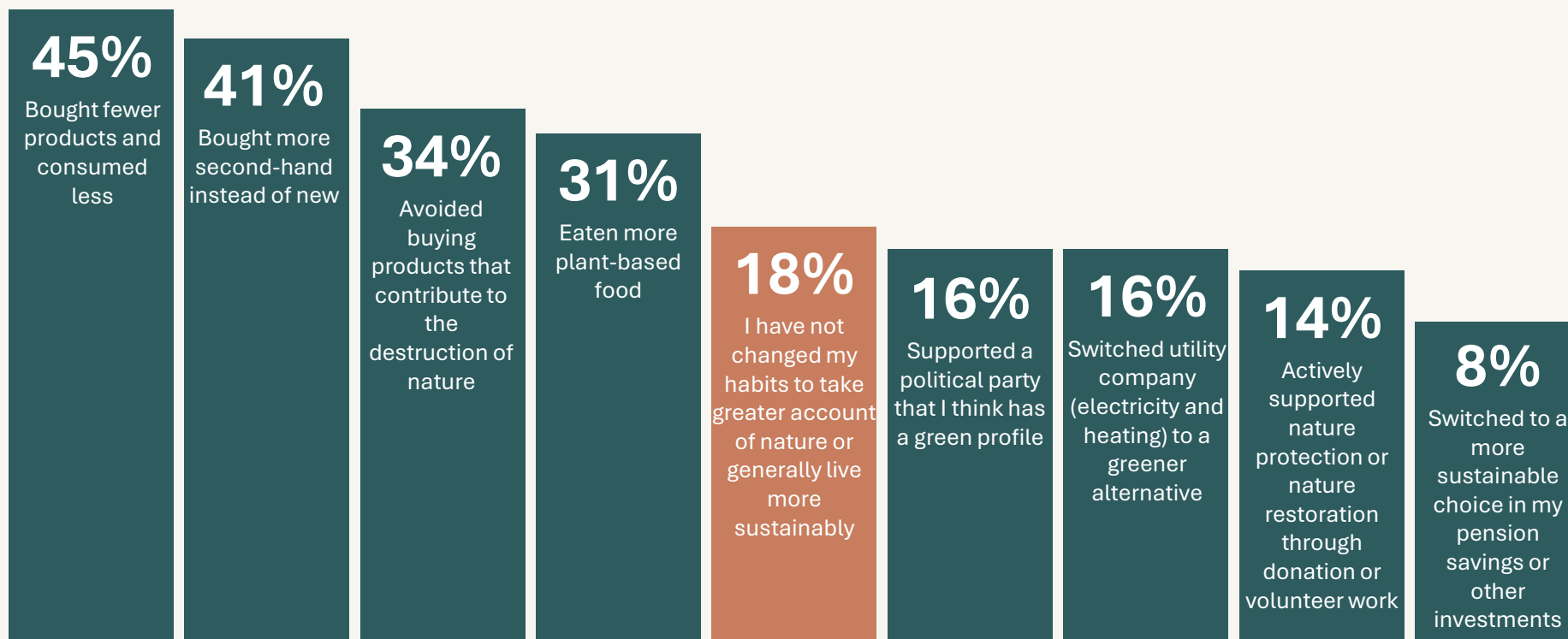
At the same time, the figures show that 18% have **not changed their habits** – a significant share - which indicates that barriers to action are still present, despite increasing attention in the public debate on the state of nature.

5% of respondents indicate “don't know”.

4% have exclusively used the “other” category. Their own answers in the “other” category are thematized and described on page 54.

There are **significant differences between the regions**. Here, clear patterns in behavior emerge. In Central Jutland (47%), more people choose reuse over new compared to the Capital Region (38%). People in the Capital area and Central Jutland also differ from people in Northern Jutland by eating more plant-based food (34% and 32% respectively) – while people from Northern Jutland generally stand out as the region in the country where plant-based diets are least prevalent (20%).

