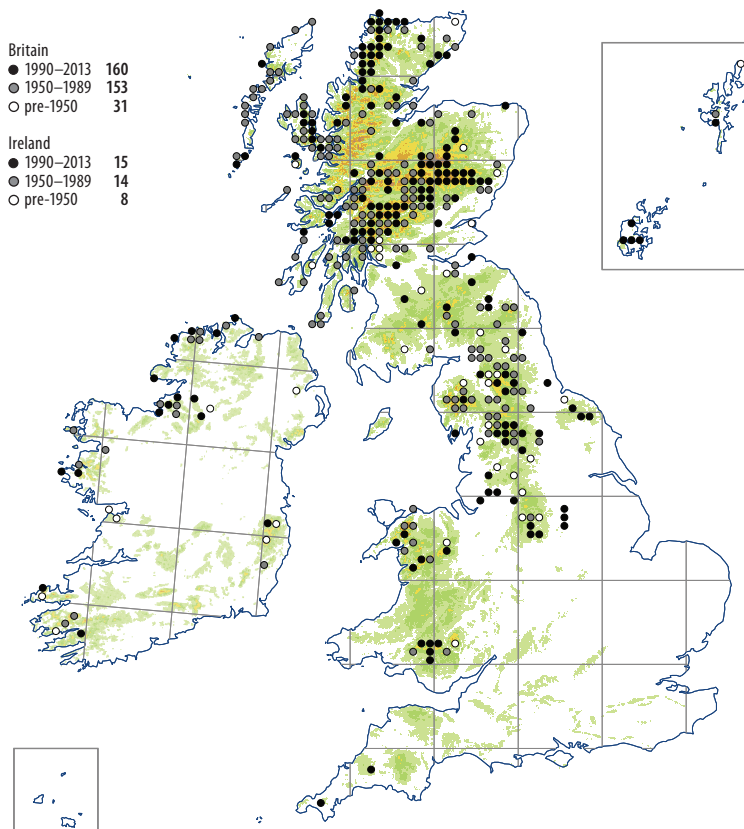


## *Distichium capillaceum*



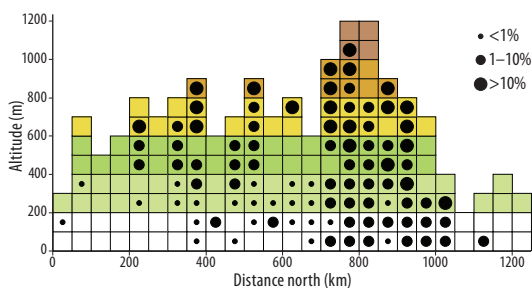
A locally frequent plant of damp basic rocks in the uplands of Britain, sometimes abundant, especially on the schists and basalts of the Scottish Highlands. It prefers shaded fissures and overhangs with some accumulation of soil, in places where it will not dry out, but it usually avoids rocks over which water flows. On more acid rocks, these fissures often follow dykes or intrusions which provide a sufficiently basic substrate. It occurs in similar situations in ravines. In northern England and Wales it occurs widely in crevices and on ledges of limestone crags, but also on igneous rocks and base-rich sandstone, often on stream banks and in gills. In montane sites *Anoetangium aestivum* is a characteristic associate, but it occurs with many other calcicolous bryophytes such as *Ctenidium molluscum* and *Tortella tortuosa*. *Distichium capillaceum* is less frequent in the lowlands; it grows in calcareous turf, on low-lying rock

outcrops (as on the Magnesian Limestone in England), and very occasionally in dune slacks, where it can look confusingly like *D. inclinatum*. Occasionally it colonises man-made habitats such as railway cuttings and mortared walls. Altitudinal range: 10–1100 m.

The high proportion of older records in the Pennines and Cumbria is probably due to low levels of recording there in recent years, rather than indicating a significant decline.

Monoicous; capsules are common and often plentiful, mature in summer.

There may be a few mapped errors, especially from lowland areas, because of confusion with *D. inclinatum* and the assumption that plants lacking mature capsules are likely to be *D. capillaceum*.



Circumpolar Boreo-arctic montane. In Europe north to the high Arctic (including Svalbard) and extending south to the mountains of the Mediterranean region. N Africa, Turkey, Iraq, Iran. A bipolar species across the whole of the Holarctic region and with scattered occurrences on mountains in the tropics. In the Southern Hemisphere in southern S America, SE Australia, New Zealand, subantarctic islands and Antarctica.

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