



Iberian Highlands, Spain

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN LANDSCAPES AFFECTED BY LAND ABANDONMENT

WHERE: SPAIN, IBERIAN HIGHLANDS

AREA OF RESTORATION SITE: 850,000 HECTARES

HABITAT TYPES: CANYONS, RIVERS, FORESTS, STEPPES

PROJECT LEAD: [REWILDING SPAIN](#)

USE OF WILD SPECIES

In Spain's Iberian Highlands Rewilding Spain are supporting the use and trade of resin tapped from Pine trees *Pinus pinaster* and edible mushrooms including truffle species *Tuber melanosporum* and *Tuber aestivum*, and Penny Bun *Boletus edulis*.

Resin tapping has the potential to be a primary source of income for resin tappers and trees can be tapped for around 25 years, meaning those tapping the resin can work in one area for an extended period before moving into a new one. Resin tapping is seasonal, from February to November.

The main harvesting seasons for the mushrooms are October-November, and April-May. The income generated for harvesters is usually supplementary, as it is too seasonal to provide a main income source, and the quantity of mushrooms available to harvest can vary markedly each year. In some instances, harvesters may combine mushroom harvesting with the wild harvest of other species such as herbs Oregano *Origanum vulgare*, Thyme *Thymus* spp., Rosemary *Rosmarinus officinalis*, and Blackthorne *Prunus spinosa* for use in liquor, to provide an adequate income.

HOW IS THE USE OF WILD SPECIES SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF THIS RESTORATION PROJECT?

The area of this landscape restoration project has experienced economic stagnation and land abandonment, with population reductions of 60-80% since the 1950s. One of the key goals of this project is to improve the socio-economic development of the landscape through nature-based solutions as the current

economic stagnation has encouraged the development of new destructive activities such as fracking and mining. Supporting training and access to profitable markets, for those involved in the harvest of resin from pine trees, mushrooms and truffles is one strategy to help provide improved livelihood opportunities.



Pine Resin

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

Rewilding Spain has developed an innovation project to train resin tappers, working on techniques to improve the tapping and make it more profitable. There are also plans to create a [resin tapping school](#) for eight individuals to be trained in how to extract the resin from the pine trees, alongside other relevant forestry skills, which can provide a supplementary income. Rewilding Spain are also actively involved in research to identify new and more profitable markets for sale of resin to improve profit margins for resin tappers.

Rewilding Spain also has a forest engineer who is working with villages and municipalities in one area to create more consistent regulatory frameworks to create more clarity over which areas require permits for mushroom

harvesting. The project team hope to support the establishment of an association of professional harvesters that they can assist with enterprise development, and the purchasing of processing equipment for drying mushrooms. The target market for this enterprise would be restaurants that are keen to source local produce, either in areas close to the restoration site, or potentially larger cities such as Valencia or Madrid. Rewilding Spain are also working on developing information resources about sustainable harvesting of mushrooms, and other wild products such as berries, which will be distributed next year.

More information about this restoration landscape can be found on their [ELSP project page](#).