

EXMOOR LANDSCAPE PERCEPTIONS STUDY



A word cloud of positive landscape perceptions. The most prominent words are 'Beautiful' (large, dark red), 'Fantastic' (large, dark red, vertical), 'Magnificent' (large, dark red), 'Stunning' (large, dark red), 'Dramatic' (large, dark red), 'Breathtaking' (large, dark red), 'Coastal' (large, dark red, vertical), and 'Relaxing' (medium, dark red). Other words include 'Glorious', 'Amazing', 'High', 'Beautiful coastline', 'Peaceful', 'Best views in the world', 'North Devon', 'Spectacular', 'Blessed by sun', 'Blue', 'Cool', 'Varied', 'sky', 'Perfect', 'Wonderful', 'Expansive', 'Panoramic', 'Open', 'Springlike', 'Brilliant', 'Picturesque', 'Vast', 'Exceptional', and 'Peaceful'.



A word cloud of emotional responses. The most prominent words are 'Happy to be here' (large, green), 'Relaxed' (large, blue), 'Good to be alive' (medium, white), 'Contented' (medium, white), 'Peaceful' (medium, green, vertical), 'Elated' (medium, green), 'Happy' (medium, green), 'Good to have reached 73' (medium, green), 'Lucky' (medium, green), 'Thoughtful' (medium, green), 'Satisfied' (medium, green), 'Tranquil' (medium, green, vertical), 'Amazed' (medium, green), 'Chilled' (medium, green), 'Observant' (medium, green), and 'Overwhelmed with awe' (medium, white).

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On behalf of
EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
and the
EXMOOR SOCIETY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study* provides important data on how members of the public perceive each of the landscape types within Exmoor National Park. Over the course of a year, volunteers surveyed 325 members of the public at agreed sites throughout the National Park, recording how respondents described each of the landscape types, and their emotional response to the landscape. It also recorded data on how Exmoor is valued in terms of the 'cultural services' it offers, as well as the public's response to landscape change. Its results will inform the forthcoming review of the Exmoor National Park Management Plan.

The *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study* has provided statistical evidence for subjective responses which can easily be taken for granted, such as people's appreciation of Exmoor's variety and scenic beauty, and the high levels of tranquillity achieved at many locations throughout the National Park. Its results indicate that the statutory purposes of the National Park are being successfully fulfilled, and that Exmoor's special qualities are being retained. The study therefore endorses the effectiveness of current management by landowners, farmers and the National Park Authority, and demonstrates the importance of continued good management of all parts of the National Park in the future.

The overwhelming conclusion of this study is the public's appreciation of ALL types of landscape within Exmoor National Park, reflected in the words used to describe different landscapes, and in the positive emotional responses that those landscapes evoke. It also confirms the emotional benefits of Exmoor (and presumably other National Parks) to individuals, and – collectively – to society as a whole.

Respondents used a total of 262 adjectives to describe the various views, ranging alphabetically from 'beautiful' to 'wow!' 'Beautiful' and 'peaceful' were the top two adjectives overall, and feature near the top of the lists for most of the individual sites. However, further down the lists the adjectives for each area become more place-specific. For example, Brendon Common ('purple', 'open', 'vast', 'expansive') contrasts with Watersmeet ('river valley', 'rocky', 'water rushing', 'fairytale', 'dramatic') and Woody Bay Station ('pastoral', 'rural', 'livestock', 'farmland', 'sloping hills').

The emotional responses to the Exmoor landscape were overwhelmingly positive. A total of 144 different emotions were expressed, with 'relaxed', 'happy', 'peaceful' and 'calm' being the clear top four. Again, further down the lists for each survey site, a greater variety of emotions begin to appear, for example 'observant', 'close to the sky', 'elated' and 'expectant' were only associated with upland moorland sites, whereas 'protected', 'delighted', 'mesmerized' and 'reflective' were only associated with valley/ woodland sites. When asked directly, 86.8% of respondents felt relaxed, 79.1% felt happy, 69.5% felt uplifted, 0.3% felt intimidated, 0.6% felt uncomfortable and 2.8% felt melancholic.

Demographic factors (age, gender, place of residence) and environmental factors (weather, season) do not appear to affect whether people feel relaxed, happy or uplifted in the different landscape types, although data on ethnicity and socio-economic status (which may influence people's response) were not collected for this study. From this

study, therefore, it appears that it is the different combinations of landscape elements (rivers, coast, moorland, field patterns etc.) and landscape qualities (openness, enclosure, wildness) which create different emotional responses in people.

Exmoor's landscape provides a wide variety of 'cultural services', although comparison of this study with previous research suggests that Exmoor's landscape provides slightly different cultural services for residents and visitors.

12.7% of previous visitors had noticed negative changes in the landscape, and 23.9% had noticed positive changes. The ranges of both positive and negative changes are quite wide and cover many different land management issues, but no specific issues were repeatedly mentioned at different survey sites. Residents of the National Park were more likely to observe landscape changes than occasional visitors.

Finally, respondents expressed a number of favourite views and routes within the National Park. These ranged from well-known viewpoints to secret spots and encompassed many different landscape character types, although coastal routes were particularly popular.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0.1 This report was commissioned jointly by Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) and the Exmoor Society. It was prepared by Fiona Fyfe, with assistance from Emma Dennis of ENPA and a group of dedicated volunteers who carried out the questionnaire surveys, whose commitment of time, energy and enthusiasm we gratefully acknowledge. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of statistician Fiona Stott, who helped with the questionnaire and spreadsheet design, and with the data analysis.

1.0.2 The report is intended to inform the forthcoming review of the Exmoor National Park Management Plan. It will also contribute to the meeting the following two objectives within the existing Exmoor National Management Plan 2007-2012:

A4.1: Base-line data from the public on what is important to them in the landscape and why will be established by the end of 2012.

A4.2: A survey of the different views on perceptual landscape characteristics such as scenic quality, tranquillity and wildness will be completed and the results taken into account by the end of 2012.

1.0.3 The report is particularly timely given the coalition Government's wish to measure and quantify people's levels of happiness, and it ties in with previous research projects which address how people relate to landscape and what the benefits and values of landscape are to society.

1.0.4 The aim of the report is to explore the following four questions:

- What is important to the public in the Exmoor landscape and why?
- How do people perceive the different landscape types within Exmoor National Park?
- What factors influence that perception?
- How should this affect management policies and strategies?

1.0.5 Following a section presenting background information, the first three of these questions are addressed in the Results section, with the fourth addressed in the Conclusions and Recommendations section. References and sources of further information are provided at the end of the report, along with Appendices describing the survey sites and summarising the key qualities of each landscape type, and containing full answers to the open-ended questions.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Landscape Character Assessment and the importance of landscape perception

The European Landscape Convention

2.1.0 The European Landscape Convention (ratified by the UK in 2006) defines landscape as:

An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors (emphasis added)

This definition puts people's perception of landscape as a central consideration. It has led to new interest in understanding how people relate to and perceive the world around them, and how the findings of research on the subject can be practically applied.

2.1.1 The Oxford pocket dictionary definition of *perceive* is:

Apprehend with the mind or through one of the senses, observe, notice, understand.

Landscape perception is about our response to landscape- how it makes us feel and the reactions it evokes in us. This project utilises the contrasting landscapes within Exmoor to see if people respond differently to the various landscapes within the National Park.

Landscape Characterisation Methodology

2.1.3 People's perceptions of landscape are an important part of the landscape characterisation process, as explained in the Countryside Agency/ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance (2002), p.35 para. 5.14:

Any consensus views gained through the involvement of stakeholders can also play an important part in indicating the importance of these perceptions of landscape, which make such a key contribution to character. Stakeholders will often have special knowledge about an area which will mean that their perceptions are influenced by particular associations which a landscape may have.

2.1.4 Para. 5.14 gives the following examples of perceptual aspects of landscape. Some are visual; others rely on other senses too:

- Beauty/ scenic attractiveness
- Tranquillity
- Wildness
- Remoteness
- Sense of security
- Quality of light
- Exposure to the elements

The various elements which combine to create 'landscape' are shown in fig. 1 overleaf.

