

The Pine Mushroom: A Candidate For “Identified Wildlife” Designation Under the Forest Practices Code Act of British Columbia?

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ABSTRACT

Tricholoma magnivelare (Peck) Redhead, commonly known as the pine mushroom or matsutake, is the most important mushroom commercially harvested from the forests of British Columbia. According to a recent draft Forest Renewal BC report by R. M. Wills and R. G. Lipsey, annual import of fresh pine mushrooms by Japan from BC can range from about 250,000 - 400,000 kg depending on whether it is a good year for mushrooms. At market in Japan, the value of the Canadian, largely BC, pine mushroom crop has been as high as CAN\$33,000,000. As research progresses here and south of the border, we are slowly gaining information on the ecology and habitat requirements of the pine mushroom, but much remains to be determined about the factors that control its distribution and productivity. There are opportunities to manage forests for the production of timber and non-timber forest products, such as pine mushroom, but there need to be mechanisms for the identification of potential pine mushroom sites and their integration into forest management plans. “Identified wildlife” designation offers one such mechanism under the Forest Practices Code of BC. Most of the species currently included in the draft “Managing Identified Wildlife” Guidebook are Red-listed vertebrates. The Conservation Data Centre currently does not include fungi in its database and the most vulnerable fungal species have yet to be identified or assigned a rarity rank. Although the pine mushroom in BC would probably be considered a Yellow-list species (i.e., not “at risk”), it is a species that requires special management attention because it is commercially harvested virtually everywhere that it occurs in the province.
