

## Preferred by Nature's Commentary: non-commercial harvesting of natural forest in China

*Conducted by Preferred by Nature China team, 17 October 2022*

Since 2017, the commercial logging of natural forest is strictly prohibited across China. This prohibition was incorporated into the revised Forest Law of China in 2019 (See Preferred by Nature's latest risk assessment for China). In effect, the prohibition means natural forest is not permitted to be harvested for commercial purposes. The non-commercial harvests (where the only objective is to conserve and cultivate the forest) are allowed to maintain and enhance the health of natural forest, including sanitary cuts such as harvesting of trees damaged by wind/snow damage.

By way of example, the annual harvest quota for the period 2021-2025 for key state natural forests in northeast China (Northeast of China include Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang, and including part of Inner Mongolia) is published on the website of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) of China ([http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2021-02/09/content\\_5586306.htm](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2021-02/09/content_5586306.htm)). This data reveals that – for key state-owned forest in Northeast China - up to 3.838 million cubic metres/year (standing volume) of non-commercial harvesting is permitted within natural forests. It is worth noting that the overall annual harvest quota for natural forests in northeast China, will be significantly higher.

Timber from the non-commercial harvests could have commercial value and the wood sold legally. However, it should be noted that the harvested logs are mostly smaller than those that were obtained during normal commercial harvests conducted before the prohibition. Additionally, a supply of logs is feasible deriving from government land expropriation processes for infrastructure development (e.g. railway, reservoir), where the harvesting of natural forest may be necessary.

In short, the logging ban of natural forest in China is not a total 100% ban of any harvesting. So, while the ban has restricted supply of Chinese-origin oak very significantly, some volumes of smaller diameter trees are being harvested via thinnings/sanitary cuttings etc, some of which is suitable for small dimension wood-products/finger jointing etc.