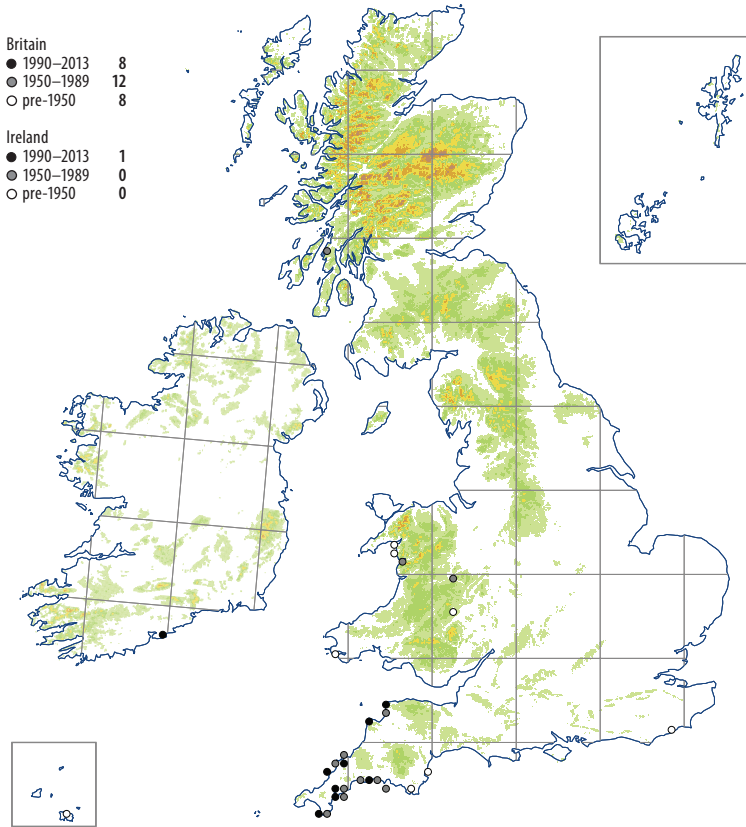


Tortula canescens



A species of thin soil in open, seasonally dry habitats, mostly occurring on banks and cliffs near the sea. In Cornwall recent records are from soil on ledges and banks in the upper parts of low slate cliffs on the coast, and inland on soil over slate in pasture-land and old quarries. There are earlier records from serpentine. Associates on coastal banks include *Archidium alternifolium*, *Tortula viridifolia* and *Trichostomum brachydontium*. In Ireland it occurs on crumbling soil on ledges of sea cliffs along with *Lophozia excisa*, *Trichostomum brachydontium*, *Tortella flavovirens*, *Weissia brachycarpa* var. *obliqua* and various other species. There is an old record in N Wales from mud-capped walls, but the most recent records there have been from earth banks. In Montgomeryshire, it has been recorded on soil on ledges of dolerite rocks on Roundton Hill. It has a marked preference for sunny south-facing slopes. Altitudinal range: 0–270 m.

There is clear evidence of decline; like many other species of open coastal habitats it has suffered from the loss of suitable habitat through scrub growth and the lack of grazing.

Autoicous; capsules are frequent, mature in late winter and spring.

Mediterranean-Atlantic. Frequent in the Mediterranean region, and in W and C Europe north to C Germany and Ukraine. Macaronesia, N Africa. Turkey and Near East, to Turkmenistan.

T.L. Blockeel

