



## Newsletter N°3 / 2025

### LIFE UNcinata\* starts working on forest interventions

The summer of 2025, the project started doing forest management work aimed at conserving and improving the black pine forests of the Pyrenees, a high-mountain habitat considered a priority by the European Union. Catalonia hosts the greatest representation of this type of forest in all of Europe, which highlights its importance.

#### Where?

- Interventions have already been carried out in Alt Urgell, Cerdanya, and Berguedà, with nearly 40 hectares treated.
- In the fall of 2025, actions began in Ripollès, Pallars Jussà, and Pallars Sobirà.
- In total, LIFE UNcinata\* plans to act on more than 300 hectares of forest.

#### Management types

The project combines two complementary lines of action:

- Multifunctional forest management based on close-to-nature silviculture, integrating timber production with biodiversity conservation. Selective thinning is carried out with tree-by-tree marking, promoting:
  - natural regeneration,
  - species and structural diversity,
  - soil fertility.

The result: healthier, more diverse, and more resilient multifunctional forests capable of withstanding environmental stress.

- Free-evolution stands. Work is carried out in well-conserved forests, containing elements typical of mature forests (very large or old trees, deadwood, natural gaps, etc.). The goal is to enhance these

maturity characteristics and prepare the forests for natural evolution without silvicultural intervention for at least 25 years. These forests, scarce across the Pyrenees, have a high capacity to host biodiversity.

#### A demonstrative project

- The interventions take place on public and private properties through voluntary agreements.
- Even though the treated area is limited, the project has a demonstrative character: the information obtained will help extrapolate the management model to other black pine areas and will serve as a reference when applying these management approaches.
- We dedicate significant effort to scientific monitoring to evaluate the impact of our interventions on the ecosystem.

With these actions, we take a step forward in conserving the black pine forests of the Pyrenees, ensuring this resilient natural heritage for future generations.



## The analysis and design phase of actions to prevent overuse impacts in sensitive areas concludes, and the first interventions begin

On one hand, starting October 1, 2025, motorized access to the Alinyà mountain area is regulated thanks to the installation of two barriers that block unauthorized vehicles. This measure was promoted by the municipalities of Fígols i Alinyà and Odèn, which incorporated the regulation into their municipal ordinances. On the other hand, the areas and measures to be applied on the ground have already been identified to reduce and prevent the impact of visitor pressure on zones with fauna and flora especially sensitive to this phenomenon.

### Objective of the measure

- Prevent the impact of recreational activities on biodiversity.
- Protect the areas most sensitive to human overuse, where species of special interest linked to the black pine habitat live.
- Reduce noise and disturbances that may affect the most vulnerable wildlife.

### How were the regulated areas selected?

The selection was carried out using an exhaustive methodology that allowed us to:

- Identify the areas under the highest pressure or most vulnerable to overuse.
- Define exclusion zones for mass events.
- Propose restrictions on motorized access in forests of high conservation value.

### Other planned actions

- Rationalization of trails and paths in sensitive areas
- Implementation of measures to regulate access and promote public use compatible with conservation.

With these regulations, we take an important step toward balancing public use and the protection of black pine forests, ensuring that the Alinyà mountain area remains a natural space of great ecological value.



## Progress in habitat impact prevention and mitigation measures

The LIFE UNCI NATA\* project continues deploying actions to protect the black pine forests of the Pyrenees from two major challenges: the risk of high-intensity wildfires in vulnerable areas and the impact of herbivory (pressure from domestic and wild ungulates) on the habitat.

### Wildfire prevention

Prescribed burns and mechanical clearing are used in strategic points. The direct intervention covers about 50 hectares but protects up to 2,000 hectares of black pine.

The goal is to reduce fuel load and minimize the risk of large wildfires.

### Reducing herbivory pressure

Various techniques are applied, some of them experimental:

- Understory restoration in degraded areas.
- Improvement of pastures near forests with high herbivory pressure.
- Exclusion of domestic livestock in mature or overgrazed stands.
- Creation of exclusion enclosures for wild ungulates.
- Understory restoration inside these enclosures to promote natural regeneration.

### Areas of action

Seven strategic sectors have been identified between the Cadí and Alt Pirineu areas, where the project is working to improve pastures and reduce the pressure domestic livestock has exerted on the black pine habitat.

These measures combine prevention, restoration, and innovation to ensure that black pine forests become more resilient and continue hosting rich biodiversity in the future.



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## Learn more about LIFE UNCI NATA\*

Looking ahead to the final two years of the project: 2026 and 2027, we have launched a new phase focused on communication and outreach. The goal is to bring the project closer to the public and highlight the value of the black pine habitat and the actions carried out there.

### New audiovisual materials

You will soon be able to watch outreach videos explaining the methodologies used in wildlife and biodiversity monitoring. These videos will show how direct and indirect bio-indicators help us understand the state of the habitat and its evolution.

### Illustrations by Blanca Martí

Illustrator Blanca Martí has created a collection of drawings representing the most characteristic elements of the habitat: fauna, flora, and dendromicrohabitats.

These illustrations are designed for outreach and awareness-raising, and they will surely captivate you.

### 360° immersive experience

In collaboration with the company 360Lab, we are preparing 360° immersive videos. They will be available at the information points of the natural parks involved in the project.

The experience will allow visitors to virtually enter the black pine forest, discover the species that live there, the interventions carried out, and the values that make this habitat so emblematic.

With this communication effort, LIFE UNCI NATA\* aims to showcase the richness of the Pyrenean black pine and share with everyone the efforts to conserve and improve it.



## Navarre completes the construction of the ungulate exclusion enclosure

The public company Orekan (Navarre) has completed the construction of the ungulate exclusion enclosure planned within WP6 of the LIFE UNCI NATA\* project.

### Where?

In the Larra-Aztraparreta Natural Reserve, an area of great ecological value, with rugged terrain and difficult access, where no forest management is carried out.

### Objective of the enclosure

- Allow observation of vegetation changes within the protected area.
- Study the impact of herbivory (pressure from domestic and wild ungulates) on herbaceous and shrub regeneration associated with the habitat.

This action is key to better understanding the dynamics of black pine forests and advancing the conservation of a high-value natural habitat in the Pyrenees.



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