



# Waxcap Grasslands

## Local Biodiversity Action Plan

### Ecology

#### What is a waxcap grassland?

Waxcap-grassland fungi are characteristic of unimproved, nutrient poor grasslands, often with moss rich highly grazed swards. Ecologically, Waxcap Grassland fungi can be split into five groups; dung fungi, litter decomposers, terricolous species, mycorrhizal species and CHEG species. CHEG species comprise the Clavariaceae (Fairy Clubs), Hygrocybe (Waxcaps), Entolomaceae (Pink gills) and Geoglossaceae (Earth tongues).



**Why are waxcap grasslands important?** Waxcap species are the best known and easiest to identify and are considered to be suitable indicators of mycologically rich grasslands. Whilst the distribution and ecology of these species is still relatively poorly understood, their unimproved grassland habitat is considered to be threatened throughout the UK and Europe. Many grassland species themselves are also considered to be threatened and over 250 are included on European Red Data Lists. However, as the UK does not yet appear to have suffered the levels of losses experienced in North-West Europe it remains a stronghold for these species.

### Current status

number of recognised Cheshire Waxcap grassland sites are within existing SBIs in the Macclesfield area including; Kerridge Hill, Macclesfield Forest, Teggs Nose Country Park and Harrop Wood. Ongoing recording and research is being undertaken at Kerridge Hill by Rachel Hunter.



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### Threats

- \* Reduced levels of Grazing.
- \* Increased public access resulting in increased picking or knocking over of fruiting bodies.
- \* Afforestation.
- \* Whilst moderate trampling by livestock and humans does not appear to have an adverse impact upon the underground mycelia, the use of heavy machinery, trampling by horses and rutting by vehicles including bikes, resulting in soil compaction could be deleterious to grassland fungi.
- \* Agricultural improvement of grasslands - especially the application of lime.
- \* Ploughing.
- \* Atmospheric pollution.

### Objectives, targets and actions

Objectives, targets and actions to help conserve waxcap grasslands in the Cheshire region can be found on the [Biodiversity Action Reporting System \(BARS\)](#) along with full details of our progress so far.

### How to find out more about waxcap grasslands

Plantlife's guide to managing grassland for fungi - [www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/assets/saving-species/saving-species-publications/management-guide-Grassland-gems-managing-lawns-pastures-for-fungi.pdf](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/assets/saving-species/saving-species-publications/management-guide-Grassland-gems-managing-lawns-pastures-for-fungi.pdf)

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### References and Glossary

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