

A spokesman for the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority stated: “This marks an important positive step forward following what has been an uncertain, prolonged period of care and maintenance at the Cononish mine site. New mining activity is expected to resume in the first quarter of 2026, once the necessary staff have been hired, and the mothballed mine and processing plant are reactivated.

Rare zeolites from the south of Spain

Henk Smeets

In October 2024 two of my friends and I undertook a 10 day mineral collecting trip to Andalusia in the south of Spain, to be precise in the region around Almería. During the trip we were guided by a few local collector friends, who brought us to locations that we would never ever have found by ourselves. Even though we had all the GPS coordinates of the places we wanted to visit, without our local guides we easily could and would have missed the exact spots.

Henk keeps on trekking in search of more mineral locations – and as always in warmer climes!

One of the collecting sites we have been searching for was a place called Agua Amarga, some 30 km east of Almería near the town of Níjar. Agua Amarga is not a mine or a quarry, but merely a natural outcrop in the landscape. To find it we had to walk a short distance on a footpath, with the collecting spot more or less hidden along the path, as a sort of a ditch that we had to descend into.

But the harvest was really worth the effort. Agua Amarga harbours a number of different zeolites, none of which are common. The minerals described have all been examined and analysed at the University of Granada, so there is no doubt about the identification. We found four of the five most desired species:

<i>Faujasite-Na</i>	In perfect octahedral, fully transparent, crystals.
<i>Flörkeite</i>	Resembles phillipsite but it has different end faces.
<i>Paulingite-K</i>	This mineral is quite rare worldwide and this is the only Spanish location.
<i>Phillipsite-K</i>	Occurs here in unusual habits, and even yellow.

The fifth is *erionite-k*, but that we did not find any of this mineral.

All Photos by Henk Smeets

References: Martínez, R.J. et al, *Las Zeolitas de Agua Amarga, Níjar, Almería, Andalucía. Paragénesis, Revista de Mineralogía*, 2022-1, p. 3-24.



Photo 1 Faujasite-Na FOV 1.5 mm



Photo 2 Faujasite-Na FOV 2 mm



Photo 3 Florkeite

FOV 2 mm



Photo 4

Paulingite-K

FOV 4 mm



Photo 5 Phillipsite-K FOV 1 mm



Photo 6 Phillipsite-K FOV 1.5 mm