When it comes to political engagement, citizens of the Capital Region (21%) support parties with a green profile to a greater extent than both citizens in the Zealand Region (11%) and Northern Jutland (11%). Additionally, in Region Zealand (21%), significantly more people actively contribute to nature protection or restoration through donations or volunteer work than in the three Jutland regions (11% in Northern Jutland, 12% in Southern Denmark, and 13% in Central Jutland).



Here you see a number of actions one can take that can have a positive effect on nature in Denmark and/or globally. Please mark the places where you have changed your habits in order to take greater account of nature or generally live more sustainably.

Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

Note: 5% indicate "don't know" and 4% indicate "other"

Here are additional steps some danes have taken to better protect nature

4% of Danes state that they have changed their habits in ways other than those previously listed in order to take greater care of nature or generally live more sustainably. 38 respondents have elaborated on how.

Consumption and lifestyle with a focus on sustainability: Many mention choices that have reduced consumption and the impact on nature and climate. Examples include: "Bought an electric car", "never fly", "have solar panels", "only buy meat and poultry raised organically", "use everything in the fridge", "buy locally", "buy products that are more sustainable".

Efforts in own garden and property: A large proportion of respondents mention that they are working to create more space for nature locally: "Set aside a large part of my garden as wild on purpose", "let grass and weeds grow", "planted flowers for bees and butterflies", "hedgehog house and wild-growing areas", "partially wild garden", "permagarden for the benefit of wildlife".

Waste sorting and cleanup: Several mention specific everyday initiatives related to waste management: "Waste sorting", "pick up trash every where I find it", "go out and collect waste about once a month", "we sort more".

Data: Danes' Perception of Nature - Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 38)





WHAT DO DATA ON CONSUMPTION SAY?

Many Danes have stated that they have changed their consumption habits for the sake of nature. But when looking at the overall consumption figures, the picture is more nuanced.

The pressure on nature is closely linked to the consumption of goods and services. The more we consume, the more needs to be produced – and this has consequences for nature. Raw materials must be extracted, land cultivated, and pollution increases, as examples.

Denmark's contribution to global resource consumption is not insignificant, despite our modest size. Denmark is the EU's fifth largest consumer of natural resources (measured per capita). A Dane consumes 25.3 tons of natural resources per year. That is 76% above the EU average.¹²

Every year, the so-called *Country Overshoot Day* is published – the day when a country has used up the natural resources that the Earth can regenerate in one year. In 2025, Denmark's Overshoot Day already fell on March 19. If everyone on Earth lived like the Danes, 4.8 Earths would be needed to cover our consumption. In 2023, the day was March 28. In just two years, Denmark has thus moved the date forward by 9 days.¹³

In 2023, The Circularity Gap Report also showed that only 4 % of our material consumption in Denmark is recycled, compared to a global average of 7.2%. This means that out of all used materials, only 4% return to the economy as recycled materials.¹⁴

A report from Statistics Denmark and the 2030 Panel highlights that waste production is increasing in all sectors – except for a small decrease among households – and especially the consumption of cardboard and paper packaging is rising sharply.¹⁵





43% of Danes are willing to pay more to protect nature - but many hesitate

43% of Danes state that they are willing to pay more for the products they consume if it can help protect nature. This indicates a significant group that is ready to let nature considerations be reflected in their economic priorities. At the same time, 33% say they are neutral, and 20% are outright strongly disagree or disagree – a picture that suggests hesitation and possible uncertainty in large parts of the population.

