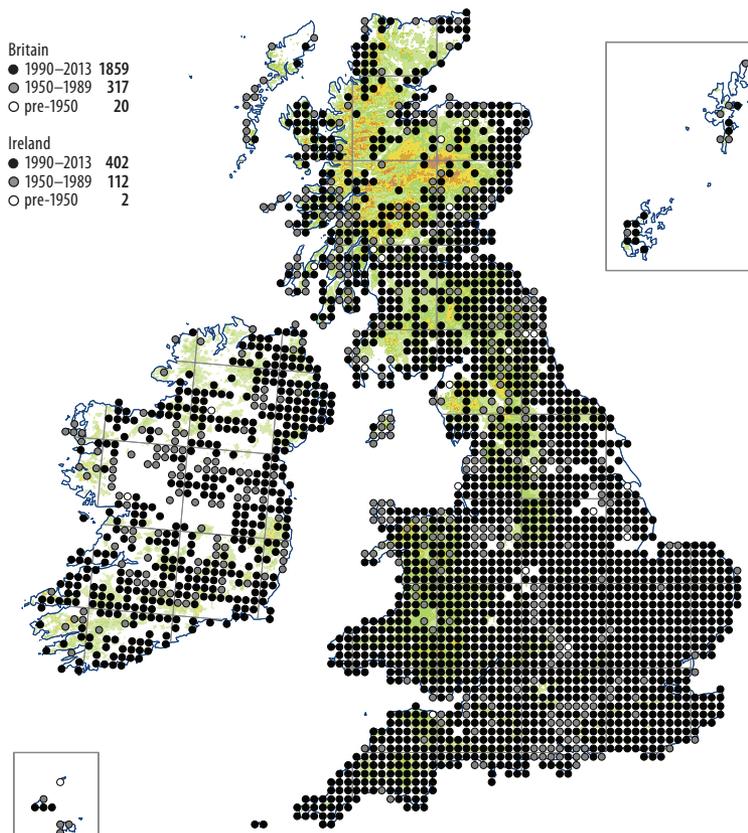


Oxyrrhynchium hians

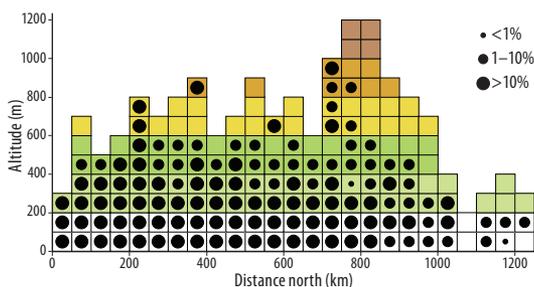


A rather variable species growing in a wide variety of habitats on neutral and basic, fertile soils. It is frequent on the ground in woodland, scrub and hedgerbanks over chalk, limestone and base-rich clays, in chalk and limestone grassland and disturbed ground in chalk pits, in damp pastures, and on moist stream-sides and river banks. Some forms grow directly on shaded basic rocks, and on wet rocks and ledges on cliffs. Less natural habitats include waste ground, railway banks, damp walls, and damp concrete. It is also a very common colonist of arable fields, occurring in over 80% of samples of the *Tortula truncata*–*Anthoceros* assemblage described by Preston *et al.* (2010), and increasing in abundance in set-aside or fallow fields alongside other pleurocarpous species. Altitudinal range: 0–950 m.

The records show an increasing trend, which can be attributed to the greater attention paid to arable fields and other ruderal habitats.

Dioicous; capsules are rather rare, mature in winter and spring. *Oxyrrhynchium hians* was one of the species found by Heinken *et al.* (2001) to be transported in the fur and hooves of deer and wild boar in forests in Germany.

Its great variability (from prostrate plants with widely-spaced leaves, to plants with erect densely-leaved branches) suggests that it may consist of more than one species. The forms with dense erect branches may appear very distinct and were formerly recognised as var. *rigidum*. Molecular studies will be necessary to unravel the status of these forms.



Circumpolar Temperate. Widespread in Europe from the Mediterranean region north to Iceland, N Norway and the northern Urals. Macaronesia, N Africa. Turkey and the Near East, Iran. Widespread in temperate parts of the Northern Hemisphere. Also in tropical Africa, Réunion, St Helena.

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