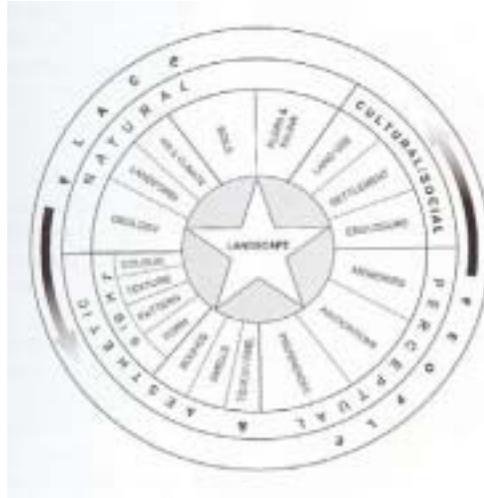


Fig. 1: What is landscape? (Reproduced from Countryside Agency/ SNH (2002) p.2)

2.1.5 In Topic Paper 3, the Countryside Agency/ SNH Landscape Character Assessment Guidance describes the importance of “communities of place” (para 1.6) and the need to involve the people who live, work and visit a particular area in the landscape characterisation process. This report therefore complements the existing Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment, enabling the subjective responses of individuals to be represented, as well as the professional judgement which has already been written into the Landscape Character Assessment.

2.2 Landscape Types within Exmoor

2.2.1 Exmoor is a landscape of contrasts- from open elevated moorland to enclosed, wooded river valleys; from soft, green farmland to jagged coastal cliffs. It is these wide variations in landscape within a relatively small area which make the Exmoor landscape so distinctive and interesting, and also make it an ideal subject for a study such as this one.

2.2.2 The **Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment** (completed in 2007) identified nine distinctive landscape types within the National Park (shown in fig. 2 overleaf) and listed below. Photographs of each of the nine landscape types, and summaries of their key qualities are provided in Appendix I.

- High Coastal Heaths
- High Wooded Coast, Combes and Cleaves
- Low Farmland, Coast and Marsh
- Open Moorland
- Farmed and Settled Vale
- Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons
- Incised Wooded Valleys
- Plantation (with heathland) Hills
- Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes

2.3 Brief review of previous studies of Exmoor

2.3.1 How people respond to and value landscape has been the subject of a large number of recent publications. Several of these are listed in the 'References and sources of further reading'. What follows here is a brief summary of previous reports which relate specifically to Exmoor. It is not intended to be a full literature review.

Moorlands at a Crossroads Land Use Consultants (2004)

2.3.2 This report, commissioned by the Exmoor Society, aimed to provide an independent evaluation of the state of Exmoor's moorlands, and to guide the Exmoor Society's work in promoting the conservation and enjoyment of Exmoor. It included the results of a postal survey sent out to all Exmoor Society members to obtain their views on the special qualities of Exmoor (Sections 3.41-3.49). When asked to rank which landscape elements were most special to their appreciation of Exmoor, many respondents commented along the lines of 'you can only take Exmoor as a whole!' and 'Exmoor is a unity...'. However, on the basis of rankings given, the moorland came out as the most important landscape element (77%) followed by the coast (30%); woodland and rivers (both 23%); villages (10%) and farmland (9%).

2.3.3 When asked to identify the qualities of the moorlands that make them special to their appreciation of Exmoor, the three qualities of 'views and openness', 'peacefulness', and 'wildness and remoteness' were the most popular, chosen by 94%, 92% and 89% of respondents respectively. These aesthetic and perceptual qualities came out higher than other qualities such as 'flora', 'fauna' and 'archaeology', indicating the importance of perceptual qualities in how this sample of people value Exmoor's landscapes.

2.3.4 Different types of moorland were valued for different reasons. For example, the Coastal Heaths were particularly highly valued for their views; the Northern Heather Moors for their flora and fauna, and the Central Grass Moors for their wildness and remoteness.

Experiencing Landscapes: Capturing the 'Cultural Services' and 'Experiential Qualities' of Landscape by The Research Box, in association with Land Use Consultants and Rick Minter, published by Natural England in 2009.

2.3.5 This wide-ranging report presents the results of a programme of qualitative social research into how people relate to and value the landscape and its component elements. The research was carried out in eight contrasting National Character Areas (NCAs), around England, including Exmoor. The report raises many interesting points in relation to people's attitudes towards landscape and the elements within it.

2.3.6 Eight 'cultural services' provided by landscape were examined, which were felt to represent a wide scope of services which would offer a structure for capturing people's responses. These were:

- A sense of history (or heritage);

- A sense of place (identity, home);
- Inspiration (stimulus);
- Calm (relaxation, tranquillity);
- Leisure and activities (recreation);
- Spiritual;
- Learning (education), and;
- Escapism (getting away from it all).

2.3.7 The study concluded that all landscapes deliver all of the cultural services identified to a greater or lesser extent, although some landscape elements are ‘big hitters’ in terms of the range of cultural services delivered, including water, rivers and streams, the coast, mountains and hills, moorland, field systems and villages.

2.3.8 As well as examining people’s responses to particular landscape features, the study also addressed how people responded to the composition of the landscape, for example, variety/ simplicity; natural vs. man-made; openness/ enclosure and also its quality and condition. In summary, people preferred the ability to see patterns, colours, layers of views and boundaries, so complex landscapes well-punctuated with features were often preferred to simple ones. People perceived ‘naturalness’ in different ways. Although the best landscape experiences were predominantly ‘natural’ in the sense of being green and rural, respondents often liked the presence of man-made features to achieve a sense of history, community or accessibility, particularly if these features blended in (old churches, thatched roofs etc.). Openness seemed to be valued more than enclosure and was a main contributor towards escapism. However, enclosure could create variety with the contrast making open views more impressive. It could also increase the sense of peace and isolation by shielding the surroundings (and other people). People generally had a limited ability to judge the landscape in terms of quality and condition, or to perceive change in natural features. However, improving landscape quality was evidenced through better-kept hedges, information signs and the return of wildlife through better land management.

2.3.9 Many of the participants in the Exmoor survey expressed a strong allegiance to Exmoor and its landscape. Participants’ feedback suggested that Exmoor is seen as a highly distinct area with a clear identity, offering a wide range of cultural services. There appeared to be a strong sense of place coming from the distinctive character of both the moorland itself and the landscape’s diversity. Compared with other NCAs, Exmoor scored particularly highly in terms of sense of place, inspiration, calm, leisure activities, spiritual and escapism.

2.3.10 To a great degree, the perceived lack of change was valued in the Exmoor landscape. Overall it was regarded as a high-quality area with a high aesthetic value, although some threats to the landscape were identified, including increased traffic, speeding motorbikes, visual clutter from road signs, poor quality development and certain agricultural changes such as biomass crops and use of plastic sheeting.

2.3.11 The Exmoor sample was largely made up of local residents, rather than visitors, and consisted of workshops attended by people mainly (but not exclusively) from the

northern part of the National Park. The *Experiencing Landscapes* report considers Exmoor as a whole and does not make any distinction between the different landscape types present within the Exmoor NCA. The *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study* therefore looks at the Exmoor landscape in much more detail, and deliberately addresses some of the issues raised in the Issues for Further Study (Section 11) of the *Experiencing Landscapes* report, such as interviewing visitors as well as local residents, and addressing the question of whether people perceive change in the landscape. For the *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study*, interviews were carried out throughout the National Park and undertaken outdoors, looking at a specific view, as described in the Methodology section below.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.0.1 A total of 11 survey sites were selected throughout Exmoor National Park. One was located in each of the nine landscape types (carefully chosen with a view as representative of that landscape type as possible), plus two others- one (Cosgate Hill) with a view over several different landscape types, and one (Fyldon Ridge) with expansive views outside the National Park. A questionnaire survey of members of the public was undertaken by volunteers at each site. Surveys were undertaken throughout the course of a year in order to assess the impacts of the changing seasons on how people perceive the landscape. The location of the survey sites is shown in fig. 3. Volunteers were encouraged to approach a range of people in terms of age and gender, and to try to get a mixture of visitors and local residents.



Fig. 3: Location of survey sites.

Number on map above	Name of Survey Site	Number of surveys completed	Number of visits (1 per season)
1	Great Hangman Hill	25	2
2	Woody Bay Station	40	2
3	Watersmeet	59	4
4	Brendon Common	20	3
5	Tarr Steps	85	4
6	Porlock Marsh	11	1
7	Selworthy	16	2
8	Nutcombe Bottom	22	2
9	Nettlecombe	3	1
10	Cosgate Hill	23	1
11	Fyldon Ridge	21	3

- 3.0.3 A total of 325 surveys were completed, comprising an acceptable statistical sample. However, the numbers of questionnaires completed and the number of visits during the year varied between sites, as shown in the above table. The small sample sizes at Nettlecombe and Porlock Marsh should be borne in mind when drawing conclusions from the results presented in the following section.
- 3.0.4 The survey included a mixture of 'open' and 'closed' type questions, as shown in the following example questionnaire.

