

Overview of snowbed bryophyte ‘handbook’

This ‘handbook’ provides an introduction to one of the most interesting, and certainly the most beautiful, plant communities in Britain, and one that is dominated by bryophytes. This vegetation only occurs on the highest of the Scottish mountains so to see it in the flesh involves quite a bit of effort but, really, that just adds to the attraction. The bryophytes here need snow cover for much of the year, the cover rarely melting before the end of July and with some snow often persisting much longer, sometimes until the next snows arrive, so you must time your visit accordingly. This guide consists of an account of the various bryophyte-dominated snowbed communities and also the species which have all or most of their UK sites within these communities. There is also a short account of the conservation problems for these special places and of the attempts being made to monitor any changes.

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Introduction

Introduction to bryophyte-dominated snowbeds

The Scottish snowbed monitoring network

Community descriptions

Marsupella brevissima – Anthelia juratzkana snowbed

Polytrichum sexangulare - Kiaeria starkei snowbed

Pohlia ludwigii snowbed

Carex bigelowii – Polytrichum alpinum sedge heath

Deschampsia cespitosa – Galium saxatile snowbed

Cryptogramma crispa – Athyrium distentifolium snowbed

Pohlia wahlenbergii var glacialis spring

Other spring and flush communities in areas of late snow lie

Species descriptions

Andreaea blyttii

Andreaea frigida

Andreaea nivalis

Andreaea sinuosa

Cephalozia albescens

Cephalozia ambigua

Conostomum tetragonum
Gymnomitrium brevissimum
Kiaeria falcata
Kiaeria glacialis
Kiaeria starkei
Marsupella apiculata
Marsupella arctica
Marsupella boeckii
Marsupella condensata
Marsupella sparsifolia
Moerckia blyttii
Nardia breidlerii
Platyhypnum molle
Pohlia ludwigii
Polytrichastrum sexangulare
Scapania paludosa
Schistochilopsis opacifolia
Sciuro-hypnum glaciale
Sciuro-hypnum starkei