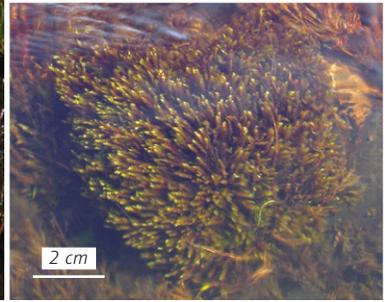
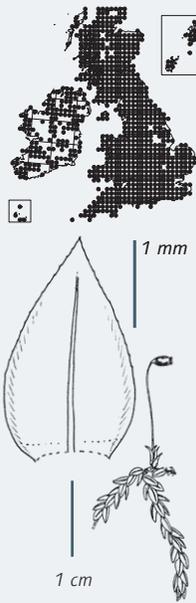


*Platyhypnidium riparioides**Rhynchostegium riparioides*

Long-beaked Water Feather-moss

Key 327, 349

**Identification**

P. riparioides occurs in or near water and varies considerably depending on the conditions. In clean water, it may form large patches of long, sparingly branched shoots (to 10 cm or more), the older parts of the stems often becoming denuded. At other times, especially in small and polluted streams, it may occur only as small, scruffy shoots. Important characters are the rather large leaves (1.5–2.5 mm long), broadly egg-shaped, narrowed at the base, broadly pointed at the tip, and standing out from the stem when moist and dry. They have a long, single nerve and finely but distinctly toothed margins. The shoot tip of *P. riparioides* tends to look broad and flattened, which is not the case in related species. Capsules (2 mm long) are often present and these are especially useful for confirming scrappy forms of the species. The lid has a beak about 2 mm long, and the seta is smooth.

Similar species

In upland streams *P. riparioides* can be confused with *P. alopecuroides* (p. 759), but well-grown *P. alopecuroides* has concave leaves which are erect or appressed and overlapping, and do not stand out much from the stem. Scrappy forms may resemble *Brachythecium rutabulum* (p. 746), *B. rivulare* (p. 748) and *B. plumosum* (p. 751). When capsules are present, the beaked lid and smooth seta distinguish *P. riparioides*. Useful pointers in non-fertile plants are the more crowded leaves and branches of the *Brachythecium* species, and the leaf tip is usually more finely drawn out than in *P. riparioides*.

Habitat

P. riparioides grows submerged or semi-submerged for at least part of the year on stones, tree roots and wood by lowland streams and rivers, but also in upland streams where the substrate is not too acidic. It grows best in and by running water, but may occur sparsely in ditches and by canals, ponds, drains and similar places.