

showing a wide distribution. As is the modern way it is also given a vernacular name – the Poplar-lettuce Aphid.

Plans are underway to set up more BPGS members as verifiers, and that would certainly help to spread the workload and enable more identifications to be verified or corrected. Becoming a verifier is also an excellent way for cecidologists to accelerate their learning about galls. The way that a coordinated BPGS verification scheme would work is that individuals take on defined geographical areas, rather in the fashion of the BSBI county recorders. We split the load now by Sam dealing with all the Yorkshire records and Peter doing the rest of the United Kingdom as best he can. Records sent to us for verification are filtered accordingly. CEH provides detailed guidance, and their staff are always ready to answer queries and provide clarification. The process is facilitated by an online verification page.

This is a field of activity which is now an established feature of natural history studies. It is one to which societies like ours can make a valuable contribution.

Call for records of rust and smut fungi in support of GB red-listing process

Paul A. Smith¹ & Matt Wainhouse²

¹pas.vc110@gmail.com

²Natural England, Matthew.Wainhouse@naturalengland.org.uk

Fungi have not been prominent in official red lists for Great Britain, and there is currently only one non-lichenised fungus group, the Boletaceae, that has a red list officially approved and constructed in accordance with the IUCN red-listing criteria (Ainsworth *et al.* 2013). An earlier unofficial and provisional red-list (Evans 2006) included rusts and smuts, but this is now very out of date. Natural England are currently supporting new red list exercises for myxomycetes, grassland fungi and a revision and expansion of the bolete (Boletales) and lichen and lichenicolous fungi assessments. Now there is an opportunity to begin a process for rusts and smuts, and a small group is working to support this initiative.

One of the first steps is to collate all the existing distributional information. Some of this is already available in national and regional databases, and we expect to extract records from these sources and from iRecord and similar biological recording platforms. There is also information in published sources, and we will draw on these as resources allow for their extraction.

There are sure to be other sources of records which are not known to us or not so readily accessible, and we would like to include as many of these as possible in the data to form the basis of the assessments. There are several ways you can contribute your records:

- add them to FRDBI <https://www.frdbi.org.uk/> - please use the CC-BY (or a less restrictive) license so that they can be easily used for the red-listing
- put them into iRecord <https://irecord.org.uk/>
- send them in some electronic form (spreadsheet, database, text file, document) to Paul Smith, pas.vc110@gmail.com. We can probably cope with nearly any format, but if they are in some proprietary software, then please check first, or export to something more standard
- we *may* be able to digitise a limited number of paper records. If your records are only in this form, and you are unable to add them to FRDBI/iRecord or similar, then please contact Paul to discuss (with a description of the format and an estimate of the number of records involved)

These are roughly in order of ease of access for us, so please choose the earlier options if possible. Whichever of these options you choose, it would be helpful if you could contact Paul to let him know what is happening and if possible a rough estimate of the number of records you may contribute. Do not include records that are already in the national databases.

We are interested in records for all rust and smut taxa, including common ones. The numbers and distribution of records for common species provide valuable information on the intensity of recording in these groups which can help to interpret the records of rarer species during the red-list assessment. Species that are (or have been) common in some areas may nevertheless be in overall decline. “Smuts” includes all the species that have been called smuts, including *Microbotryaceae* (now in the same subphylum as rusts) and *Entorrhizomycota* (now split off as a separate phylum). The taxonomy in use in Britain is currently in flux, with the recent publications of the Welsh Parasitic Microfungus Group (the latest overview of many groups is in Woods *et al.* (2025)) largely following the taxonomy of Klenke & Scholler (2015). This brings us into line with European taxonomy, but means that we will need to assign some records to

species based on their host plants. So it is very important to include the host plant information with your records if you have it.

Although we are asking for records for red-listing, we would like them to be available for wider use, including (for example) the production of distribution maps, so please donate records for general scientific study. For the same reason we would also be interested in records from the island of Ireland, from the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands even though they are outside the geographical scope of the red-list exercise. If there is a need to protect site information for very rare species, then we can handle that.

It would be helpful if you could process your records by the end of January 2026. The absolute cut-off date for records to be used in the red-listing project will be 31 March 2026. Thank you in advance for your help.

References

- AINSWORTH, A.M., SMITH, J.H., BODDY, L., DENTINGER, B.T.M., JORDAN, M., PARFITT, D., ROGERS, H.J. & SKEATES, S.J. 2013 *Red List of Fungi for Great Britain: Boletaceae. A pilot conservation assessment based on national database records, fruit body morphology and DNA barcoding*. Species Status No. 14. Peterborough: JNCC.
- EVANS, S. (2006) *The red data list of threatened British fungi*. British Mycological Society.
- KLENKE, F. & SCHOLLER, M. (2015) *Pflanzenparasitische Kleinpilze*. Berlin & Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.
- WOODS, R.G., CHATER, A.O., STRINGER, R.N., EVANS, D.A. & SMITH, P.A. (2024) *Towards a handlist of microfungus parasites of vascular plants from Britain and Ireland and a census catalogue for Wales*. Aberystwyth: A.O. Chater.
-

Spring issue of *Cecidology*

The next issue of *Cecidology* will appear in the Spring of 2026. Please send all contributions to Paul Smith at **pas.vc110@gmail.com**, to arrive no later than **20th March 2026**. Please note the instructions to authors at <https://www.britishplantgallsociety.org/cecidology/>