EXMOOR LANDSCAPE PERCEPTIONS STUDY
QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) **How often do you visit Exmoor?**
 a) Live here
 b) More than once a month
 c) More than once a year
 d) Once every few years
 e) Only visit-
- 2) **What is the reason for your visit here today?**
- 3) **Do you live within**
 a) Exmoor National Park
 b) Devon or Somerset but outside the National Park
 c) Further afield
- 4) **Did you grow up in the**
 Countryside
 Town/suburb
 City?
- 5) **How would you describe this scene today? (up to 5 words)**
- 6) **Here is a list of words used to describe the landscape. On a scale of 1-5, do you consider this scene to be: (circle value below).**



wild	1	2	3	4	5	managed
open	1	2	3	4	5	enclosed
tranquil	1	2	3	4	5	busy
historic	1	2	3	4	5	modern
High scenic quality	1	2	3	4	5	Low scenic quality

- 7) **How do you feel as you look at this scene today? (up to 5 words)**
- 8) **When you look at this scene today, do you feel any of these emotions:**
 Relaxed
 Happy
 Uplifted
 Intimidated
 Uncomfortable
 Melancholic

9) Which of the following values do you associate with the Exmoor landscape?

Identity/ sense of place/ feelings of 'being at home';
 Understanding of the past;
 Inspiration
 Escapism/ 'getting away from it all';
 Relaxation/ tranquillity/ peace and quiet;
 Spiritual values;
 Learning and education;
 Leisure and recreation;
 Having 'quality time'

10) (PREVIOUS VISITORS ONLY) Have you noticed any negative changes in the landscape?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, what?

11) (PREVIOUS VISITORS ONLY) Have you noticed any positive changes in the landscape?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, what?

12) - Are there any changes you would like to see?**13) Do you have a favourite landscape view from within Exmoor National Park?**

(If yes) Where is it?

(If yes) Why do you like it?

14) Do you have a favourite series of views (i.e. along a road or footpath) from within Exmoor National Park?

(If yes) Where are they?

(If yes) Why do you like them?

Male Female	Age	
Date:	Under 16	
Time :	16 – 25	
Weather:	25 – 50	
Location:	50+	
NOTES:		

4.0 RESULTS

4.0.1 This section looks firstly at the sample of respondents and the background data on age, gender etc. It then presents the results of the survey in relation to the first three of the broad questions which the study set out to address. The fourth question, relating to management recommendations, will be answered in the following section.

4.1 The sample

4.1.1 The sample of people taking part in this survey appears to be reasonably representative of people within the National Park.

Age of respondents

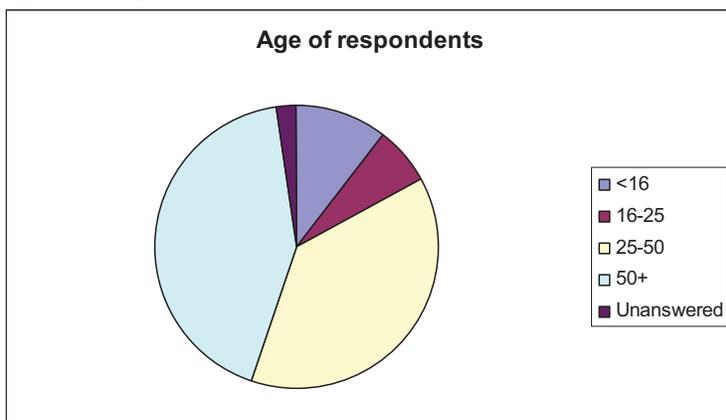


Fig. 4: Age of respondents

4.1.2 Most respondents were either 25-50 or 50+. These two groups accounted for 80.6% off all respondents. The least represented age bracket was 16-25 (6.8%) although whether this was because this age group were at school/ university or working when the surveys were undertaken, or whether it is because there genuinely are fewer people of this age in the National Park cannot be ascertained from this survey.

Gender of respondents

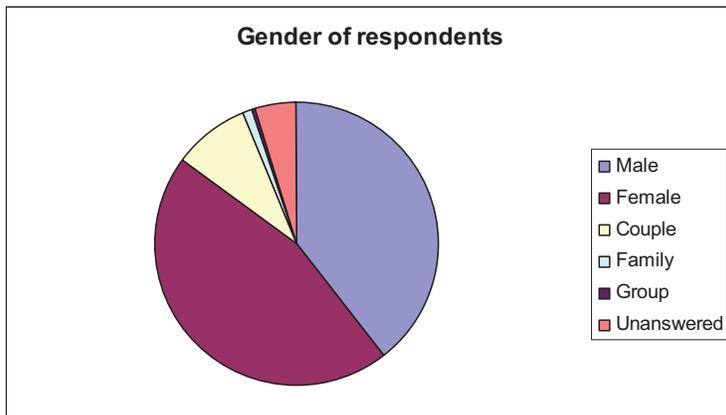


Fig. 5: Gender of respondents

- 4.1.3 Roughly equal proportions of men and women were surveyed (39.4% and 45.5% respectively). There were also some couples and families who completed the survey together.

Q.1: How often do you visit Exmoor?

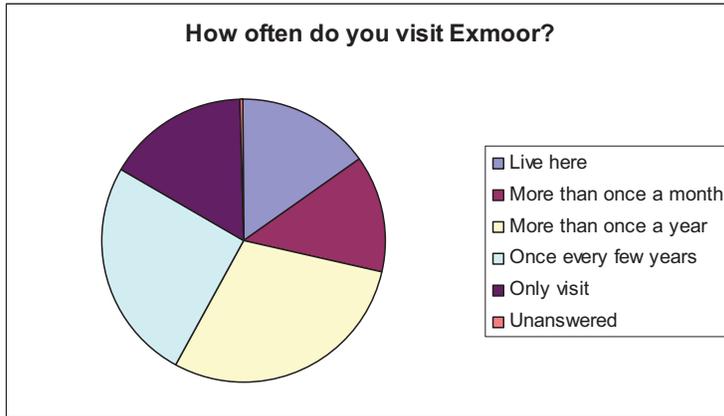


Fig. 6: Frequency of visits to Exmoor

- 4.1.4 The greatest proportion of respondents (29.2%) visit Exmoor more than once a year, indicating a good level of repeat visits to the National Park. The other four categories: 'Live here; More than once a month; Once every few years and Only visit' were also well represented.

Q2: What is the reason for your visit here today?

- 4.1.5 This was a free-response question, as it was only intended to explain respondents' answers to later questions. As an extreme example, if the reason someone was visiting was to 'scatter granny's ashes' then we wouldn't expect them to be feeling particularly cheerful!
- 4.1.6 By far the greatest number (29.5%) of respondents said they were on holiday, followed by 'walking', day trip, and 'dog-walking.' Only 4 respondents (1.25%) were working. Several of the under-16s were training for Duke of Edinburgh or Ten Tors expeditions and others were geocaching. More unusual reasons for being at a survey site included 'being lost', 'a new camera' and 'cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats'!

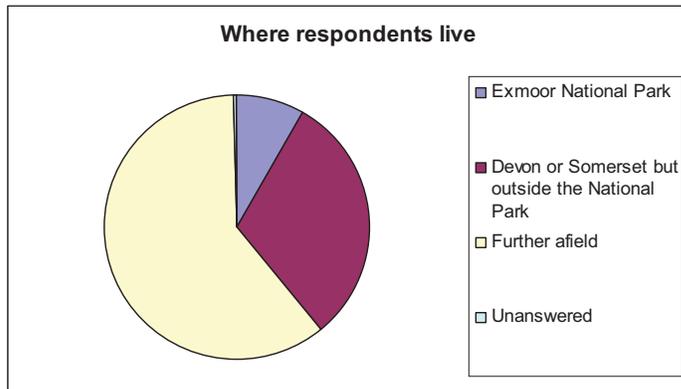
Q3: Where do you live?

Fig.7: Where respondents live

4.1.7 Only 8.3% of respondents lived within the National Park. The sites with the highest proportion of local people (often dog walkers) were Nutcombe Bottom, Porlock Marsh and Selworthy. 30.8 % of respondents were from Devon or Somerset but outside the National Park, and 60.6% were from further afield. These figures illustrate the local and national appeal of Exmoor, and represent a different make-up of respondents from the earlier study by Research Box et al.(2009), where the vast majority of responses came from local people.