The trend is also found in several previous studies. Danish Chamber of Commerce (Dansk Erhverv) found in 2023 that over half of Danes want to consider environmental and climate concerns in their purchasing choices and two-thirds want to buy more sustainably – but that price and lack of transparency often stand in the way.¹⁶

Similar results are seen in an international analysis from 2022, where 37% of Danish consumers state that they are willing to pay more for sustainable groceries – on average 21% extra.¹⁷

A study from Verdensmål.org in 2022 finds that it is especially older and economically strong consumers who in practice act on sustainable intentions.¹⁸

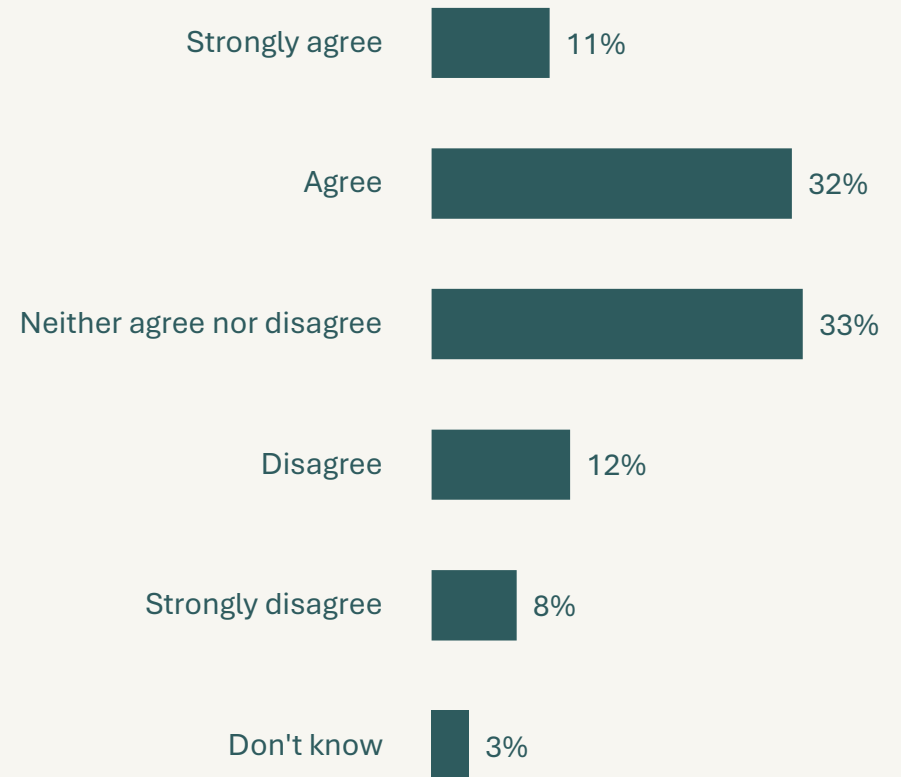
It should be emphasized, however, that there is still a lack of solid documentation as to whether this stated willingness to pay also translates into concrete behavior.

Studies say a lot about attitudes, but less about actual purchasing behavior. If we are to understand the real potential for nature-friendly consumption, better data on actual purchases is needed.

The results in this report indicate that many Danes want to take responsibility – also financially – but that barriers such as price and doubt about the effect of products still hinder behavioral changes. This opens up an important space for action: better information, transparent labeling schemes, and economic incentives can be crucial for promoting nature-friendly choices in practice.



I am willing to pay more for what I consume to protect nature



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

05

**Danes' attitude
towards nature
responsibility**

The question of who is responsible for protecting nature is crucial for understanding where the population places the obligation to act – both nationally and globally. This section examines which actors Danes believe bear the greatest responsibility for the state of nature in Denmark and in the world, and to what extent there is support for Danish authorities and companies also taking responsibility for the environmental consequences of Danish consumption abroad.

By analyzing these attitudes, insight is given into the population's expectations of the political environment, business, civil society, and the individual, as well as how the distribution of responsibility is perceived in relation to both local and global natural systems. The section thus not only highlights who Danes think should act – but also to what extent responsibility is understood as something that extends beyond Denmark's borders.

