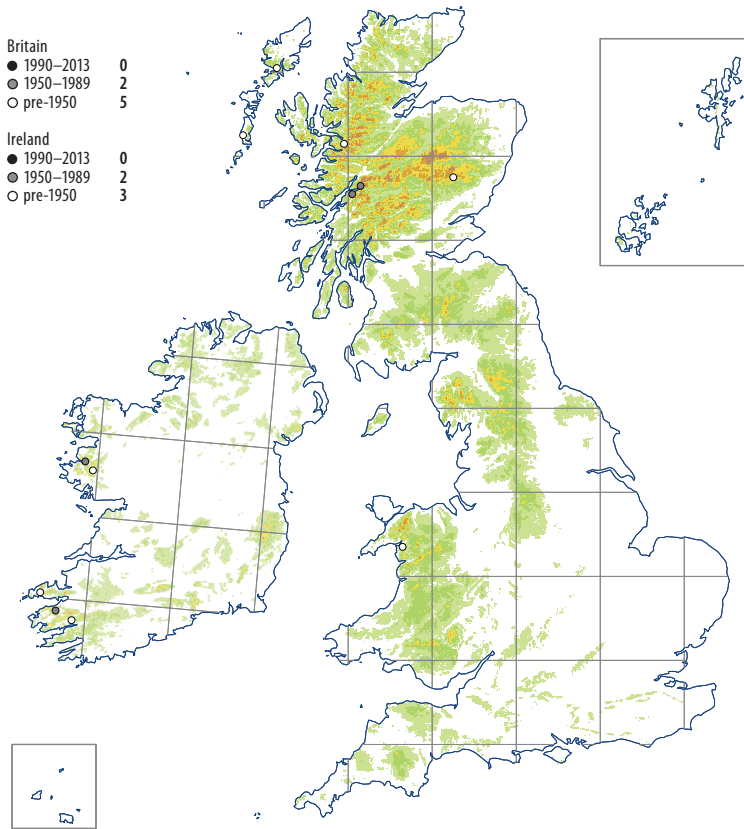


# *Philonotis cernua*



A small *Philonotis* characterised by a disproportionately large capsule borne on a curved seta. Most records have been from damp, bare, and in many cases previously burnt, acid peat on heathy montane slopes, with a minority of records from unstable mineral soil amongst loose scree. Apart from an implied association with *Calluna*, no information about associated species has been found. Although very rare and sporadic, it has been recorded in large patches at some sites. Altitudinal range: 240–530 m.

This very rare and enigmatic plant has not been seen in Britain and Ireland since 1987 (Mweelrea, Co. Mayo). It may have been overlooked in the absence of capsules in some localities because of its small size, but the complete lack of more recent records suggests it has probably disappeared. Why this should be the case, when it used to grow in such

apparently ordinary habitats, is unknown, but it appears always to have been extremely rare. Overstocking with sheep may have played a part in recent years.

Synocious, rarely autoicous or dioicous (synocious only, according to both Koponen *et al.* (2012) and Griffin (2014)); capsules are apparently abundant, mature in autumn. No specialised method of vegetative dispersal is known.

Hyperoceanic Temperate. In Europe known only in Britain and Ireland. China (Hainan, Taiwan, Yunnan). Eastern N America (mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee), C America; western and northern S America. W Africa (Bioko).

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