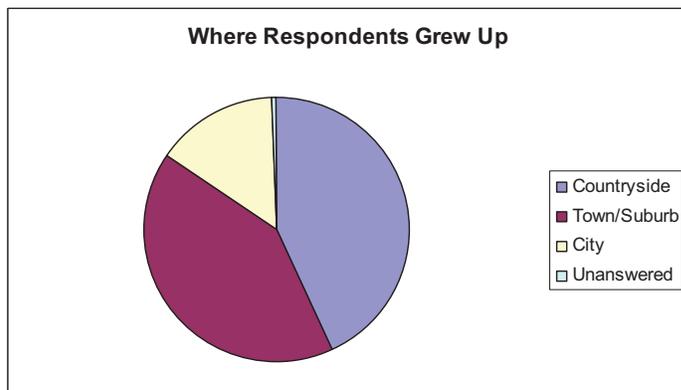
Q4: Where did you grow up?

Fig. 8: Where respondents grew up

4.1.8 The vast majority of respondents grew up in the countryside or a town/suburb (43.1% and 41.2% respectively). Only 15.1% grew up in a city. If this figure is representative it suggests people who grew up in the countryside/ town wish to return to the countryside, and that the wish to visit the countryside is less strong in those who grew up in a city.

4.2 What is important to the public in the Exmoor landscape and why?

Q.9: Which of the following values do you associate with the Exmoor landscape: Identity/ sense of place/ feelings of ‘being at home’; Understanding of the past; Inspiration; Escapism/ ‘getting away from it all’; Relaxation/ tranquillity/ peace and quiet; Spiritual values; Learning and education; Leisure and recreation; Having ‘quality time’? This question was intended to relate to Exmoor as a whole, rather than individual landscape character types.

4.2.1 Respondents associated Exmoor with all these cultural services (initially identified by Research Box et al. (2009)). The Exmoor Landscape Perception Study found that the highest value associated with Exmoor was relaxation/ tranquillity/ peace and quiet, by 81.5% of respondents overall. This was followed by ‘escapism/ getting away from it all’ (69.5%) and ‘having quality time’ (61.8%), ‘leisure and recreation’ (54.5%), ‘inspiration’ (46.2%) and ‘sense of place/ being at home’ (36%). The lowest values were associated with ‘learning and education’, ‘understanding the past’ and ‘spiritual values’, but even these were all over 23% (see fig. 8).

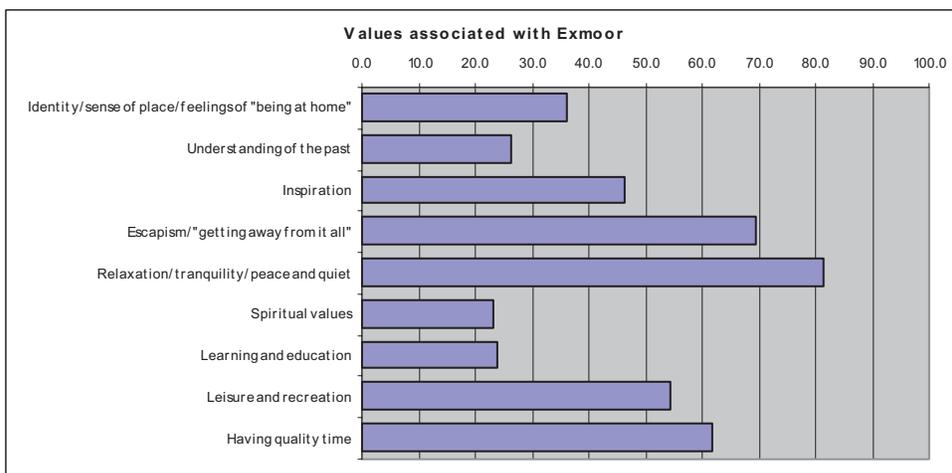


Fig. 9: ‘Cultural services’ provided by the Exmoor Landscape

4.2.2 In general, the results of the Exmoor Landscape Perception Study supported those of the Research Box report in relation to Exmoor, in that both studies found Exmoor to be associated with all the cultural services identified in the Research Box report, but with relatively low numbers of people associating Exmoor with ‘learning and education’ and ‘understanding the past’. However, the higher number of respondents and the wider cross-section of locals and visitors have enabled some refinement of the Research Box findings. Firstly, ‘Sense of place/ being at home’ was one of the strongest responses in the Research Box survey, but relatively low in the Exmoor Landscape Perception Study survey, which instead emphasised the area’s association with relaxation/ tranquillity/ peace and quiet. These variations are likely to be a result of the different proportions of residents and visitors in the two surveys, and whether they regard Exmoor as their home or as somewhere tranquil to visit for relaxation. ‘Spiritual values’ ranked higher in the Research Box study than in the *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study*, although as the term is

likely to mean different things to different people it is difficult to compare this cultural service between studies.

Q.10: (To previous visitors only) Have you noticed any negative changes to the scenic quality of the landscape?

- 4.2.3 12.7% of previous visitors had noticed negative changes in the landscape. Some of these were very site-specific, such as the new fence below Watersmeet. Others were more general, such as dumping of rubbish/ litter. However, there were no repeated issues which arose repeatedly at different sites. A full list of responses is provided in Appendix 2.

Q.11: (To previous visitors only) Have you noticed any positive changes to the scenic quality of the landscape?

- 4.2.4 23.9% of previous visitors had noticed positive changes in the landscape. Many of these were recorded at Nutcombe Bottom and related to the construction of the Tall Trees Trail and the provision of improved footpaths through the woodland. Positive comments were recorded on many general topics including moorland management, footpaths and signage, but again they were very varied, with few issues being repeatedly mentioned at different survey sites. A full list of responses is provided in Appendix 3.

- 4.2.5 It was noticeable from the answers to questions 10 and 11 that a higher percentage of National Park residents perceived landscape change than those who lived in surrounding counties or further afield. Similarly, frequency of visits also had an impact on the percentages of people noticing change, with National Park residents the highest and occasional visitors the lowest.

Q.12: Are there any changes you would like to see?

- 4.2.6 The answers to this open-ended question are set out in Appendix 4. The majority of answers relate to the provision of visitor facilities such as signposts, benches and dog bins. Some relate directly to landscape management (e.g. 'fewer conifer plantations'; 'greater return to heather moor') and a few relate to improvement of access (e.g. bus services, cycle path provision and access to rivers). The most frequent request was for litter and dog bins.

Q.13: Do you have a favourite landscape view from within Exmoor National Park? If yes, where is it, and why do you like it?

- 4.2.7 The most popular viewpoint was Dunkery Beacon/ Hill, with the spectacular, panoramic views being the most frequent reason for its popularity. Other popular viewpoints were Valley of Rocks, Watersmeet and Tarr Steps. As the table in Appendix 5 shows, a large number of favourite views were recorded located all around the National Park. Many different reasons were given to explain why people like these views, but the majority relate to the landscape in some way, either through the colour or composition of elements within the view, or through perceptual qualities such as openness or a sense of distance. Appreciation of changing seasons was also given in several answers.

Q. 14: Do you have a favourite series of views (i.e. along a road or footpath) from within Exmoor National Park? If yes, where are they?

4.2.8 Again, a wide variety of routes were listed, but the top three (the A39 Coast Road, the Coastal Path and Woody Bay- Hunters Inn) are all coastal routes. Variety and contrast of scenery were a key reason for people's choices, which included main roads, minor roads and footpaths. A full set of responses are given in Appendix 6.

4.3 How do people perceive the different landscapes within Exmoor National Park?

Q5: How would you describe this scene today?

4.3.1 The most common words given were general adjectives. A full set of responses are given in Appendix 7, but for the survey as a whole, the top 15 words are as follows:

Beautiful	92 mentions
Peaceful	38
Fantastic	19
Pretty	17
Stunning	17
Lovely	16
Picturesque	15
Green	14
Tranquil	14
Amazing	12
Natural	12
Relaxing	12
Breathtaking	11
Sunny	11
Wonderful	11

4.3.2 This general list reflects the most common descriptive words for each site (listed below), which also contain mostly non place-specific adjectives at the top of their lists such as 'beautiful' and 'peaceful'. It is interesting to note that the 'least typical Exmoor' sites of Fyldon Ridge, Nettlecombe and Porlock Marsh show the greatest variation when compared with the above list for Exmoor as a whole, although two of these sites also had relatively small samples.

Brendon Common: Beautiful, stunning, wonderful, peaceful.

Cosgate Hill: Amazing, beautiful, calm, peaceful.

Fyldon Ridge: Beautiful, hazy, panoramic.

Great Hangman Hill: Beautiful, fantastic, breathtaking.

Nettlecombe: Picturesque.

Porlock Marsh: Calm, interesting.

Selworthy: Beautiful, breathtaking, fantastic.