The responsibility for Danish nature is broadly distributed - but Parliament, consumers, and businesses top the list

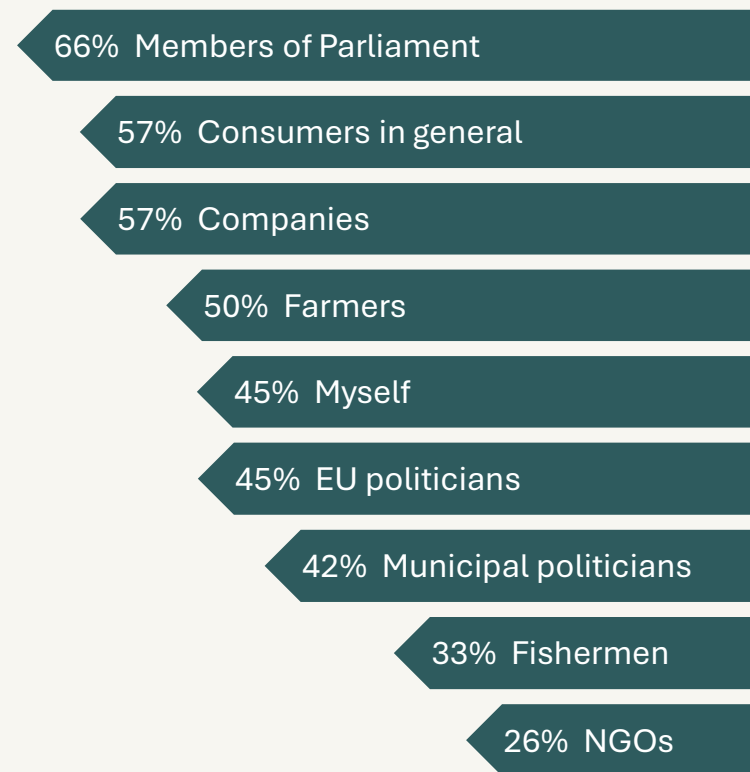
66% of Danes point to **members of parliament** as those with the greatest responsibility for protecting Danish nature. But the responsibility is not seen as purely political. 57% also believe that **consumers** and **companies** bear a significant part of the responsibility. This reflects a broad understanding that both structural decisions and individual actions play a role.

Farmers are mentioned by 49%, while 45% point to **themselves** – and the same proportion to **EU politicians**, which indicates a broad distribution of responsibility.

At the bottom – but still with a significant share of responsibility – we find **municipal politicians** (42%), **fishermen** (33%), and **nature organizations** (26%), which suggests that responsibility is attributed more to national and systemic actors rather than local or voluntary ones.

Looking more closely at **significant regional differences**, Region Zealand stands out with the lowest proportion of residents who believe that agriculture has the greatest responsibility (38%) compared to, for example, Northern Jutland (60%), Capital Region (53%), and the Region of Southern Denmark (52%).

Who do you think has the greatest responsibility for protecting nature in Denmark?
[You can select multiple answers]



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009) ; Note: 4% state "don't know"; 3% state "others" – and here almost everyone mentions that everyone has a responsibility; 1% state that Danish natural areas do not need protection.

The responsibility for global nature is primarily placed locally in the vulnerable areas

When it comes to protecting the world's most vulnerable natural areas – such as rainforests and coral reefs – respondents primarily place the responsibility on **local authorities** in the affected countries – in parallel with the placement of responsibility in Denmark with members of Parliament. 57% point to the local authorities as the primary responsible parties.

Next come **international organizations** such as the UN, EU, and World Bank (52%) and authorities in developed countries such as Denmark and the USA (48%), which indicates an understanding that responsibility is also globally distributed. Furthermore, **large international companies** are mentioned by 46%, while 43% point to **local businesses** in the relevant areas.

Further down the list are the **individual themselves** and **international NGOs** such as Greenpeace and WWF – both mentioned by 22%. This suggests that nature protection is primarily perceived as a political, systematic, and business responsibility rather than something driven by individuals or the local civil society.

A full 11% answer "don't know," which may reflect uncertainty about who actually has the power to act.

