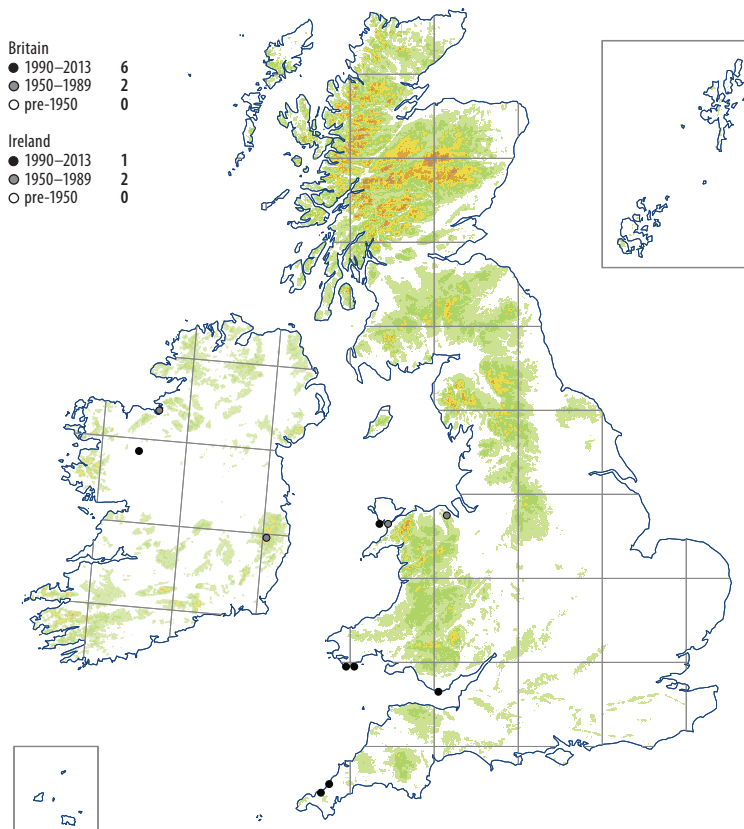


Southbya tophacea



Found in moist calcareous habitats, including dune slacks, flushes in or bordering sand dunes, disused marl pits, clayey or sandy waste from abandoned mines, wall mortar and dripping tufa on limestone walls and sea cliffs. It grows in thinly vegetated areas, usually associated with *Leiocolea turbinata* and often with *L. badensis*. Associates on thin soil overlying limestone in Pembrokeshire include *Fossombronina caespitiformis* subsp. *multispira*, *Dicranella varia* and *Trichostomum brachydontium*; in Cornwall it grows with both *T. brachydontium* and *T. crispulum*, whilst the Anglesey colony has *Petalophyllum ralfsii* and *Tortella inclinata* alongside. Altitudinal range: 25–160 m.

Three overlooked populations have been discovered since the 1991–1994 Atlas. However, the Flintshire colony has not been seen since 1973, and recent searches have failed to relocate the species at two Irish sites for which there are single records, in Co. Wicklow (1988) and Co. Sligo (1963) (Lockhart *et al.*, 2012). One of the Pembrokeshire sites is threatened by rapid cotoneaster and *Quercus ilex* invasion.

Dioicous; sporophytes are occasional, maturing from September to May. Reports of gemmae almost certainly represent misinterpretation of crenulate bract margins (Paton, 1999).

Mediterranean-Atlantic. Frequent in the Mediterranean countries and reaching its northern limit in Britain and Ireland; also in the Caucasus.

C.D. Preston, rev. S.D.S. Bosanquet



◀ Penhale Dunes, West Cornwall, 2012. Des Callaghan