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### THE WILDER THE HAPPIER:

### NATURAL AREAS INCREASE HUMAN LIFE SATISFACTION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

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While land use change caused by agriculture and urbanization is the major driver of biodiversity decline in terrestrial ecosystems, natural environments are known to improve human well-being at local level. This suggests a compatibility between nature conservation and human development. The Human Development Index accounts for the health, education, and income dimensions of human populations. These socio-economic variables are known to be highly correlated with human life satisfaction. Here we show that the percentage of natural land cover also increases human well-being at country level, as a model considering this variable together with those socio-economic ones explained better the variation of human life satisfaction around the world. We recommend the inclusion of the natural land cover index in the Human Development Index as it currently lacks an environmental dimension. This would produce a more accurate and socio-environmentally fair human development index, while encouraging actions towards nature conservation and human well-being aspirations in an increasingly harvested and urbanized planet.

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