Tarr Steps: Beautiful, peaceful, sunny.

Watersmeet: Beautiful, peaceful, spectacular.

Woody Bay Station: Beautiful, open, green.

- 4.3.3. However, further down the lists, the less commonly-used words become far more place-specific, and it becomes possible to identify each site from the words used to describe it, as shown in the examples below:

Brendon common: Remote, spacious, expansive, exhilarating, vast.

Cosgate Hill: Soft, contrasting topography, varied, rolling moorland, fields.

Fyldon Ridge: Hazy, panoramic, typical Devon, farmed, expansive

Great Hangman Hill: spectacular, dramatic, high, open, coastal.

Nettlecombe: Picturesque, Classical painting, green, man-made and natural at the same time, changing seasons.

Nutcombe Bottom: Bluebells, wooded, spectacular mature trees, peaceful, with paths.

Porlock Marsh: Desolate, strange, striking, evocative, barren.

Selworthy: Gentle, wide-open, colourful, man-made, restful.

Tarr Steps: Idyllic, noisy, inviting, historically interesting, sublime.

Watersmeet: River valley, rocky, water rushing, fairytale, dramatic.

Woody Bay Station: Pastoral, rural, livestock, farmland, sloping hills.

- 4.3.4 In all, 262 different adjectives were used to describe the various views, ranging alphabetically from 'beautiful' to 'wow!' This variation is impressive, and illustrates the diversity of perception of landscapes across the National Park, but it is easy to overlook given the generic words at the top of each list.

- 4.3.5 It is clear from the positive nature of the responses that respondents think extremely highly of all parts of the Exmoor landscape. The more negative descriptions generally relate to the weather ('wet', 'cold') or to the effects of salinisation on Porlock Marsh ('desolate', 'barren'). It is also interesting to note how highly the word 'peaceful' features on each list, despite the large numbers of people present at some sites such as Tarr Steps and Watersmeet. This suggests an ability by respondents to 'blot out' other people, cars, ice cream vans etc. and to focus on the natural and attractive elements of the landscape. It also suggests that the sites are sufficiently well-managed so that they retain their beauty in spite of the large numbers of visitors.

Q6: Here is a list of contrasting words used to describe the landscape. On a scale of 1-5, do you consider this scene to be: (circle value below)

Wild vs. managed

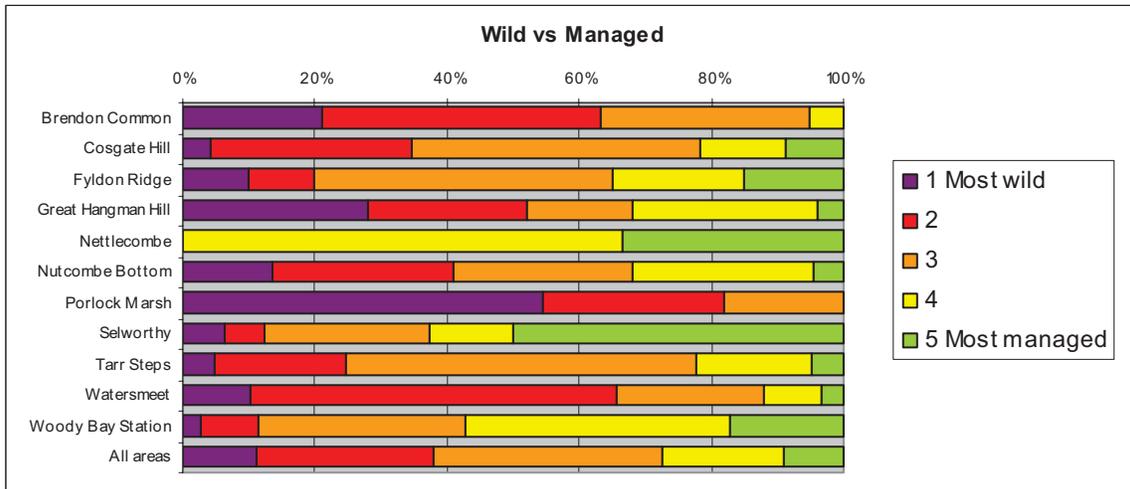


Fig. 10: Perceptions of landscape types as wild vs. managed

- 4.3.6 The views considered to be most wild were Porlock Marsh, Brendon Common and Great Hangman Hill, suggesting a perceived association between moorland and wildness. Watersmeet also has a high number of responses towards the 'wild' end of the spectrum, possibly because of the proximity of water and the steep form of the valley. The views considered to be the most managed are Selworthy, Nettlecombe, Fyldon Ridge and Woody Bay Station, all of which contain a high proportion of farmland.
- 4.3.7 Even though the reality is that all of the National Park is managed in some way, the perception of respondents is that there is considerable variation in the levels of wildness/management between the different survey sites in the National Park. Of all the landscape attributes queried in this question, the responses to wild/managed showed the fewest extremes, with a high proportion of responses in the middle three categories.

Open vs. enclosed

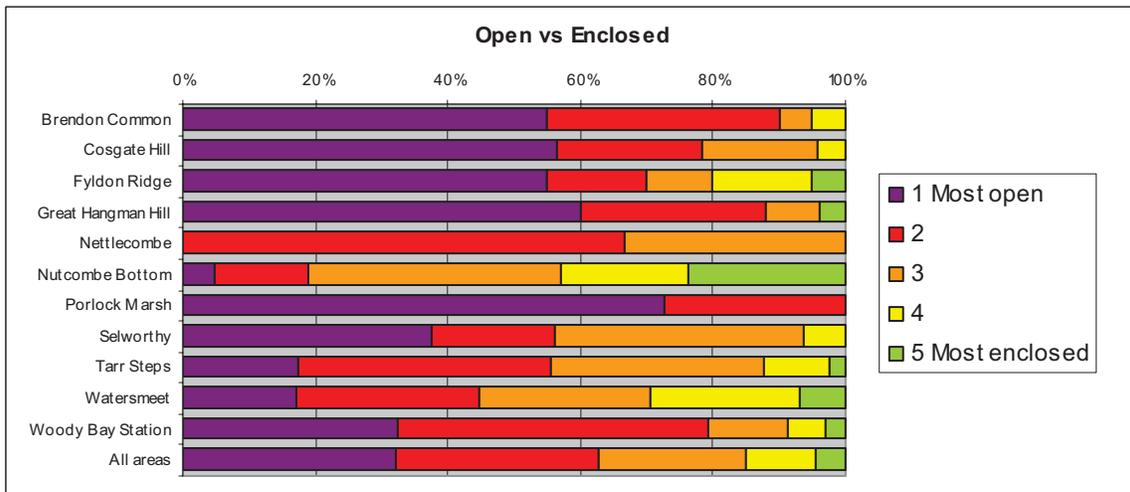


Fig. 11: Perceptions of landscape types as open/ enclosed

4.3.8 Responses regarding the level of enclosure were generally as expected. Porlock Marsh, with its flat topography and big sky was considered to be the most open site, followed by the elevated sites of Great Hangman Hill, Cosgate Hill, Brendon Common and Fyldon Ridge. The site considered to be most enclosed was the woodland site of Nutcombe Bottom, where views are enclosed by trees. The sites enclosed by topography (Tarr Steps and Watersmeet) also had a relatively low number of ‘most open’ responses.

Tranquil vs. busy

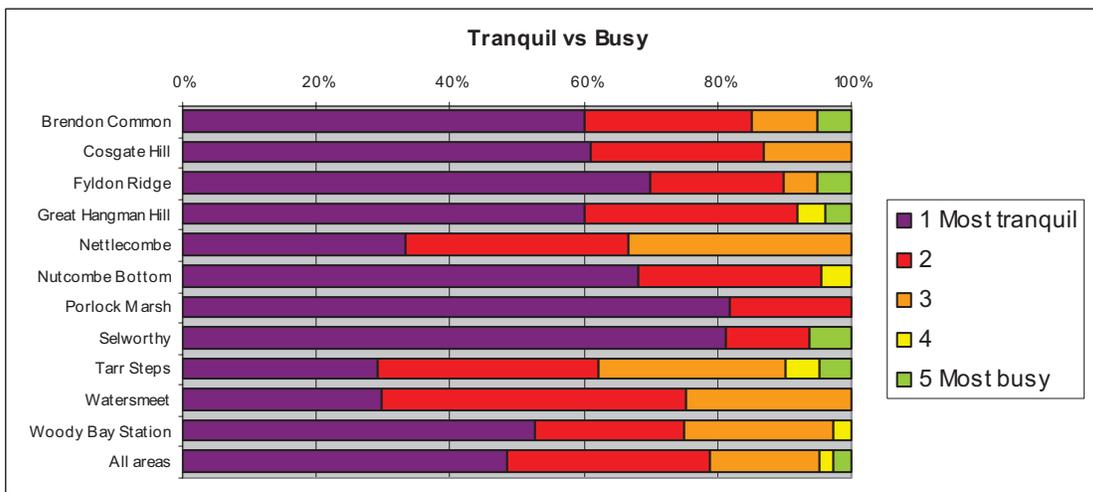


Fig. 12: Perceptions of landscape types as tranquil/ busy

4.3.9 These results broadly reflect the numbers of people present at the various sites, with the ‘honeypot’ sites of Tarr Steps and Watersmeet having the lowest number of ‘most tranquil’ responses. Interestingly, however, Watersmeet had no responses at all in the two ‘most busy’ categories, suggesting either that respondents are good at ‘blotting out’ other people (as suggested by the high number of ‘peaceful’ responses in Q.5 above) or that the topography, woodland and current management of the site enable large numbers

of people to be absorbed into the landscape. The sites with the highest number of ‘most tranquil’ responses were Porlock Marsh and Selworthy.

