

Hygrocybe conica sp. 'PNW28'

Humans want species to fit into nice neat little boxes that we can easily identify with. Fungi don't always agree with what we want or think the world should look like - and seem to want to mess with us. The *H. conica* sp. 'PNW28' belongs to a group that decides to cooperate.

The *Hygrocybe conica* is a large ranging species with over 16,000 observations on iNat as of September 2026 in literally every corner of the world. In the PNW we have a very similar species but enough different that it is called *Hygrocybe singeri*. It is notable for its black bruising which turns the entire mushroom completely black and there are over 5,000 observations on iNat. In the early days of sequencing we believed we only had *H. singeri* here in Washington State and no *H. conica*. More recently - for reason unclear other than maybe the increase in number of sequences being performed - we started to pick up some different DNA *H. singeri* we thought that Danny has now been suggesting these are closer to *H. conica* than *H. singeri*.

Hygrocybe sp. 'conica-PNW22' - with 11 observations on iNat
Hygrocybe sp. 'conica-PNW25' - with 1 observation on iNat in Grays Harbor
Hygrocybe sp. 'conica-PNW27' - with one observation in Whatcom County
Hygrocybe sp. 'conica-PNW28' - with 3 observations

The single observation from Grays Harbor County is my observation from the headwaters of the East Fork Humptulips - so high elevation. The *H. sp. 'conica-PNW28'* collected from spitting distance from the shoreline of Little Skookum Inlet in Mason County. The exact area is called Oxen Camp which is the likely site of where the first loggers corralled their oxen teams. As expected the mushrooms we're found under red cedar and in moss next to a salmon rich freshwater creek. This particular mushroom is the only one of the three observations with a sequence that shows in GenBank. The closest match when a Blast is performed for this mushroom is 95.7%.

The picture with the dark center to the cap is used as the thumbnail picture to represent the species on iNat;

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?subview=map&taxon_id=1692772

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/246639342>

The picture of the underside of the mushroom is used to represent PNW28 on Danny's DNA Discoveries picture key;

<https://www.alpental.com/psms/ddd/Hygrophoraceae/index.htm>

The general nature of the of this group with such diverse DNA - but that are obviously closely related makes me think they may not all achieve species status. It may be that they are given Var. status which makes sense to me. What would be a good name to attribute to this var.? Latin for “oxen camp” maybe? That would be castraboum. Something like that. So maybe just playing with names it would be; *Hygrocybe conica* var. *castraboum*.