Nature Soundscapes and Cognitive Performance in an Office Environment

by

Maxwell Pittman
B.A., University of California, 2016

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE, CONCENTRATION

In the Department of Psychology

© Pittman, Maxwell, 2019
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This Thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.
Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Robert Gifford, Department of Psychology
Supervisor

Graham Brown, School of Business
Departmental Member

Research suggests that interacting with nature has positive psychological, physiological, and cognitive benefits. Views to nature, interacting with nature, and other visual nature stimuli have been widely studied. Receiving less attention, however, is nature soundscapes, and the limited research that has been published has mixed findings. In the present study, the researcher assessed whether nature soundscapes influenced performance on cognitive and affective assessments. Participants completed the Flanker task, the Stroop task, a Visual Search task, and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, while exposed to either nature sounds alone, nature sounds with outdoor views, or neither stimulus. The results revealed no statistically significant differences in performance in any of the three conditions, on either the cognitive and affective assessments. These findings indicate that the relation between nature sounds and cognition is more complex than originally presumed, and potential future directions are discussed.