Who do you think has the greatest responsibility for protecting the world's most vulnerable natural areas?
[You can select multiple answers]



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009) ; Note: 11% indicate "don't know"; 2% indicate "other" – and here almost everyone mentions that everyone has a responsibility; 1% indicate that the world's most vulnerable natural areas should not be protected.

55% of the Danes believe authorities and companies should take responsibility for environmental destruction outside Denmark

When asked whether Danish authorities and companies should take responsibility for environmental destruction abroad caused by Danes' consumption, 57% of Danes agree. 25% are neutral, while 9% disagree and 9% answer "don't know".

This shows that there is predominant support for the idea that environmental concerns should not stop at Denmark's borders – but also that a significant part of the population is either unsure or reserved about how responsibility for destruction abroad should be understood and handled in practice.

Although more than half of Danes believe that Denmark should take responsibility for environmental destruction in, for example, rainforests and coral reefs, the analysis on page 63 still points out that Danes primarily attribute the responsibility to the national authorities in the vulnerable natural areas (57%) as well as international organizations (52%).

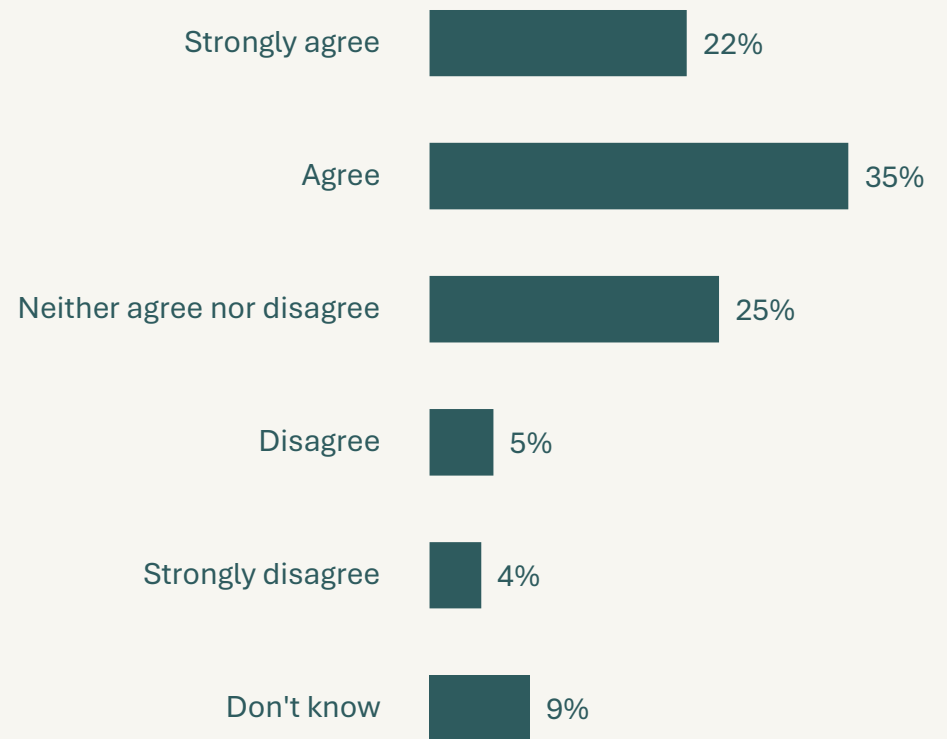
According to analyses from WWF, Denmark is among the countries in the world with the largest deforestation footprint per capita, which is partly due to the import of feed for animal production. Denmark imports 1.8 million tons of soy every year, which claims 898,000 hectares of forest.¹⁹

According to WWF, about 65% of the soy used in Danish agriculture comes from South America – especially Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, where production is often associated with deforestation and thus loss of biodiversity.²⁰ In these areas, monitored populations of wild animals have on average declined by 95% since 1970 according to the Living Planet Index (figures for Latin America and the Caribbean).²¹



Orangutan
Pongo pygmaeus

Danish authorities and companies should take responsibility for environmental destruction abroad caused by our consumption



Data: Nature Perception Report 2025 (n = 1009)

A sea turtle with a brown and white patterned shell is swimming over a dense field of green seagrass. The background is a clear, deep blue ocean.

