Current Status - UK and Local

UK Biodiversity Status: Vulnerable (*Hygrocybe spadicea*)
LBAP Partnership area Status: Local Priority Species

In common with many waxcaps, both *H. radiata* and *H. spadicea* favour basic, unimproved grassland. Both have only been found locally on the ultrabasic, basaltic soil of the Gleniffer Braes.

Date Waxcap (*Hygrocybe spadicea)*
This species occurs in Western Europe but is rare throughout its range. In recent years, the species has occurred in fewer than 15 one-km squares within the UK, with records showing a distinct westerly bias, e.g. Ayrshire, Colonsay, Cumbria, Shropshire, Wales. The species has been recorded only once within the LBAP Partnership area, a single fruitbody on thin soil covering a basalt outcrop on the Gleniffer Braes during the early 1990s.

Slender Waxcap *(Hygrocybe radiata)*
This species seems to be extremely rare in the UK being currently known from only three localities in the Scottish Borders and one site within the LBAP Partnership area, all recorded in autumn 2000. This species may have gone unrecorded in the past due to confusion with similar species. The local record is of a single fruitbody found growing at the edge of a tiny quarry on the Gleniffer Braes.

In Great Britain *H. spadicea* is considered to be *Vulnerable* and is included in the provisional red data list of European fungi. The rarer H. *radiata* may have been unknown in Britain before 2000 and consequently was not considered by the UK Biodiversity Group when drawing up the priority list of Species of Conservation Concern. *H. radiata*, with only four British records, might superficially be considered as *Endangered* but is likely to be under-recorded and perhaps more appropriately regarded as *Vulnerable* in the UK.

Ecology and Management

The 'Date-coloured' Waxcap (*H. spadicea*) is mainly an upland species which occurs on south-facing limestone pastures in submontane regions, but has also been recorded on calcareous dunes and basic / neutral grassland in lowland areas, including mown parkland and road verges. The species produces fruiting bodies following heavy rain in late summer and early autumn in most years. The edible fruit bodies are rather distinctive in appearance, being 5-7 cm in diameter with a brown cap and bright yellow gills.

H. radiata is a lead-grey coloured waxcap 3-5 cm in diameter which grows on basic or neutral unimproved grassland in continental Europe.

Factors Causing Loss or Decline

The factors influencing population trends in waxcaps are poorly understood, but potential threats to existing sites are likely to include the following:

- Improvement of grassland habitat through ploughing, reseeding or application of fertilisers
- Reduction of grazing or mowing which leads to the growth of rank vegetation and scrub
- Changes in the microhabitat at isolated sites.

Opportunities and Current Action

- In Great Britain, *H. spadicea* receives general protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The known sites for *H. radiata* and *H. spadicea* are both protected to some extent because they are within Gleniffer Braes Country Park
- There is an ongoing British Mycological Society / Scottish Natural Heritage "Survey of Waxcap Grasslands", the aim of which is to identify grasslands of high biodiversity value using waxcap diversity as an indicator.

Action Plan

A priority is to increase awareness among landowners and landusers of the species' presence and vulnerability to certain land management practices. Local populations should be monitored and further survey work carried out to locate new populations.

Hygrocybe radiata © Tom Byars

Inverclyde
Renfrewshire
East Renfrewshire
LBAP

Hygrocybe radiata © Alan Silverside

Waxcaps

(Hygrocybe spadicea) and *(Hygrocybe radiata)*

Waxcaps have been described as the orchids of the world of fungi. They are often startling in colour from reds, oranges and yellows to whites and browns.

The Date Waxcap *(Hygrocybe spadicea)* and has a rather distinctive appearance, being 5-7 cm in diameter with a brown cap and bright yellow gills.

The Slender Waxcap (*Hygrocybe radiata)* is a lead-grey coloured waxcap 3-5 cm in diameter.

Hygrocybe spadicea © Alan Silverside

Objectives and targets

Objective 1	Continue to protect all waxcap species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Maintain the current distribution and population sizes.
Objective 2	Research the current status of *H. radiata* and *H. spadicea* within the LBAP area.
Objective 3	Enhance the presence of *H. spadicea* and *H. radiata* as part of a diverse waxcap community at all known sites for these species.
Objective 4	Promote, in the LBAP area, an awareness of the significance of waxcap diversity as an indicator of biodiverse grassland, along with the specific identification of features of *H. radiata* and *H. spadicea* where appropriate.
Objective 5	Review this plan on an annual basis, beginning in 2005.

We will achieve these objectives by:

Action	Actioned by	Timescale
Ensuring no further loss or damage to the surviving populations	GBCP LAs Landowners	2004-07
Surveying to locate new populations and monitoring existing populations	UoP SNH	2004-07
Encouraging appropriate management of known sites	LAs GBCP SNH	2004-07
Disseminating information on identification of waxcaps and their use as indicator species	UoP LBAP Officer	2004-07
Monitoring and recording actions towards these objectives	LBAP Steering Group LBAP Officer Local Records Centre	Ongoing

Links with Other Action Plans

Unimproved Grasslands

Further Information can be obtained from The Biodiversity Officer 0141 842 5281