

## **How are coronavirus lockdowns changing our environment?**

*From cleaner air to liberated wildlife, coronavirus lockdowns across the world appear to have had a number of positive effects on the environment.*

Modern life as we know it has largely been put on pause with millions of us cooped up indoors as governments try to curtail the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. But outside, the natural world has continued to rumble on, and even shown signs of benefiting from our absence. Below, we take a look at some of the notable impacts of coronavirus lockdowns on our surroundings.

### **Cleaner Air and Increased Visibility**

Cleaner air has perhaps been the single greatest positive effect of the lockdowns on the environment. Citizens in Northern India are seeing the view of the Himalayan mountain range for the first time in their lives, due to the drop in air pollution caused by the country's coronavirus lockdown. Those living in Jalandhar in northern Punjab have shared pictures of the mountains from rooftops and empty streets, amazed by the view which has been hidden by pollution for 30 years.



In fact, cities across the world have seen pollution levels plummet as people have spent less time in vehicles, offices and factories and more time at home. Reductions in nitrogen dioxide have also been registered in localities throughout the UK, with London and several other major cities all recording a dip in the presence of the harmful substances.

### **Clearer Water**

In Venice, famous for its winding canals, water quality appears to have improved amid Italy's stringent coronavirus lockdown. Residents in the city have said the waterways are benefiting from the lack of usual boat traffic brought on by the hordes of tourists who visit each year.

Emptied of the usual array of motorboat taxis, transport and tourist boats which clog the canals, there has reportedly been a sharp uptick in the clarity of the water.

Gloria Beggiato, a local hotel owner, recently told the Guardian Venetians feel "nature has returned and is taking back possession of the city". "I honestly believe we should take the opportunity of this lockdown to reflect and see how we can be more organised in the future to find a balance between the city and tourism."



## **Liberated Wildlife**

As in Venice, wildlife elsewhere has also taken the opportunity presented by our widespread absence from suburban streets and city centres to venture out and explore.

While there have been a host of now debunked fake stories about animals' activities during Covid-19 lockdowns, there have also been plenty of instances of creatures across the world appearing to be emboldened, and perhaps a bit bemused, by our ongoing lack of activity.



From a herd of marauding goats taking over a Welsh seaside town to deer in a Japanese city roaming the roads in search of food, the shift in behaviours has ranged between the beautiful and the downright bizarre.

In Barcelona, Spain, boars have been spotted along the city's normally bustling avenues, snuffling and trotting around where vehicles once jostled for position. In Northern America, Orcas have also seemingly been encouraged to explore by humans' momentary lack of presence, with locals reporting spotting the majestic whales in parts of a Vancouver fjord for the first time in decades.

Across the world, the lockdowns may just be showing us how quickly the natural world around us can adapt and thrive in our absence when given some space.

Or to put it simply, when we move out, nature can move in!