4.3.10 The sites with the greatest number of ‘most busy’ responses were considered to be Selworthy, Brendon Common, Fyldon Ridge and Tarr Steps. All but one of these survey sites were on roads/ in carparks, and although the roads/ carparks should not have been included in the view, if there was moving traffic in the vicinity, it may well have influenced people’s responses. However, not too much should be read into this, as other carpark sites (e.g. Nutcombe Bottom; Woody Bay Station) did not record any responses in the ‘most busy’ category.

4.3.11 Across the National Park as a whole, 47.1% of respondents considered the scene they were observing to be ‘most tranquil’, with 2.5% considering it to be ‘most busy’.

Historic vs. modern

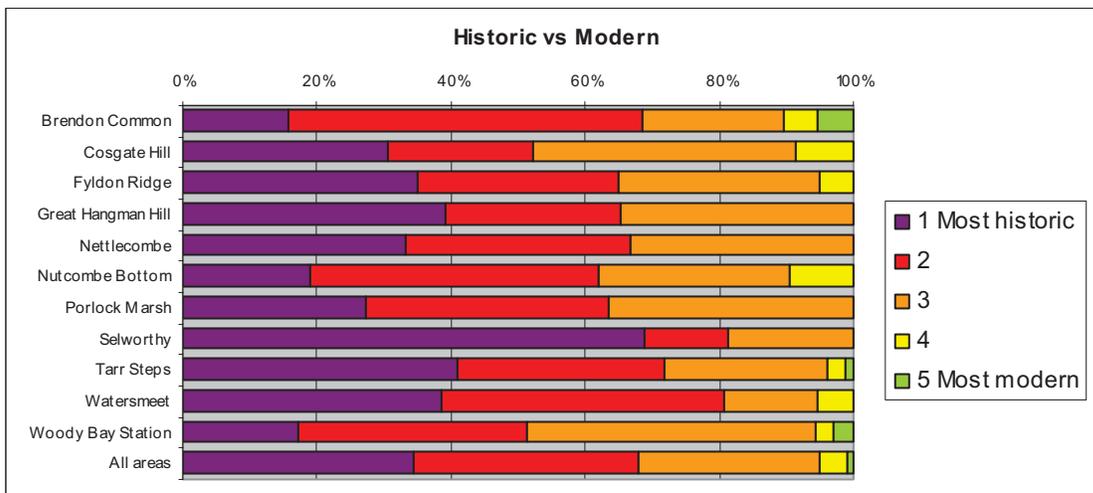


Fig. 13: Perception of landscape types as historic / modern

4.3.12 The vast majority of responses (100% at 4 sites) considered the view to be within the top three ‘most historic’ categories. Selworthy stands out as being the site considered by respondents to be the ‘most historic’, possibly because of the presence of traditional buildings in the view.

4.3.13 Unexpectedly, the site with the highest number of ‘most modern’ responses was Brendon Common. However, this only relates to one person’s response, and may be due to misunderstanding the phrasing of the question or incorrect recording of the answer.

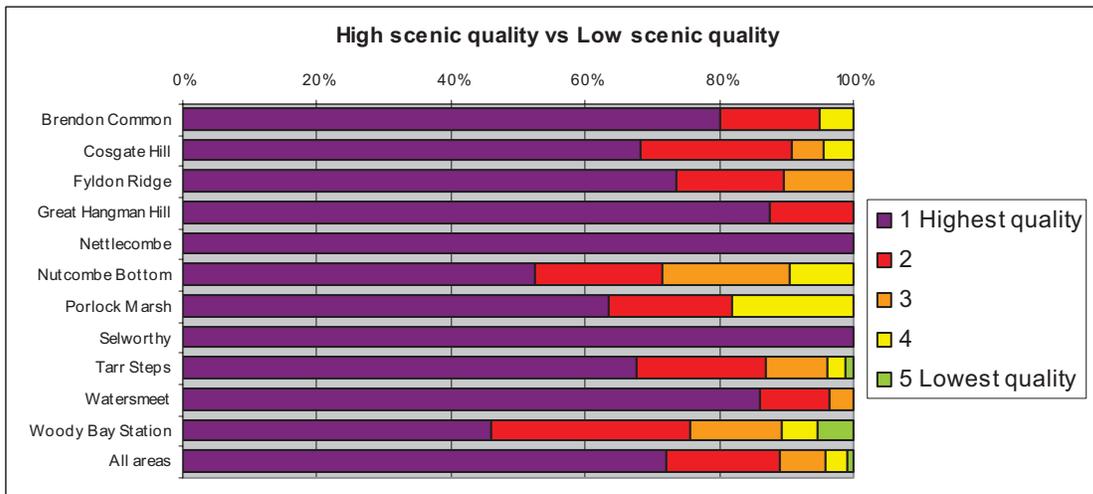
High scenic quality vs. low scenic quality

Fig. 14: Perception of landscape types as high scenic quality/ low scenic quality

4.3.14 The data for this is overwhelmingly positive, with all but one site receiving 50%-100% of responses in the 'highest scenic quality' category. The exception was Woody Bay station, with 42.5%. Woody Bay Station also had the highest number (5%) of responses in the 'lowest scenic quality' category, although these results may be explained by the poor weather during one of the surveys there. Nutcombe Bottom also had relatively low scores, suggesting that the coniferous forest is not considered to be of such high scenic quality as the other landscape types.

4.3.15 Overall, 68% of people considered the views to be of the highest scenic quality, followed by 16%, 6.5%, 3.1% down to 0.9% in the 'lowest quality' category.

Q.7: How do you feel emotionally as you look at this scene today?

4.3.16 The responses for this section were overwhelmingly positive, and are produced in full in Appendix 8. The clear 'top four' emotions over all sites were 'relaxed' (78 respondents), happy (63 respondents), peaceful (55 respondents) and 'calm' (42 respondents).

4.3.17 These four emotional responses were also the top responses at Cosgate Hill, Nutcombe Bottom, Selworthy, Tarr Steps, Watersmeet and Woody Bay (the farmland and valley/ woodland sites). The moorland sites had slight variations, with 'free' replacing 'happy' at Brendon Common, and 'Good to be alive' replacing 'calm' at Great Hangman Hill, suggesting that these elevated moorland sites- and the effort required to reach them- provoked a slightly different emotional response.

4.3.18 Fylton Ridge had 'lucky' instead of 'relaxed' in the top four, possibly reflecting the fact that most respondents at this site were on their way somewhere in a vehicle, rather than at their destination. Nettlecombe had only 'relaxed' listed, but there were only small number of responses at this site. Porlock Marsh had 'happy', 'calm' and 'with wildlife/nature' as the top three responses. 'peaceful' and 'relaxed' were slightly further down the list.

- 4.3.19 A total of 144 different emotions were expressed, and further down the lists, the variations in emotional response between the different landscape types become more apparent. For example, 'observant', 'close to the sky', 'elated' and 'expectant' were associated only with upland moorland sites; 'protected', 'delighted', 'mesmerized', 'reflective' and 'ethereal' were associated only with valley/ woodland sites, and 'serene', 'at rest', 'thankful' and 'quiet' were associated only with farmland sites.
- 4.3.20 The spiritual nature of people's response to the landscape was apparent in emotions such as 'thankful to God', 'spiritual' and 'blessed'.
- 4.3.21 A small number of less positive emotions were also expressed, including 'claustrophobic', 'insignificant' and 'wistful' at valley/ woodland sites; 'both happy and sad', 'wet/ miserable because of the weather' and 'challenged' at farmland sites; 'distressed', 'eerie' and 'like the darkness' at Porlock Marsh, and 'overwhelmed with awe' at upland moorland sites. Although they only form a tiny proportion of the emotional responses expressed, these more negative responses are important as they allow people to experience a range of emotions, and also demonstrate the complexity of people's response to the landscape. Negative emotions were usually expressed in conjunction with positive ones.