06

The way forward

Danes' view of nature as a starting point for action in Denmark

Biodiversity is under pressure – in Denmark and globally. Species and habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate, and human activity is weakening nature's ability to regenerate. Denmark is among the world's most cultivated countries, and no natural areas meet international standards for strictly protected nature. Globally, the size of wild animal populations has declined by an average of 73% in just five decades³ – with serious consequences for ecosystems and climate. It is time to act.

This report shows that the majority of Danes actually want action. Nature is of great importance – both as a sanctuary for people and for nature's own sake. 65% want more wild nature without human intervention, and there is broad support for nature types with high biodiversity such as untouched forests, wetlands, and seas. Nevertheless, the population is divided on the question of whether Denmark lacks good nature, and especially split in their view of agricultural fields. Half of them believe they have sufficient knowledge about biodiversity loss, while a quarter do not.

This knowledge is not just a snapshot of Danes' perception – it is a starting point for various actors to take responsibility and turn it into concrete action.

We all have a responsibility to take care of nature – and a role to play in the way we do business, legislate, consume, and otherwise manage nature's resources.

Companies can read from the report that Danes – as consumers and employees – want to protect nature, and that, among others, companies translate this into responsible choices throughout the value chain – from raw material extraction, suppliers, and to reduction of climate impact. For example, 57% of Danes say that companies bear the greatest responsibility for protecting nature in Denmark.

Politicians receive a mandate to strengthen nature restoration/protection. 66% of Danes believe that members of Parliament have the greatest responsibility for protecting nature in Denmark, and 57% say that Danish authorities should take responsibility for the destruction of nature outside the country's borders caused by our consumption.

Foundations and the rest of civil society can use the figures in the report to understand Danes' support for the field, engage stakeholders, and target communication, especially in areas where the population lacks knowledge, is uncertain, or divided. For example, about a quarter of Danes say they lack sufficient knowledge about the concept of *rewilding*.

Consumers can reflect their own attitudes in those of the population, consider what "good nature" is, change habits, and make demands on companies and politicians – also for nature outside Denmark's borders.

07

References and foto credits

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Page 12	Flower stripes: Foto of Irina Schmidt on: https://stock.adobe.com/dk/contributor/202065956/irina-schmidt?load_type=author&prev_url=detail	Page 42 og 66	Foto of David Courbit on: https://unsplash.com/photos/brown-turtle-in-body-of-water-9XzyEzPAHMI
Page 12	Gardens and city parks: Foto of Josephine Baran on: https://unsplash.com/photos/woman-sitting-on-bench-cjrULwnJKhl?utm_content=creditCopyText&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=unsplash	Page 44-45	Foto of Aaron Burden on: https://unsplash.com/photos/macro-photography-of-drop-of-water-on-top-of-green-plant-Kp9z6zcUfGw
Page 12	Sea: Foto of Ryan on: https://stock.adobe.com/dk/contributor/212640191/ryan?load_type=author&prev_url=detail	Page 50	Foto of Henry Be on: https://unsplash.com/photos/orange-flowers-lilyciaPYGGI
Page 12, 45-55	Wetland: Foto of jpiiks1 on: https://stock.adobe.com/dk/contributor/202214397/jpiiks1?load_type=author&prev_url=detail	Page 56-57	Foto of Alex Person on: https://unsplash.com/photos/an-excavator-works-in-a-massive-landfill-eJ20Cf1qWLA
Page 14 -15	Foto of Aleksandra Kovacic on: https://unsplash.com/photos/a-path-in-the-middle-of-a-forest-with-lots-of-trees-tH75PVj1i2c	Page 58	Foto of Andrew Charney on: https://unsplash.com/photos/landscape-photography-of-forest-3tW2GR0KAd8
Page 16	Foto of Aaron Burden on: https://unsplash.com/photos/selective-focus-of-green-grass-3TmLV0fLzFU	Page 64	Foto of Chris Charles on: https://unsplash.com/photos/primate-beside-orangutan-XXMx0r5Bvj6U
		Page 68	Foto of Lukas Zischke on: https://unsplash.com/photos/grassy-dunes-roll-beneath-a-cloudy-sky-LWR6jys0Glg
		Page 72	Foto of Julia Taubitz on: https://unsplash.com/photos/a-forest-filled-with-lots-of-tall-trees-3uzg_U8i4RQ



