

ENTOLOMA

Pink Gills

A large and generally difficult genus, although some species can be identified in the field. They all have pink spores which clearly show on the gills in mature specimens.



Indigo Pinkgill *Entoloma chalybeum*

One of the more common blue *Entoloma* species.

GEOGLOSSACEAE

Earthtongues

These are small, unobtrusive dark brown or black club-shaped fungi



Glutinous Earthtongue
Geoglossum glutinosum

One of the more easily recognised species with its viscid and often distorted fruiting body.



Snowy Inkcap
Coprinosis nivea

One of the fungi helping to break-down animal manure on grassland. These and other fungi have an important role in maintaining grassland ecosystems.

Unimproved grassland is becoming an increasing rare habitat within Britain. The Outer Hebrides boast considerable tracts of this endangered habitat in the form of machair (coastal grassland formed from wind-blown shell-sand) and acidic grazing pastures (mainly on moorland). The grassland fungi are an integral part of the biodiversity of these ecosystem as are the flowers and invertebrates. Fungi are nature's recyclers, breaking down organic matter to release the nutrients which in turn are used by the plants.

Most of the time they exist as a network of fine threads (hyphae) in the soil and we are not aware of their presence until the fruiting bodies appear above ground to release the spores which will form the next generation of fungi.

We know very little about the fungi of the islands and we are interested in all your records, particularly of common species which are often under recorded. For more information, or to submit your records, please visit the Outer Hebrides Biological Recording website: www.ohbr.org.uk



Outer Hebrides Biological Recording

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Grassland Fungi of the Outer Hebrides



Meadow Waxcap *Cuphophyllus pratensis*

Long after the wild flowers have faded the ancient grasslands of the Outer Hebrides bloom once more as the fungi appear. Waxcap fungi have been described as the orchids of the fungi world and jewels of the grassland. Often brightly coloured, they can smell of honey, cedar or just fungi, and have descriptive common names, such as snowy, scarlet, parrot and slimy.

The community of grassland fungi include other groups: pink gills, earthtongues, corals, spindles and clubs which are not as flamboyant. This group known by the acronym CHEG (Clavaroids, *Hygrocybe*, *Entoloma*, Geoglossums) are all sensitive to artificial fertilisers and herbicides. Their presence is indicative of ancient grassland and can be used to assess the conservation importance of this type of habitat; particularly where indicator plant species have been lost through overgrazing or mowing.

CLAVARIOID FUNGI

Clubs, Spindles and Corals

Typically a single thin stem or a branched coral-like structure usually with distinct colours: white, yellow, rose and grey. Found in shortish grass (often after grazing) which is not too wet.



Smoky Spindles
Clavaria fumosa
Usually in clusters, rarely found singly. Grey to smoky-brown with pointed tips when young.

Yellow Club
Clavulinopsis helvola
A small, bright yellow club, a widespread and common species.



Meadow Coral *Clavulinopsis corniculata*
A branched structure, with a distinctive egg-yellow colour.

WAXCAPS

Most have striking colours and are the stars of the autumn fungal season in grassland. Recent changes in nomenclature have placed some species into other genera, mainly *Gliophorus*.



Cedar Waxcap *Hygrocybe russocoriaceae*
One of two, fairly common, white species found in trooping groups in short grass. It has a short stature and a distinct smell of Russian leather or cedar.



Scarlet Waxcap
Hygrocybe coccinea
One of several bright red species which can be identified using a good field key. Common in short grass and dune slacks

Blackening Waxcap
Hygrocybe conica
The stipe (stem) is yellow with an orangey cap when young, the colours darkening with age, eventually turning black.



Parrot Waxcap, *Gliophorus psittacinus*



Golden Waxcap, *Hygrocybe chlorophana*



Crimson Waxcap, *Hygrocybe punicea*