



THE ZSL WILD SCIENCE PODCAST: SHOW NOTES

Episode: ZSL #048 – The rubber story and the road to sustainability

What do car tyres, yoga mats and trainers have in common? They all contain natural rubber, tapped from trees by millions of small farmers, mostly in Asia. While natural rubber production is renewable, its impact on the environment through deforestation, habitat loss and soil degradation, can be great when not managed sustainably.

In this episode, we hear first-hand from Khun Soontorn, a Thai rubber farmer, about the challenges faced on the ground. We speak with Edouard de Rostolan from Michelin, one of the world's biggest tyre makers, about rubber's colonial history, its tangled supply chains, and how they're working with farmers on sustainability. Finally, with Joe Horrocks-Taylor from Columbia Threadneedle, we explore how investors can use their influence to demand better practices and drive industry-wide change that benefits both people and nature.

This episode is part of a series showcasing ZSL's Sustainable Business and Finance work.

Overview

- 00:15** [Harriet McAra](#), Host of Wild Science, and [Rachel Poluan](#), ZSL SPOTT Team: Episode introduction
- 02:58** Introduction to the natural rubber sector and how rubber is produced
- 07:30** Edouard De Rostolan, Michelin: The historical legacy of rubber production and supply chains
- 12:54** Exploring ESG risks and opportunities
- 23:52** Khun Soontorn, a rubber smallholder in Thailand: A smallholder perspective
- 32:04** Agroforestry and the environmental aspects of rubber farms
- 41:38** Joe Horrocks Taylor, Columbia Threadneedle: How can investors and buyers affect change?
- 1:02:15** Rachel Poluan, summary and outro

Resources

- If there's a topic you'd like to hear on a future podcast, or if you'd like to share your thoughts, email the ZSL Wild Science Podcast at: wild.science@zsl.org
- Check out our science and conservation work at: www.zsl.org/Science or www.zsl.org/conservation
- SPOTT: <https://www.spott.org/>
- Natural rubber: SPOTT'S ESG policy transparency assessments: <https://www.spott.org/natural-rubber/>
- SPOTT training hub: <https://www.spott.org/training-hub/>
- Help keep SPOTT going. Without continued funding, these assessments can't continue. Donate today at <https://donate.zsl.org/spott/> or email spott@zsl.org
- Find out more about ZSL's Sustainable Business and Finance team: <https://www.zsl.org/what-we-do/working-with-business>

Get in touch

- Email wild.science@zsl.org with your questions, comments, and thoughts for future episodes!
- Find us @ZSLScience on X or @zslofficial.bsky.social on BlueSky and use the hashtag #ZSLWildScience

- Follow us on Facebook @ZSLScienceAndConservation
- Email spott@zsl.org for questions about SPOTT assessments, methodology, or partnership.
- Follow SPOTT on LinkedIn @ZSL SPOTT, X @zslspott or BlueSky @zslspott.bsky.social
- ZSL's Sustainable Business and Finance team offers advisory services to help companies and investors take practical, science-based action for nature. Get in touch: <https://www.zsl.org/what-we-do/working-with-business/advisory-services>