

# Understanding the roles of hope and conservation attitudes in retaining and attracting community conservationists

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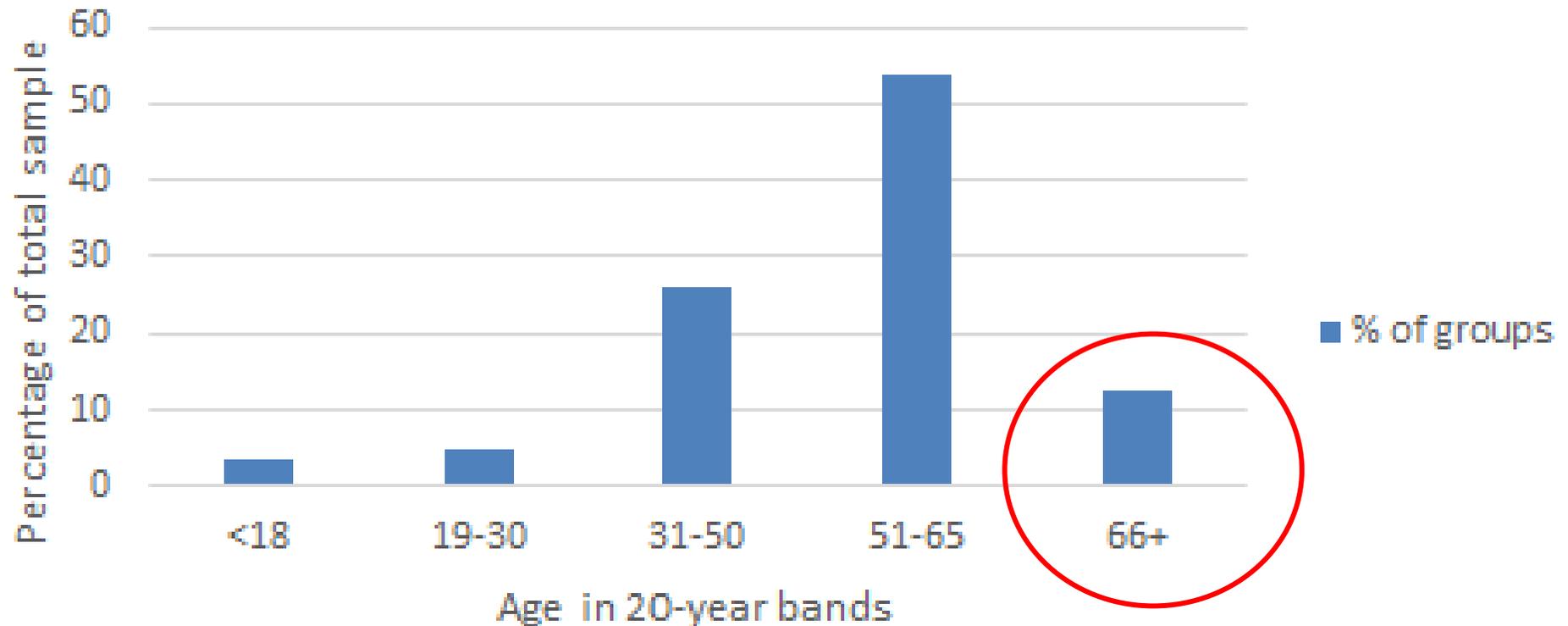


Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



- Biodiversity decline is happening
- Conservation is important
- Conservation volunteering is vital
- Future of conservation volunteering is uncertain
- Therefore, current and future conservation gains are in jeopardy

## Age of most New Zealand community group members/volunteers by percentage of total sample



(Peters, Hamilton & Eames, 2015)

# Hope not optimism

**Optimism** is thinking that the odds are in your favour.

Optimism leans back, puts its feet up, and wears a confident look knowing that the deck is stacked.

**Hope** is a verb with its shirtsleeves rolled up. (Orr, 2007)

# Why study hope?

The **belief** that the future will be better than the present, along with the **belief** that you have the power to make it so. (Lopez, 2013)

Hopeful people are **actively** engaged in **defying or changing** the odds. (Orr, 2007)

Hope is not a wish, it is measurable, malleable, it's action. (Gwinn & Hellman, 2022)



2. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals.



