



Weissia multcapsularis: a surprising discovery

The globally rare *Weissia multcapsularis* was historically known from arable fields in Cheshire, Cornwall and Sussex, and its apparent loss from this habitat has been blamed on modern intensification

of farmland. On 27 February 2018, it was therefore surprising to discover a large population of the moss in a winter-stubble field at Rosteague, East Cornwall. After 1 hr, 23 GPS waypoints for *W. multcapsularis* had been collected in the field; a longer search would no doubt have recorded many more. The moss was frequent amongst a community of bryophytes similar to the *Dicranella staphylina*–*Riccia glauca* arable assemblage, which is widespread on acidic soils in Britain. Until about 2010, the field was managed as grass ley for grazing and silage. Since then, it has been managed as intensive autumn-sown arable, on an oats/wheat rotation, the oats acting as a break crop. The rainy weather of autumn/winter 2017 meant ground conditions were too wet for the usual autumn-sown crop and the field was left as winter-stubble, resulting in the remarkable and rapid emergence of a large population of *W. multcapsularis*. By February 2019, the field was again under an autumn-sown crop and no mosses of any species were evident. The fact that *W. multcapsularis* can survive in a field managed under a modern agricultural regime, with high inputs of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, is welcome news and suggests that targeted searches of similar arable fields elsewhere in Britain may be fruitful. A paper will appear in the June issue of *Journal of Bryology* that clarifies the taxonomy and identification of this species.

Des Callaghan, Bryophyte Surveys Ltd, 65 Belle Vue Rd, Stroud, Gloucestershire
des.callaghan@bryophytesurveys.co.uk
Beth Tonkin, Natural England, Polwhele, Truro, Cornwall

