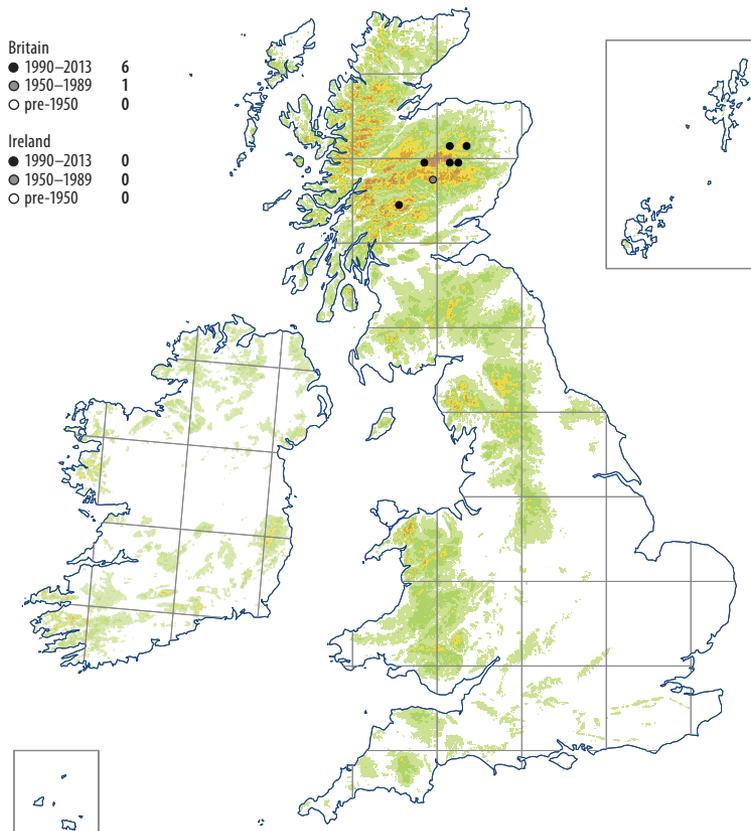


Schistidium atrofusum



This species occurs as large, dark, readily disintegrating tufts, frequently mixed with silt and small stones on dry, crumbling, west- or south-facing, strongly calcareous schist or metamorphosed limestone cliffs. Almost all the sites are associated with the outcrops of metamorphosed Dalradian Limestone in the Cairngorms area. The moss usually occurs as discrete cushions with much bare rock around but also occurs with a number of other typical calcicoles including *Ditrichum flexicaule*, *Orthotrichum anomalum*, *Pseudoleskeella catenulata*, *Schistidium papillosum*, *S. robustum*, *Tortella bambergeri* and *T. tortuosa*, along with a number of rare species including *Ctenidium procerrimum*, *Didymodon icmadophilus*, *Hypnum vaucheri*, *Schistidium helveticum*, *Stegonia latifolia* and *Tortula leucostoma*. Altitudinal range: 350–700 m.

This is the only member of the *S. apocarpum* complex for which the British status has not been profoundly altered by Blom (1996). It is therefore the only member of the complex for which trends could be meaningfully examined, but the peaks of records in the 1960s, 1970s and 2000s merely reflect periods of recording activity in the eastern Highlands and it is likely that all recorded Scottish populations continue to exist.

Autoicous. Capsules are common, mature in late winter, old by July.

European Boreal-montane. Locally frequent in the mountains of Spain, C Europe and the Balkans, but much confused in southern Europe with *S. helveticum*; frequent on Öland and Gotland, and with isolated sites in Iceland and Norway. Scattered in Turkey. Disjunct in Alberta and New Mexico.

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