Definitely false

Mostly false

Somewhat false

Slightly false

Slightly true

Somewhat true

Mostly true

Definitely true

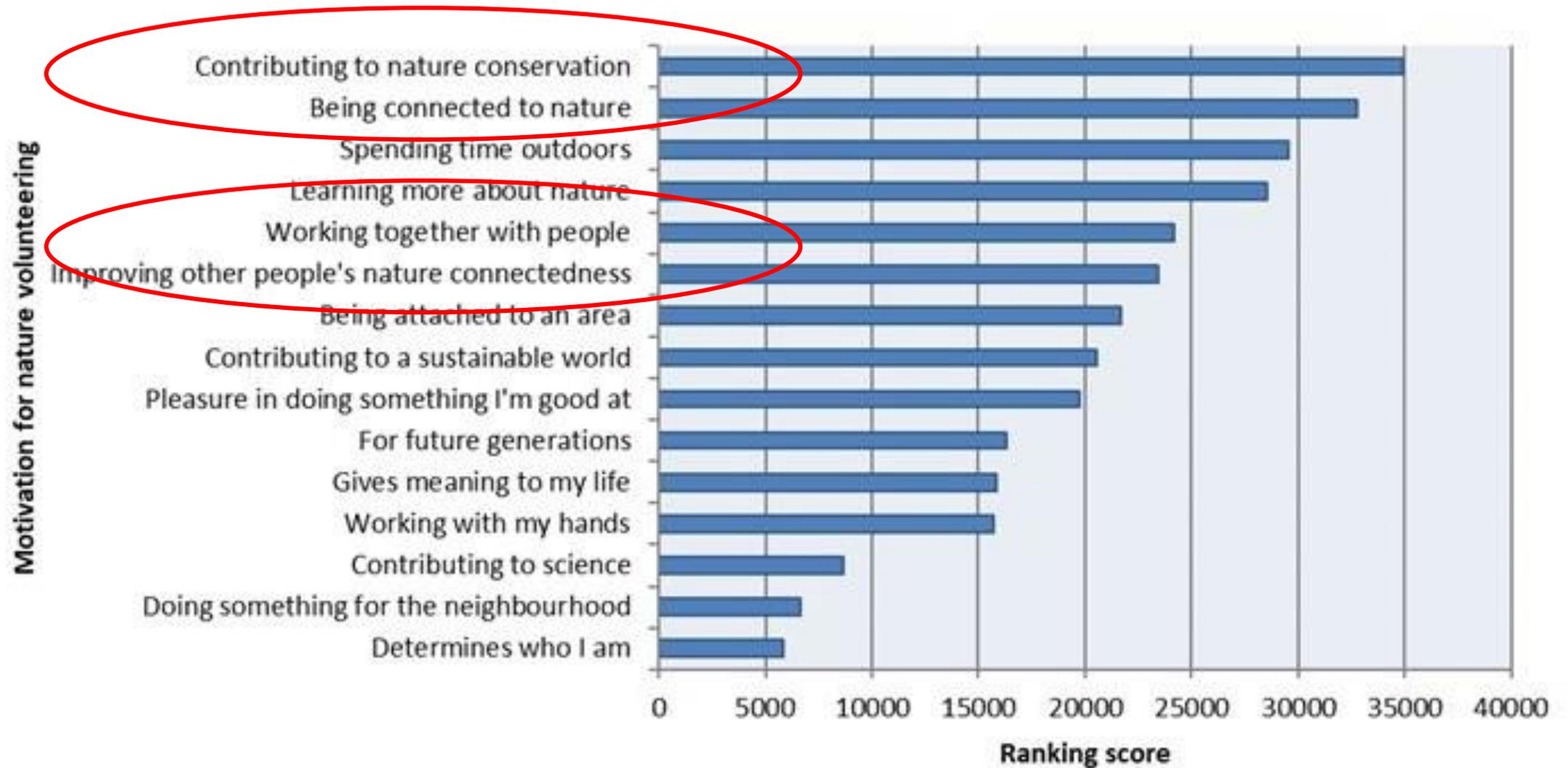
# Why study conservation attitudes?

Engagement in community-led conservation is influenced by an individual's personal beliefs about, and attitudes towards the world and their place within it.

(Thiermann & Sheate, 2020; Wray-Lake, Flanagan, & Osgood, 2010)

Attitudes may shape their “...responses and willingness to alter (their future) behavior.”

(Paterson et al., 2020)



Important motivational factors for voluntary action. (Ganzevoort, Riyan & van den Born, 2020)

**Current**



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**Future**



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# Six main attitude themes

## **Commitment**

Effort is needed to carry out the conservation work necessary.

## **Connectivity**

Connectedness between humans; between humans and the natural world; within the natural world and its interconnected systems e.g. biodiversity.

## **Group action**

Group conservation action is more effective than acting as an individual.

## **Learning cycle**

Learning is a necessary ongoing process. As one learns, so that learning is taught to others who in turn perpetuate the learning cycle.

## **Practical solutions**

Examples of practical conservation action: pest and pet control, planting natives, protected areas (ecosanctuaries, pest-free islands, mainland islands, private national parks).

## **Unconditional belief**

Belief in ability of nature to heal itself, a higher being that will resolve issues, science to find solutions.

