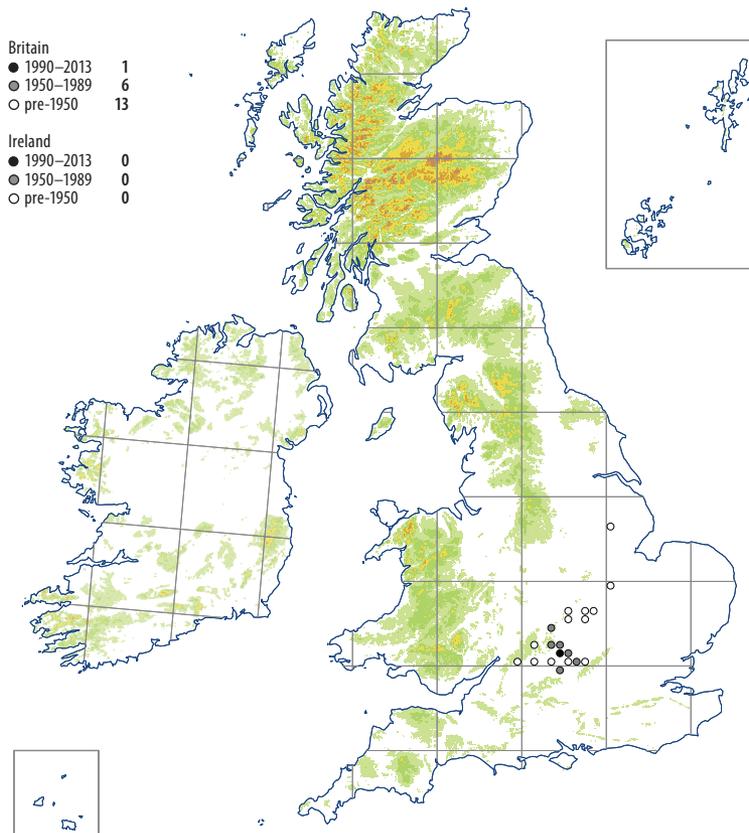


Ceratodon conicus



A plant of thin dry earth over Oolitic Limestone. In the past it was most often found on the top of earth-capped limestone walls, and in crevices in such walls. Other habitats have included bare ground in stone quarries, the coping of a canal lock, and tracksides and hard paths (e.g. in chinks between paving stones). It has commonly been found with *Barbula convoluta*, *Didymodon fallax* and *Pseudocrossidium hornschurchianum*; other associates on wall tops were *Aloina* spp., *Encalypta vulgaris*, *Pterygoneurum ovatum* and *Tortula lanceola*. Unlike *Ceratodon purpureus* it is a strict calcicole, and the two taxa only rarely grow together. Altitudinal range: 40–210 m.

Assessing the status of this species is complicated by the difficulties in identifying material lacking capsules. It has



evidently declined in Britain to near extinction as the practice of earth-capping walls has ceased, and the walls themselves have been destroyed. Suitable ground may also have been lost from the filling of old pits and vegetational succession in open habitats. It was last recorded in 1991 on a path in the garden of the late E.W. Jones, where it had previously also occurred on the garden wall. There is a recent record (not mapped) on soil over concrete near Bristol (Porley, 2013; Lansdown, 2014; Martin, 2014), but in the absence of capsules this has not yet been confirmed on morphological grounds. However molecular analysis has provided support for its identification as *C. conicus* (Bell *et al.*, 2013).

Dioicous; capsules are rare, mature in May and June.

Burley & Pritchard (1990) revised the genus *Ceratodon* and concluded that *C. conicus* merited specific rank. The distribution mapped here is largely based on a revision by Burley (1986); many old records were based on forms of *C. purpureus*.

Submediterranean-Subatlantic. Norway, Sweden (Öland), Germany, the Alps and southern Europe, but many records are based on vegetative material. Canaries, N Africa (Morocco). Turkey. Western N America. Records from elsewhere require confirmation.

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◀ Site for putative *Ceratodon conicus*, Shirehampton near Bristol, East Gloucestershire, 2012. *Richard Lansdown*