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2019

2020

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STEPPING OUT

A data story

EST. COVID-19

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Stepping Out

A landscape of North American outdoor engagement before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

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2020 brought an unprecedented enthusiasm for hiking, camping, birdwatching, and the outdoors as people sought safe and healthy ways to enjoy fresh air during pandemic lockdowns. Many were new to these activities, enjoying countless new experiences and deeper relationships with the natural world.

Birds (1) represent frequency of bird sightings by type in the U.S. as reported to iNaturalist.com. The outline of the snow-capped mountains (2) shows frequency of Google searches for the phrase “local hiking” over the past two years, which spiked shortly after the pandemic began. Tents (3) each represent a percentage share of travel that North Americans devoted to camping preCOVID (11%) and post-COVID (16%) according to the 2020 North American Camping Report. Trees (4) encode data from the National Recreation and Park Association’s 2020 Engagement with Parks Report: each small tree represents a percentage point of Americans who made a small number of trips to parks (1-20 visits) in 2019 (left door) and 2020 (right door). Medium trees represent the same for more trips (11-50 visits) and large represents that of the most trips (51+).

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