# Volunteer conservation attitudes and hope

Current volunteers	Intending volunteers
Connected to each other	✓
Connected to nature	✓
Committed to looking after natural world	✓
Keen to help others learn	✓
Believe nature cannot heal itself	✓

Current volunteers	Intending volunteers
✗	Nature needs our help
✗	Individual actions important for future natural world
✗	Group actions important for future natural world
✗	Teamwork and collaboration solve future problems
✗	Science and technology solve future problems

<b>Hope is not a factor</b>	<b>Are hopeful</b>
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# Conservation volunteer preferences

## Current

- Have preferred activities - planting (49%), weeding (60%), predator control (41%)
- Intend to be more active in weeding and planting (10%) than predator control (5%)

## Intending

- Non-weeders or planters intend planting and/or weeding (10-15%)
- Non-predator controllers intend controlling predators (9%), planting (38%), weeding (33%)

## Suggestions

- Concentrate initially on more 'attractive' conservation actions - weeding, planting, then introduce predator control opportunities
- Consider wholistic approach to biodiversity restoration.



## Utilising conservation attitudes and hope

Recognise and  
build on  
achievements

ATTITUDE - Use  
commitment,  
connection,  
“nature needs  
our help” in  
comms

Connection to  
others through  
social events

Develop  
knowledge/  
capability  
through  
conservation  
opportunities

Reduce  
conservation  
action silos and  
increase  
holistic  
approach

Involve in goal-  
setting and  
pathfinding

HOPE - Active  
practical  
involvement  
and problem-  
solving

‘Try before you  
buy’ events  
linked to more  
‘popular’  
activities

# Retaining current and attracting intending volunteers

1. Support and develop current volunteers
2. Work with current and intending volunteer preferences
3. Utilise conservation attitudes in communications and activities
4. Tap into future volunteers' hope – willpower, waypower, goal directedness



