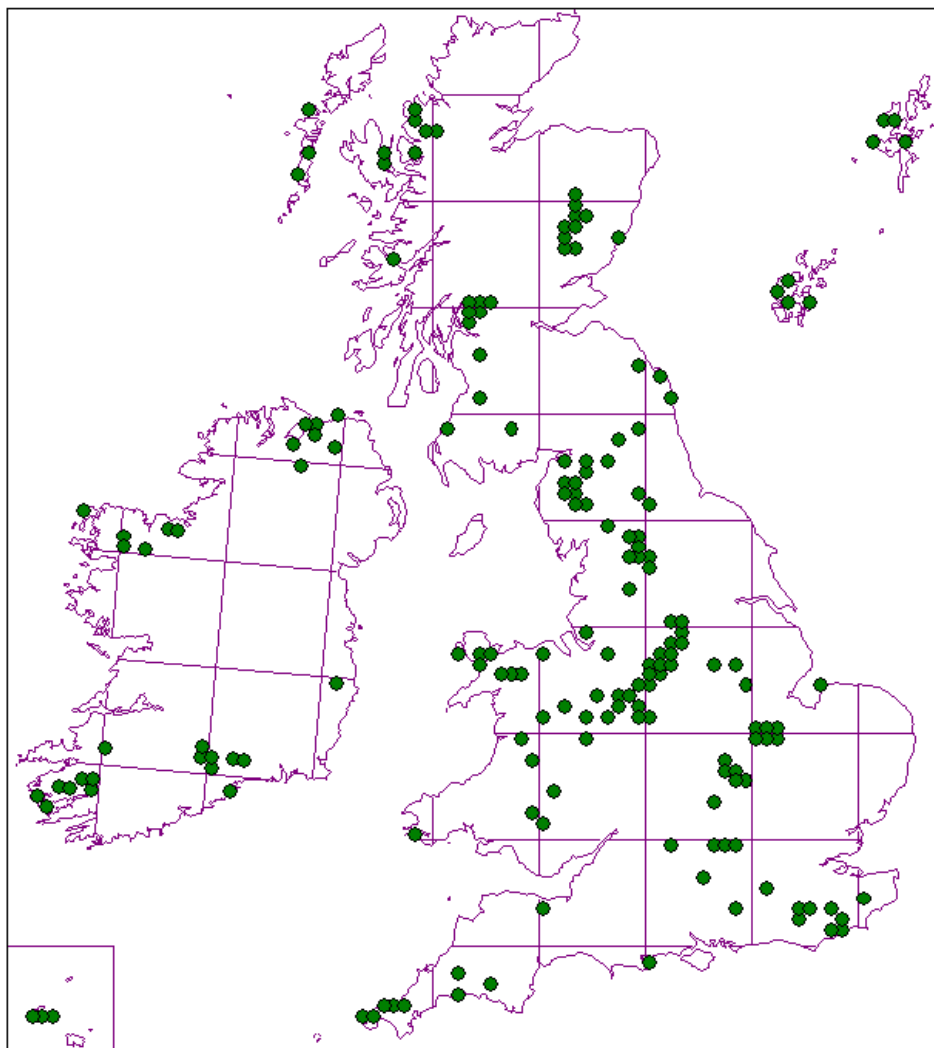


## BRECOG Update – February 2015

The tiny band of BBS members contributing to the BRECOG survey of bryophyte habitats and 'communities' was particularly active in 2014 and the number of individual microhabitats surveyed now stands at 765, based on 4135 quadrats completed. Records in 2014 originated from Anglesey, East Sussex and Kent (Spring Meeting), southern and south-western Ireland, the Outer Hebrides, Shetland, Loch Lomond, Mid Wales, plus several outings in 'local' English counties. The map below shows the 180 hectads in which at least one, and often many, microhabitats have been surveyed.

**Hectads visited by end 2014**



The survey is aimed at the commonest bryophytes across Britain and Ireland, although these are left to reveal themselves rather than being based on our preconceptions. By the end of 2014 a total of 480 distinct taxa had been recorded but many of them have been recorded only once or in a few samples. For eventual inclusion in a planned *Ecological Atlas*, it is argued that the data for each species must meet certain simple criteria:

- they should be based on a minimum of 15 and preferably 30 or more microhabitat samples (=record cards);
- the samples should represent the known distribution of the taxon in question across Britain and Ireland rather than all coming from one small area;
- the samples should comprise a range of abundances typical of the taxon in its British and Irish stations.

Currently, 126 taxa have been recorded in at least 15 microhabitat samples and 65 in 30 or more samples, the latter meeting most of these criteria. The sixteen most frequent taxa have been recorded in over 100 of the 765 samples with the 'top 5' being *Kindbergia praelonga* (222), *Hypnum cupressiforme* var. *cupressiforme* (197), *Hypnum jutlandicum* (179), *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* (178) and *Dicranum scoparium* (171). Further work is evidently required to increase the number of adequately-sampled species to nearer 250 as originally anticipated.

### **We need YOU to become involved**

Field recording is currently planned to continue until the end of 2016. Further data, obtained using the downloadable BRECOG sheets and the methodology described on the BBS website, would be most gratefully received from any part of Britain or Ireland, but especially from the larger unrecorded gaps. Habitats that are especially wanted include: those in the uplands above 600 m, e.g. areas of late snow-lie; rocky streams and lakesides; basic flushes and fens; springs; steep earth banks; plantation tracks; arable land; epiphytes on the boughs of Elder, Willow and Hazel (use narrow quadrat); masonry, roofs and tarmac.

There is a weekend meeting for BRECOG sampling to be held in the Mendip Hills, North Somerset, 13-15 March 2015 (email me for a programme) and there will be a BRECOG excursion from Preston Montford during the BBS Autumn Meeting. My wife Joyce and I have made plans to undertake BRECOG recording in Norfolk, Lochinver (N.W. Scotland), Harris (Outer Hebrides) and Eigg (BBS Summer Meeting) this year, and, following on from the Autumn Meeting, probably also in Mid Wales.

### **Update on Physiology Work**

Despite being heavily involved producing a local flora over the winter, I have managed to run a further 17 common taxa through the 'Light Curve' and 'Desiccation' experimental protocols that form an important adjunct to this project. We now have light curves for 181 species and desiccation profiles for 162 taxa. The main difficulties now are (1) matching the physiology list to the ever-changing field list of common species and (2) obtaining material of plants that are signalled to be common but do not grow anywhere near me!

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