Q.8 When you look at this scene today, do you feel any of these emotions: Relaxed, happy, uplifted, intimidated, uncomfortable, melancholic?

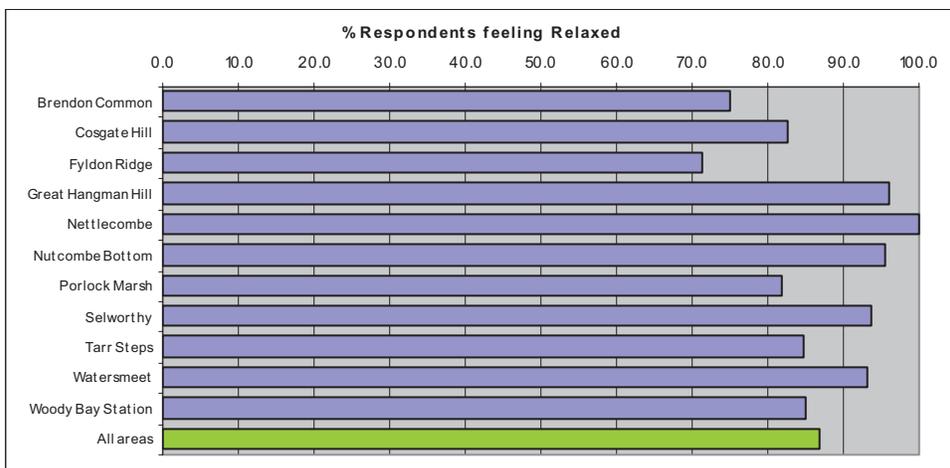


Fig. 15: Percentages of respondents feeling relaxed in each landscape character type

- 4.3.22 Overall, 86.6% of respondents felt relaxed. Nettlecombe (which had a smaller sample than the other sites) had 100% of respondents feeling relaxed; Great Hangman Hill, Nutcombe Bottom, Selworthy and Watersmeet all had over 90% of respondents feeling relaxed, suggesting that people feel relaxed in all the types of landscape (i.e. upland moorland, farmland and valley/ woodland). Tarr Steps and Woody Bay Station both had over 80% of respondents feeling relaxed, and the lowest results were from Fyldon Ridge and Brendon Common, with 71.4% and 75% respectively. As mentioned above, it is possible that the relatively low result for Fyldon Ridge may be because people there were

en-route (often by vehicle) and hadn't yet arrived at their destination. Several respondents were following road diversions or were lost, which probably didn't help their relaxation levels.



Fig. 16: Percentages of respondents feeling happy in each landscape character type

4.3.23 A slightly lower overall percentage (79.1%) of respondents said they felt happy. Again, the sites in which people felt happiest represented each of the upland moorland, farmland and valley/ woodland types of landscape. The sites where people felt least happy were Fyldon Ridge (possibly for the reasons given above) and Woody Bay Station (possibly as a result of the wet weather).



Fig. 17: Percentages of respondents feeling uplifted in each landscape character type

4.3.24 Overall, 69.5% of people felt uplifted. Interestingly, there did not appear to be a strong correlation between being on high ground and feeling uplifted, and the sites with a positive response of 80% or above again included upland moorland sites (Brendon Common and Great Hangman Hill), Farmland (Nettlecombe and Selworthy) and valley/ woodland sites (Nutcombe Bottom and Watersmeet). Three sites (Cosgate Hill, Porlock Marsh and Woody Bay Station) had scores of below 50%.

- 4.3.25 Only one respondent (at Woody Bay Station) felt intimidated when looking at the view. It is possible that this result would have been higher if the survey had been undertaken in worse weather conditions (misty moorland, for example).
- 4.3.26 One person at Tarr Steps and one person at Great Hangman Hill felt uncomfortable; one of these people explained that he was feeling uncomfortable because of the number of people around.

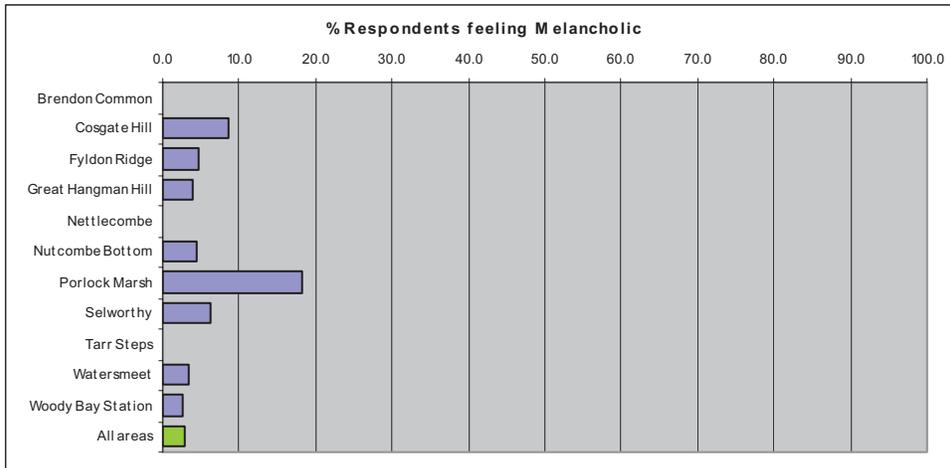


Fig. 18: Percentage of respondents feeling melancholic at each landscape character type

- 4.3.27 All sites except Brendon Common, Nettlecombe and Tarr Steps had at least one respondent feeling melancholic. Several respondents qualified their answers, saying ‘yes but in a good way’ or ‘because of the rain’. Porlock Marsh had the highest percentage feeling melancholic, giving the bleakness of the landscape following salinization as the reason. Feeling melancholic usually occurred in conjunction with other emotions such as happy and relaxed, indicating the complexity of people’s responses to landscape, and the importance of Exmoor in enabling people to experience a variety of emotions.

4.4 What factors influence people’s perception of the different landscapes within Exmoor National Park?

- 4.4.1 The sample of people expressing negative emotions is too small to analyse statistically, and (as explained above) the factors which influence those negative perceptions were usually explained by the respondents (‘too many people’, ‘groundwater salinization’ etc.). However, it is possible to analyse the positive emotional responses (feeling relaxed, happy and uplifted) against the background data, in order to see if people’s age, gender, place of residence, where they grew up or frequency of visits affects how they perceive the landscape.
- 4.4.2 Using the data from this study, none of these demographic factors were found to have a noticeable effect. For example, between 83%-91% of respondents felt happy, regardless of

whether they visited Exmoor every day (ie. they live there), more than once a month, more than once a year, once every few years or only visit. It was noticeable that a lower proportion of under 16 year-olds felt 'uplifted' but this could well have been due to unfamiliarity with the term, as they expressed other positive emotions.

- 4.4.3 As the demographic factors did not appear to affect perception of landscape, environmental factors (weather and season) were tested. Apart from the predictable result that people felt slightly less happy when it was raining, neither weather nor season had a noticeable influence on whether people felt happy, relaxed or uplifted.
- 4.4.4 Yet figs. 15-18 show variations in the emotional responses of respondents to the various landscape types. If these responses cannot be explained by demographic or environmental factors then it suggests that the variations in emotional response are a result of the different landscape types and the combination of elements and qualities within those landscapes. This would support the findings of the Research Box et al. (2009) report, which identified certain landscape features (e.g. rivers and streams, coast, mountains and hills, moorland, field systems, villages) as being particularly highly valued for the 'cultural services' they provide, and – presumably – for the positive emotional response they evoke. Other landscape qualities such as openness or enclosure were also found to evoke different reactions. Different landscape types have different combinations of these elements and qualities e.g. field systems in farmland landscape types; rivers and enclosure in valley landscape types and moorland and openness in upland moorland landscape types. Some landscape types have combinations of these elements- for example the Coastal Heaths (Great Hangman Hill) have both moorland and coast, with strong qualities of openness, wildness and exposure. It is likely that the variations in responses between similar types of landscape e.g. High Wooded Coastal Combes (Watersmeet survey site) and Incised Wooded Valleys (Tarr Steps survey site) could be at least partially explained by subtle differences in the combination of these landscape elements and qualities. Similarly the differences in responses between the Open Moorland (Brendon Common) and Coastal Heaths (Great Hangman Hill) may also be due to the presence of the sea and the dramatic cliffs and shoreline.
- 4.4.5 Interesting and valuable as these findings are, they should be treated with a note of caution, as a recent publication by DEFRA (2011) highlights research suggesting that ethnicity and socio-environmental factors also affect people's perception of upland landscapes, and data on these factors was not recorded for the *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study*. Also, there is an element of self-selection within the sample, as people who do not like Exmoor (or how it makes them feel) are unlikely to chose to visit.
- 4.4.6 The survey undertaken of members of the Exmoor Society in 2004 and published in the *Moorlands at a Crossroads* report indicated a marked preference for moorland as the landscape element most special to their appreciation of Exmoor (77%) followed by the coast (30%), woodland and rivers (both 23%) and farmland (9%) (see section 2.3.2). Although the *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study* did not ask exactly the same question, it is interesting to note that moorland survey sites did not always score more highly in terms

of scenic beauty than other types of landscape (fig. 14), and nor did they produce consistently higher positive emotional responses than other landscape types (figs. 15-17).

