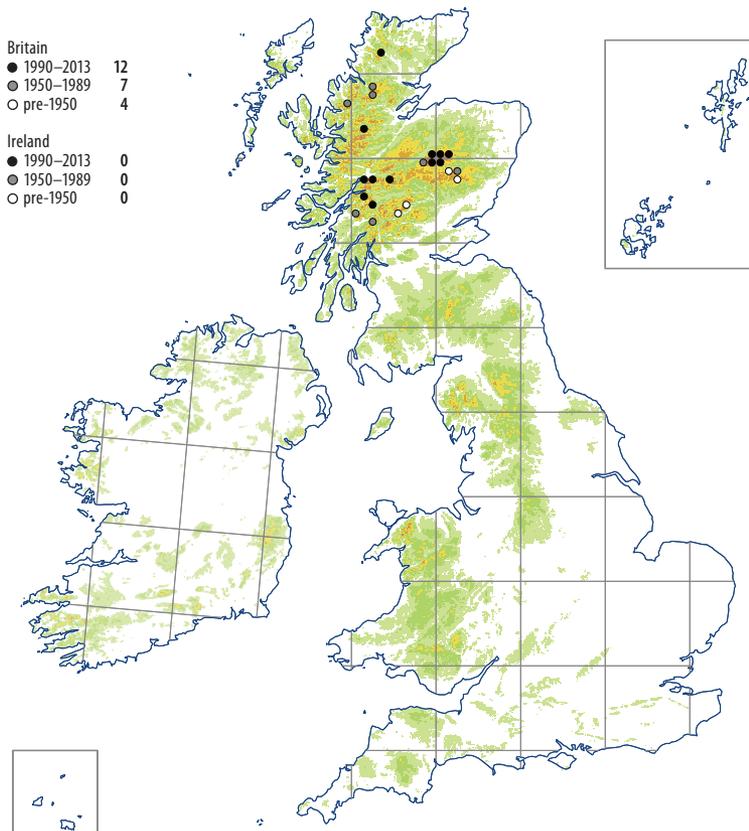


Andreaea nivalis



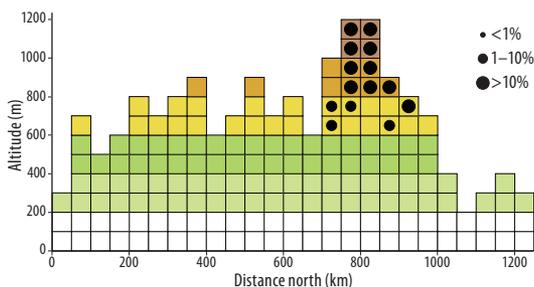
A characteristic species of wet rocks and gravels in areas of late snow-lie and associated meltwater burns high in the Scottish hills. It is most frequently found on dripping, north-facing crags along the 'cornice line' at the top of corries, where snow persists into the summer. Here the moss can form large cushions and on Ben Nevis it is remarkably abundant in this habitat with numerous associates, including *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Saxifraga stellaris*, *Anthelia julacea*, *Lophozia opacifolia*, *Marsupella sphacelata*, *M. stableri*, *Andreaea alpina*, *A. rupestris*, *Ditrichum zonatum*, *Kiaeria falcata*, *K. starkei*, *Polytrichastrum sexangulare*, *Racomitrium lanuginosum* and, rarely, *Oedipodium griffithianum*. In the Cairngorms it often occurs with *Andreaea frigida* in burns but it also occurs on open gravel areas which are very wet during snow melt and here it may form a complex mosaic with *Marsupella sphacelata*,

Nardia compressa, *Scapania uliginosa* and *Pohlia ludwigii*.
Altitudinal range: 880–1340 m.

Andreaea nivalis is abundant in its core area on the Ben Nevis massif and in the Cairngorms but populations are much smaller elsewhere in its range and it has not been possible to re-find it at some of its old sites. There must be a concern that changes in snow accumulation and persistence as a result of climate change may affect the more marginal sites for this species.

Dioicous; capsules are occasional.

Andreaea nivalis is a large and easily identifiable moss and is not likely to be confused with other species. The mapped distribution is therefore believed to be accurate.



European Arctic-montane. In the European mountains from N Norway and Arctic Russia south to N Spain and east to the Urals and Caucasus. Russian Far East, Japan. Western N America, Newfoundland, Labrador and Greenland.

G.P. Rothero