

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.