08

**The method behind
the study**

The method behind the study

The study is primarily based on a quantitative questionnaire survey. It covers four main themes: 1) understanding of nature, 2) appreciation of nature, 3) behavior in relation to nature, and 4) attitude towards who is responsible for the state of nature.

The questionnaire framework was prepared by Upstream Partners and quality assured in collaboration with individuals with expertise in natural sciences, a methodology and statistics expert from methods.dk, as well as researchers from YouGov.

To ensure clarity and understanding, the questionnaire framework was pilot tested among a small group of respondents who provided feedback on wording and answer options. Relevant adjustments were made based on this feedback before the questionnaire was widely distributed.

The data collection was carried out by the research institute YouGov. In total, 1,009 CAWI interviews were conducted with Danes aged 18+ years, in the period 20th – 25th June 2025. Data was collected to constitute a representative sample of the Danish population based on the target group. Data was weighted on the dimensions of gender, age, and geography based on an ideal from Statistics Denmark, so that the results are representative of the population in relation to the above-mentioned target group.

The data processing was mainly carried out by YouGov. Upstream Partners conducted further analyses of the questionnaire data, including cross-analyses between respondents' answers to different questions.

In addition to the responses to the thematic questions, background data was collected about the respondents, including gender, age, geography, family life cycle, degree of urbanization, household income, employment information, education, and use of social media. These have enabled analyses of the groups, where significant differences in responses depending on, for example, gender, age, or education have been identified and highlighted in the report. In this context, YouGov conducted statistical tests (T-test) to identify the significant differences between the groups.

Finally, Upstream Partners has also conducted a supplementary analysis of the media coverage of *rewilding*. The word *rewilding* was searched for in media on Infomedia at both headline and body text level from 2009-2025.

The reporting itself was prepared by Upstream Partners. Supplementary studies, knowledge, and statements have been continuously included in the report, to nuance and put the results from the questionnaire study into perspective.

Who is Planetary Responsibility Foundation?

Planetary Responsibility Foundation (PRF) is a Danish commercial foundation whose purpose is to protect and preserve our planet's nature as well as promote sustainable development. PRF was founded in 2022 by Andreea Kaiser and Ludvig Find, who run the real estate group ALFA Development.

The foundation has a holistic approach to mission-driven investments and projects that make a difference for both people and the planet, as well as generate returns that can be reinvested in the foundation's work.

The foundation's strategy has two tracks, RESTORE (nature restoration) and RETHINK (knowledge sharing about nature-positive business practices and management).

Upstream Partners P/S is established and owned by PRF.

Read more: www.prf.dk



Who is Upstream Partners?

Upstream Partners P/S (Upstream Partners) is a consultancy specializing in sustainable and nature-positive development. Upstream Partners helps to create and develop sustainable business in balance with nature and works for systemic change across sectors - with biodiversity as the focal point.

With a strong professional foundation and a cross-cutting approach, Upstream Partners develops and implements strategies that address complex sustainability challenges. Upstream Partners creates partnerships between businesses, authorities, and civil society, which promote solutions with real impact for both nature, society, and business.

Through consulting in, among other things, strategy, business development, and sustainable financing, Upstream Partners helps its clients manage nature- and climate-related risks and create long-term value in a changing world.

Upstream Partners has offices in Copenhagen and New York.

Read more: www.upstream.partners