- 4.4.7 But perhaps the greatest divergence from the results of the Exmoor Society survey is the appreciation of farmland sites. Farmland was ranked very low in the Exmoor Society survey, with only 9% of respondents considering it to be most special to their appreciation of Exmoor. Yet the *Exmoor Landscape Perception Study* has demonstrated the positive responses which farmland landscapes can generate, in terms of both emotional response (feeling happy, relaxed and uplifted) and verbal description.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 General Conclusions

- 5.1.1 The overwhelming conclusion of this study is the public's appreciation of ALL types of landscape within Exmoor National Park, reflected in the words used to describe different landscapes, and in the positive emotional responses that those landscapes evoke.
- 5.1.2 Nevertheless, people do perceive differences between the different landscape types, and these differences are expressed through the wide variety of words used to describe those landscapes (262 different adjectives), and people's emotional responses to them (144 different emotions). However, these differences are not apparent in the most frequently-used words, which tend to be generic and positive terms such as 'beautiful', 'peaceful' and 'happy' which were used throughout the National Park.
- 5.1.3 Demographic factors (age, gender, place of residence) and environmental factors (weather, season) do not appear to affect how people respond emotionally to different landscape types, although data on ethnicity and socio-economic status (which may influence people's responses to landscape) were not collected for this study. From this study, therefore, it appears that it is the different combinations of landscape elements (rivers, coast, moorland, field patterns etc) and landscape qualities (openness, enclosure, wildness) which create different emotional responses in people. This endorses the Research Box et al. (2009) findings on the values attributed to different landscape elements and qualities.
- 5.1.4 A related observation is that 85% of respondents grew up in the countryside or a town/ suburb, with only 15% growing up in a city. If this is a fair sample it suggests that where people live as a child influences their choice of where to visit as an adult. However, those who grew up in a city did not have noticeably less positive responses to the Exmoor landscape than those who grew up in the countryside/ town/ suburb.
- 5.1.5 Data collected by this study confirms the emotional benefits of Exmoor (and presumably other National Parks) to individuals, and – collectively – to society as a whole.
- 5.1.6 Exmoor's landscape provides a wide variety of 'cultural services', although comparison of this study with previous research undertaken by Research Box et al. (2009) suggests that Exmoor provides slightly different cultural services for residents and visitors, with a 'sense of place/ being at home' and 'spiritual values' being ranked more highly by residents and 'relaxation/ tranquillity/ peace and quiet' being more highly ranked by visitors. Both studies found that 'learning and education' and 'understanding the past' were ranked relatively low.
- 5.1.7 A relatively low proportion of respondents had noticed positive or negative changes within the landscape, but of those that had, the greatest number were residents and the smallest number were occasional visitors. The changes which people had noticed covered a variety of topics but were rarely repeated across different survey sites. When people

were asked what changes they would like to see, the majority referred to improved visitor facilities (benches, bins etc), with some referring to land management (fewer conifer plantations; increased area of heather moorland) and others suggesting various access improvements.

- 5.1.8 A larger proportion of respondents had a favourite view and/ or a favourite series of views within the National Park. The favourite viewpoint was Dunkery, followed by Valley of Rocks, Watersmeet and Tarr Steps. The favourite three routes were coastal (the A39, the Coast Path and Woody Bay- Hunters Inn). Many different favourite views and routes were recorded, located throughout the National Park and including main roads, minor roads and sites only accessible by footpath. Reasons for preference often included references to landscape- either the combination of elements within it, or other qualities such as a sense of space or the distance or contrast within a view.
- 5.1.9 The *Exmoor Landscape Perceptions Study* has provided statistical evidence for subjective responses which can easily be taken for granted, such as people's appreciation of Exmoor's variety and scenic beauty, and the high levels of tranquillity achieved at many locations throughout the National Park. The results of the study demonstrate that the statutory purposes of the National Park are being successfully fulfilled, and that Exmoor's special qualities are being retained. The study therefore endorses the effectiveness of current management and demonstrates the importance of continued good management of all parts of the National Park in the future.
- 5.1.10 Clearly, the ways in which people perceive and value landscapes are extremely complex and cannot be comprehensively addressed by a single study. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the results of this study will add a further piece to the jigsaw. Despite the complexity of the subject, a number of clear conclusions are apparent which may influence future management of the National Park. This leads on to the final question to be addressed by the study:

5.2 How should people's perception of landscapes affect management policies and strategies?

- 5.2.1 The extremely positive responses by the public to the Exmoor landscape indicate that current management by farmers, foresters and landowners, supported by the National Park Authority and others is very effective. The following comments are suggestions only, intended to stimulate discussion amongst those preparing the forthcoming review of the Exmoor National Park Management Plan.
- 5.2.2 The variety of landscape character within the National Park is fundamental to people's appreciation of it. Farmland, moorland and valleys/ woodland create equally positive responses. It is therefore important that the unique combination of landscape elements and qualities within each landscape type are retained and enhanced, in line with current policy.

- 5.2.3 It was apparent during the selection of survey sites that farmland was relatively inaccessible compared to moorland and woodland, with far fewer footpaths or places of service provision. Given people's positive responses to farmland landscapes, it may be beneficial to increase levels of access to these areas, and to consider the provision of facilities (footpaths, toilets etc) to encourage visitors to farmland areas, possibly reducing the pressure at other honeypot sites. Of course any such schemes would need to be undertaken with all due sensitivity to the concerns of farmers, particularly regarding the wellbeing of livestock. Results from farmland survey sites suggest that the challenge of accommodating modern agricultural practices within the historic landscape framework is being achieved, although the associated challenge of funding farm conservation projects (such as hedgebank repair) outside designated SSSI areas remains.
- 5.2.4 All the 'cultural services' provided by the Exmoor landscape need to be encouraged, with relevant projects instigated and/or supported through the National Park Management Plan where possible. Of particular importance is the encouragement of projects which emphasise learning/ education or understanding of the past.
- 5.2.5 The Exmoor landscape is clearly of enormous value to people's emotional well-being, as well as their physical health. Exmoor (along with other National Parks) has a role to play in providing society with these benefits. It is therefore important that visitors continue to be encouraged and welcomed to Exmoor, and that the National Park continues to reach out to attract as wide a range of visitors as possible, thereby contributing to long-term benefits to society. The sample for this survey contained relatively few 16-24 year olds, and if this pattern is representative, then new methods of communication to attract this age group should be explored. There are many opportunities for using technology-based media to reach out to young adults, and those already undertaken by the National Park such as its Twitter feed (currently with 500 followers) and its new image-rich and dynamic website should be encouraged. The National Park Authority's plans for an Exmoor National Park presence on Facebook and for a mobile phone app should also be supported. In addition, adventurous recreation (providing it fits with National Park purposes and special qualities) should continue to be promoted through the 'Active Exmoor' brand, and a broadening of the range of National Park visitors through the 'Mosaic' scheme should also be supported. Provision of low-cost accommodation such as hostels and camping barns, and good public transport, should also facilitate visits by young people.
- 5.2.6 Finally, some small-scale improvements which have been pointed out by a number of respondents (e.g provision of dog bins at Tarr Steps and the visual improvement of the fence at Watersmeet) would improve the visitor experience at these sites. The new 'Tall Trees Trail' and easy-access paths at Nutcombe Bottom received very positive comments, suggesting similar access schemes would be well-received in other parts of the National Park.

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