

Oak polypore (*Buglossoporus pulvinus*)

This rare fungus is known only from a single ancient dead oak tree in Staverton Park in East Suffolk. Its fruit bodies appear during the summer, but do not persist long making monitoring the species difficult. It is a heartwood rotting species that requires exposed, seasoned wood of mature or dead oak trees. It is restricted to wood pasture habitat due to the need for a long continuity of mature oak.

1 Current Status

1.1 National

This species is known only from six sites in Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Suffolk. There is no evidence for an historic decline in England although it has become extinct through most of its European range, with recent records only from Latvia. It has been reported as far east as Japan. England is therefore the global stronghold of this species.

1.2 Local

Oak Polypore was first found at Staverton Park on a hollow dead oak during a field meeting of the British Mycological Society in 1985. It was found more recently by Ted Green in 1994 whilst ancient trees were being tagged. The record is therefore included in the ancient tree database for Staverton so the host can be relocated. As the 1985 record gives no precise location, it is not certain that the fungus was recorded on the same tree. The 1994 record shows the host tree to be a standing, hollowed bole with no limbs. Although the girth of the tree is somewhat smaller than average for the Park, it is likely to be very old. Recent finds in Windsor Great Park show that the fungus can thrive on fallen dead trees, so it is possible that it may occur in similar habitat in the adjacent Thicks where there is suitable open habitat. The possibility of bracken fires is considered to be a possible threat at Staverton. Collection of the fungus for the pot or for identification is not considered a threat as the site has no public access away from footpaths.

1.3 Natural Areas

Suffolk Coast and Heaths.

1.4 Protection

Oak polypore is classified as Endangered in Britain and is specially protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

2 Current factors causing loss or decline

- Lack of younger generation of host trees to ensure continuity of oak polypore habitat is a threat to the long term survival of the species.

3 Current action

No action being taken in Suffolk.

4 Action plan objectives and targets

- 1 Establish current status and distribution of the species at Staverton and suitable habitat in the vicinity
- 2 Maintain and where appropriate enhance population of this species at Staverton Park and Thicks.
- 3 Consider use of material from Suffolk population for ex-situ cultivation and artificial establishment of this species at locations locally and nationally by 2010.
- 4 Seek information on the ecological needs of this species and apply new knowledge to Suffolk site.

Proposed action with key local partners

ACTION	KEY LOCAL PARTNERS	TIMETABLE				
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
A. Policy and Legislation						
No action proposed						
B. Site safeguard and management						
Seek to establish favourable management for host tree	EN	*	*			
Ensure continuity of habitat within site by protecting and planting new saplings and creating new pollards as future host trees.	EN	*	*	*	*	*
C. Species management and protection						
Assess the possibility, subject to suitable techniques being devised, of translocating material of this species to suitable host trees at Staverton in the event of existing host becoming unsuitable	EN	*	*	*	*	*
Ensure that host tree is not felled	EN	*	*	*	*	*
D. Advisory						
Ensure full liaison with relevant individuals and organisations	EN	*	*	*	*	*
E. Future research and monitoring						
Monitor on an annual basis within May to December period	EN	*	*	*	*	*
Seek information on sites outside Suffolk	EN	*	*			
Seek further information into the needs of the fungus to assist management and circulate information acquired	EN	*	*			
F. Communications and publicity						
Discourage collection	EN	*	*	*	*	*