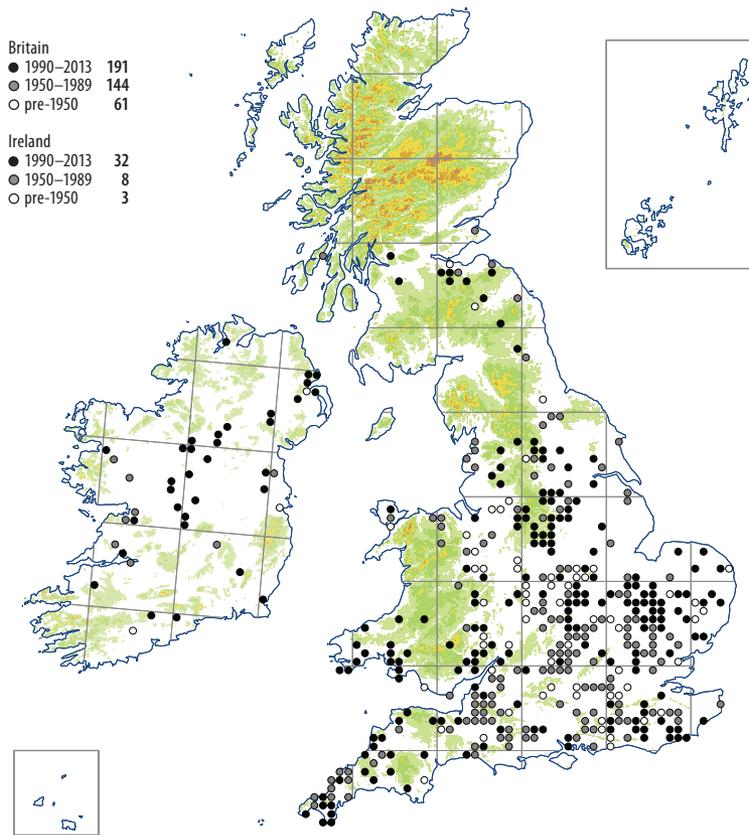


Aphanorrhagma patens



A primary colonist of bare nutrient-rich mud, this species is sometimes found in great abundance in the draw-down zone of reservoirs, at some of which it is associated with *Riccia cavernosa* and *Physcomitrium sphaericum*. Likewise it occurs on the bottoms of dried-up ponds (especially in dry summers) and on dredged mud. It is widespread but less abundant in other habitats where there is bare moist soil, including wet meadows and pastures (often where poached by farm animals or rutted by vehicles), on clay in arable fields, on the sides of ditches and streams, on wet farm tracks and woodland rides, and in old pits where water accumulates. It is found on both calcareous and mildly acid soils; on the latter *Pseudephemerum nitidum* is a regular associate. Although usually a plant of well-illuminated sites, it may occur in the shade of trees by ponds and reservoirs; it is sometimes restricted to such sites in very hot summers when

the mud dries out too rapidly to allow it to develop in the open. Altitudinal range: 0–330 m.

There was a marked rise in records in the early years of the 21st century, probably due to increased interest in the bryophytes of reservoir margins. Ireland and Wales in particular have produced a large number of new sites. Although populations fluctuate, there is no evidence of general decline or indeed genuine increase.

Paroicous or synoicous; capsules are abundant, mature in summer and autumn.

Eurosiberian Temperate. In temperate parts of Europe north to southern Scandinavia and NW Russia, absent or rare in most of the Mediterranean region, to N Spain, C Italy and N Greece. Siberia, Yakutia. Western and eastern N America.

T.L. Blockeel

