

# Species Factsheet

the  
species  
recovery  
trust

*Cheilothela chloropus*



**Red List Status:**  
Vulnerable

**Threat of extinction:**  
High

**Main threats:**  
Poor reproductive  
ability, restricted  
range, habitat  
degradation,  
decrease in rabbit  
numbers



Rabbit Moss

**Description:** A dull yellowish to brownish-green turf-forming arccarp moss, up to 10mm tall, with rigid, spiky leaves and a thickened beak on the capsule lid.

**Lifecycle:** Dioecious. Sporophytes are unknown in Britain and rare throughout its range. It acts as a colonist and spreads locally via clonal reproduction.

**Habitat:** Predominately found in coastal habitats, on short, rabbit-grazed, herb-rich grassland, or on thin soils amongst rocks on south-facing limestone hills and sea-cliffs. Also found on a dune slack in one location.

**Distribution:** Found in only two vice-counties (North Somerset and South Devon) and on the edge of its range in the UK. Frequent in the Mediterranean and along the Atlantic seaboard. Also recorded in North Africa, South Africa and Macaronesia.

**Status:** Classified as Vulnerable in the UK, which means it is facing high risk of extinction.

**Reasons for decline:** The principal threat is habitat degradation through scrub encroachment and shading, which is linked to a decrease in rabbit numbers. Its reproductive ability is likely to be poor, as sporophytes are unknown in Britain, probably because conditions are sub-optimal, here on the edge of its range.

**What we are doing:**

- Establishing a monitoring network across all sites  
Carrying out habitat restoration work across the network of sites to enlarge the areas where Rabbit Moss can grow.

**What you can do:**

- Become a species supporter  
and help fund the project.

