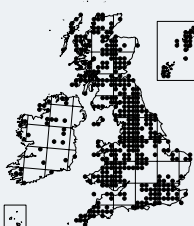


Warnstorfia fluitans

Drepanocladus fluitans

Floating Hook-moss

Key 321



Identification This lax, straggling, dingy, dark green pleurocarp lacks red tones. Its leaves are always curved, but seldom very strongly so. This and its long, irregular branches give *W. fluitans* a distinctive appearance. Rhizoids are sometimes produced on the leaf tip. Shoots may be many centimetres long, and leaves are 3–5.5 mm long. Curved, cylindrical capsules occasionally form, borne on a seta about 4–8 cm long.

Similar species Typical plants of *W. exannulata* (p. 716) look strikingly different thanks to their orange or red colours, more strongly curved leaves, shorter, more regular branches and more upright growth form. However, *W. fluitans* and *W. exannulata* both vary in appearance and can be very hard to distinguish. The large cells in the basal angles of the leaves of *W. exannulata*, visible through a hand lens when leaves are stripped from the stem and held between finger nails, are different from the small ones of *W. fluitans*, but this should be confirmed microscopically. Otherwise, habitat is the best pointer for distinguishing *W. fluitans* from *Drepanocladus aduncus* (p. 714), lax plants of which can look identical in the field – *D. aduncus* grows in nutrient-rich, neutral or base-rich conditions. If rhizoids are present on the leaf tip, a specimen cannot be *D. aduncus*.

Habitat Typical of nutrient-poor, base-poor, still water, especially pools fed by rainwater in the uplands. It may grow among floating lawns of *Sphagnum cuspidatum* or as the sole bryophyte, usually in unshaded places or below a sparse cover of bottle sedge (*Carex rostrata*). Unlike *W. exannulata*, it is very rarely found in flushes.