

## Statement from Plantlife – Fungi: The once forgotten kingdom

16 October 2024

Nicola Hutchinson, Director of Conservation, Plantlife, said: “Plantlife is delighted to see fungi recognised as an independent kingdom of life through this new pledge. It endorses the critical roles of fungi across so many aspects of our lives which, historically, have failed to be a priority for conservation action.

“Many fungi species are rare and declining, both in the UK and globally. A much clearer picture of the status of many more species is needed, to truly understand the extent of these declines and how to tackle them. This pledge will give fungi the long overdue attention they deserve and is a pivotal step in encouraging their inclusion in national and global policy mechanisms to support future research and conservation.

“For 35 years, Plantlife has been championing fungi, the ‘hidden backbone’ of our ecosystems. In the UK, our annual survey, Waxcap Watch, helps identify which species require urgent conservation action and our training courses inspire the next generation of mycologists. Our current Fungi Appeal will help us to use our influence to amplify the voices of our forgotten fungi, working with experts around the world to grow knowledge and raise the profile of these species.

“We look forward to working with the UK and other Governments to ensure that all Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity recognize fungi as an independent kingdom of life across legislation, policies and agreements, and integrate concrete measures for their protection into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. At next week’s COP16, Plantlife will be supporting this pledge, alongside promoting the new Global Strategy for Plant Conservation that will help to achieve the targets and goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework.