

### Fungi

Grassland macrofungi include clavarioid species, *Hygrocybe*, *Entoloma* and Geoglossaceae (CHEG) species which are found on unimproved grasslands, including grassy meadows, pastures, churchyards and woodland margins. They are recorded from both calcareous and acidic grassland. Fruiting bodies, which are rarely abundant, mainly appear between September and November. Key Herefordshire species include:

**Date Waxcap** *Hygrocybe spadicea*: a distinctive species of unimproved, usually dry, grassland, unique among the waxcaps by virtue of the contrasting cap colour. Cap dark brown, radially fibrillose sometimes slightly viscid; gills and stipe yellow, the fibrils of the stipe darkening to orange – brownish at maturity. There are only two Herefordshire records for this unusual waxcap, one in 2005 and another in 2006. It is nationally listed as ‘near threatened’.

**Violet coral** *Clavaria zollingeri*: has striking tubular, purple to pinkish-violet fruit bodies that grow coral-like from a common base up to 10 cm (3.9 in) tall and 7 cm (2.8 in) wide. The branches are often forked in the upper part and tips. The extreme tips of the fragile, slender branches are usually rounded and brownish. It occurs on old and unimproved grassland and very occasionally in woodland. Only 2 post-1960 Herefordshire sites are known for this Red Data List species.

**Big blue pinkgill** *Entoloma bloxamii*: a medium-sized, fairly stout species up to 8cms across, broadly conical then with a broad umbo. Strikingly blue-violet throughout initially, with white or yellow colours at the stipe base. By maturity the blue is often lost and the fruiting body is then grey. The fungus grows from late summer to autumn in unimproved calcareous grassland and occasionally on more acid soils and in broad-leaved woodland.

### Birds

A number of birds rely on grassland habitats for nesting and feeding:

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* on lowland wet grassland, this wader feeds predominantly from surface and ground vegetation and requires areas of surface water in June for feeding chicks. In Herefordshire the main concentrations are along river valleys and adjacent meadow land.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* skylarks are associated with open hills and commons in Herefordshire, they nest in hollows in the ground, sometimes in arable fields.

### Invertebrates

Insect pollinators play a vital role in the pollination of agricultural crops and wild flowers. At least 1500 species of insect pollinate plants in the UK including bumblebees, honeybees, solitary bees, hoverflies, wasps, flies, beetles, butterflies and moths.

The Brown-banded carder bee *Bombus humilis* has undergone a drastic reduction in range and abundance, as a result of the loss of this habitat. It nests on the surface of the ground at the base of long vegetation, or occasionally underground in redundant small mammal burrows. It has most often been recorded in areas of grassland supporting a large number of plant species with long corolla flower types, notably those belonging to the plant families *Lamiaceae* and *Fabaceae*.

Other invertebrates of importance include;

- **Small heath** *Coenonympha pamphilus*
- **Six-belted clearwing** *Six-belted Clearwing*
- **Chimney sweeper** *Chimney sweeper*
- **Mother shipton** *Callistege mi*
- **Burnet companion** *Euclidia glyphica*
- **Six spot burnet** *Zygaena filipendulae*
- **Five spot burnet** *Zygaena trifolii*
- **Small purple barred** *Phytometra viridaria*
- **Small copper** *Small Copper*
- **Brown argus** *Aricia agestis*
- **Ruddy carpet** *Catarhoe rubidata*