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Traffic noise may be making birdsong less calming – 10th September 2026

Level 0

Birdsong is good for our mental health. It is one of nature's most beautiful sounds. Noise from traffic is not good for our mental health. It can increase our stress. A study found that traffic noise reduces the benefits of hearing birdsong. A researcher said towns needed more green spaces and lower speed limits.

Many people took part in the study. They listened to natural sounds and traffic noise. They then answered questions about how they felt. A researcher said listening to traffic noise reduced people's feelings of well-being. The researcher said we need more outdoor spaces to help people who are stressed.

Level 1

Listening to birds singing is positive for our mental health. Birdsong is one of nature's most beautiful sounds. Conversely, noise from traffic can increase our stress. A study from the UK suggests that traffic noise may reduce the positive effects of birdsong on our mood. A researcher said traffic noise reduces the benefits on our well-being of natural sounds. She said we needed more green spaces in towns. She also suggested lowering speed limits.

More than 1,500 people took part in the study. They listened to natural sounds and traffic noise. They then answered questions about how relaxed they felt. The researchers found that listening to traffic noise reduced people's feelings of well-being. A researcher said we need to find out more about how much traffic noise affects sounds in nature. She added that we need more outdoor spaces to help people who are stressed.

Level 2

Listening to birds singing is positive for our mental health and well-being. Birdsong is one of the most beautiful sounds in nature. Conversely, noise from traffic can increase our stress. A new study from a UK university suggests that the noise from traffic may reduce the positive effects of birdsong on our mood. An environmental psychologist said traffic noise affects the benefits on our well-being of natural soundscapes. She said we need to think more carefully about green spaces in towns. She also suggested making speed limits lower near parks.

More than 1,500 people took part in the study. They listened to soundscapes of natural sounds and traffic noise. They then answered questions about how relaxed they felt after listening to the sounds. The researchers found that listening to traffic noise, even at low levels, reduced feelings of well-being. A researcher said the modern world is noisy. She said we need to find out about how much traffic noise affects sounds in nature. She added that we need to find more quiet outdoor spaces to help people who are feeling stressed.

Level 3

Listening to birds singing has a positive effect on our mental health and well-being. Birdsong is one of the most beautiful sounds in nature. Conversely, noise from traffic is annoying and can increase our stress. A new study from the University of Surrey in the UK suggests that the noise from traffic may reduce the positive effects of birdsong on our mood. Environmental psychologist Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe said: "Traffic noise undoubtedly affects the psychological benefits of natural soundscapes." She said we need to think more carefully about adding green spaces to towns, "so that people enjoy such areas to the fullest". She also suggested lowering speed limits near parks.

More than 1,500 people took part in the study. They listened to nine different soundscapes of natural sounds and traffic noise. The people then answered questions about how relaxed and refreshed they felt after listening to the sounds. The researchers found that listening to birdsong benefited well-being. However, even at low levels, traffic noise reduced feelings of well-being. Researcher Dr Melissa Marselle said the modern world is noisy. She said we need to investigate the impact of traffic noise on nature's sounds and whether it negatively affects their benefits. She added that we need to identify more quiet outdoor spaces to help people who are feeling stressed.