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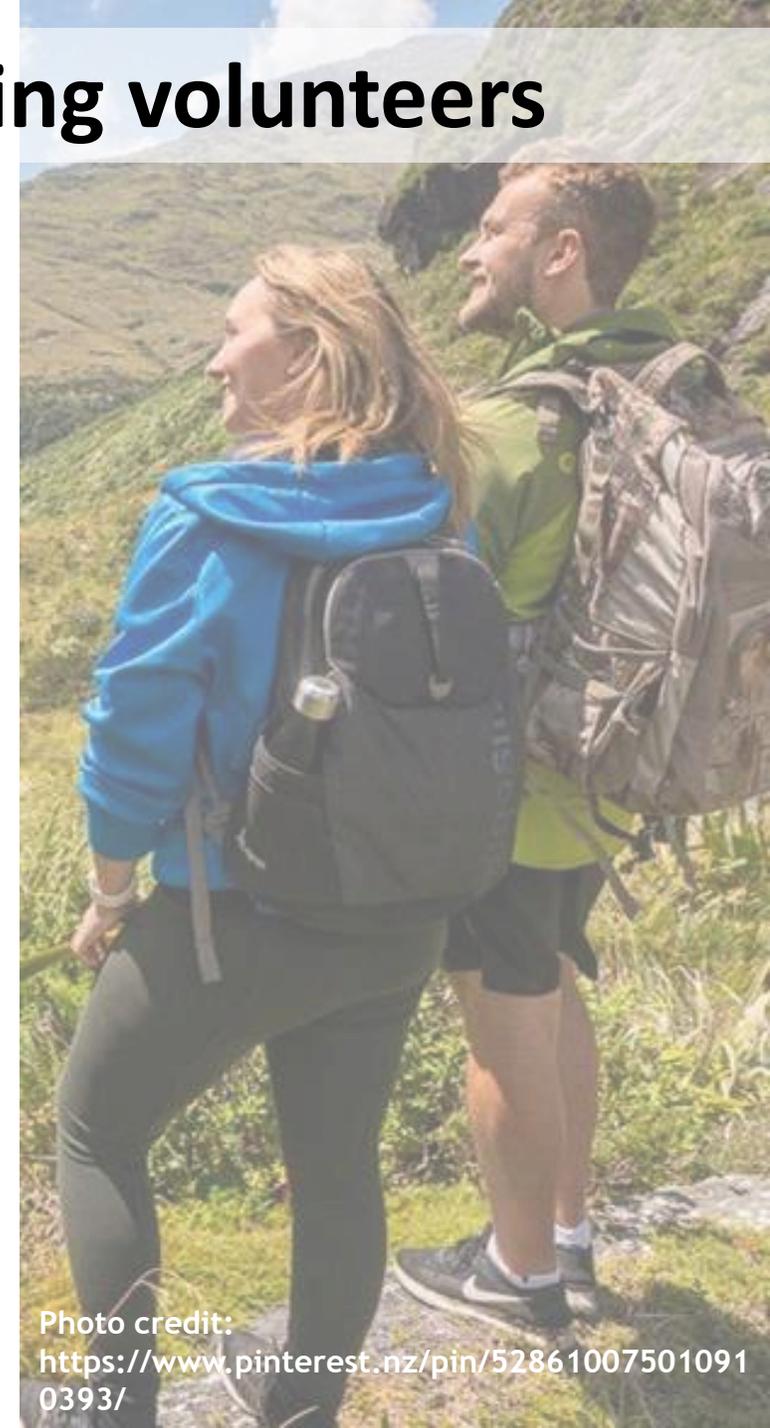
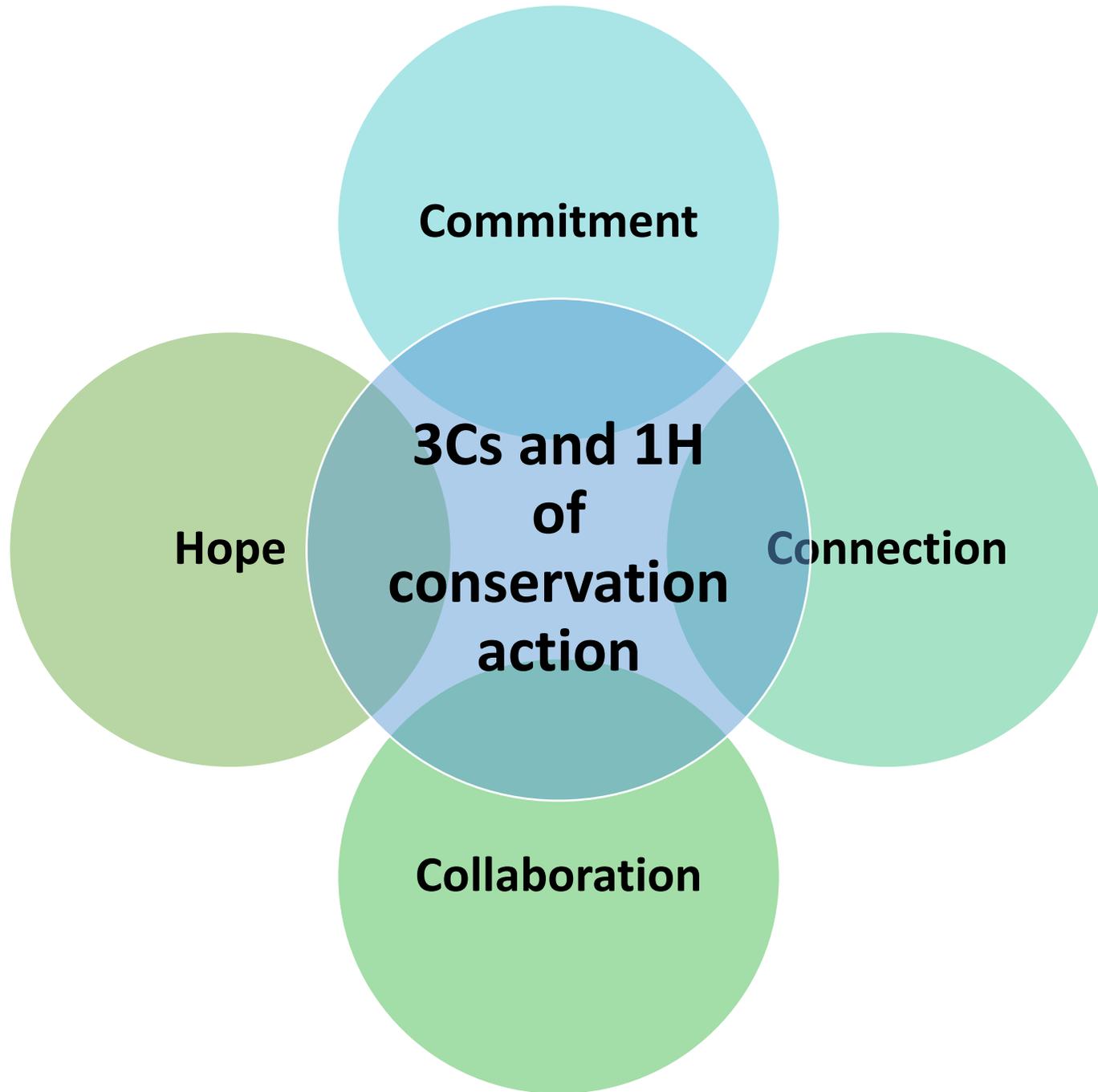


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**Commitment**

**Hope**

**Connection**

**Collaboration**

**3Cs and 1H  
of  
conservation  
action**

# Questions?

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