

Flora Protection Order - bryophytes

Mastigophora woodsii

Status: Near Threatened; listed on the Flora Protection Order

Location: Benllettery, Co. Galway

Species Records

Taxon	Vice County number	Taxon Site	Locality / habitat	Grid Reference	Date	Recorder	Protected site
<i>Mastigophora woodsii</i>	16	09		L74	1968.	Perry, A.R.	Indeterminate

It is debatable whether this record is worth designating as a taxon site, but it has been retained because this is the only record from this hectad. The most likely locality is Benllettery. The Discovery map below has not been annotated.

Location (1:50,000 Discovery map)



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Location (6" map)

No map available.

Field Data Sheet

None available. Not refound by Rory Hodd during targeted FPO survey in 2015.

Aerial photograph

No aerial photograph available.

Site photographs

None available.

Management & Conservation

General

- Overstocking in the uplands
- Afforestation
- Burning
- Climate change?

Potential site-specific threats/issues

- *M. woodsii* needs to be refound in this hectad

Excerpt from:

Lockhart, N., Hodgetts, N. & Holyoak, D. (2012). *Rare and Threatened Bryophytes of Ireland*. Belfast: National Museums Northern Ireland Publication No. 028.

RARE AND THREATENED BRYOPHYTES OF IRELAND

Mastigophora woodsii (Hook.) Nees

Wood's Whipwort

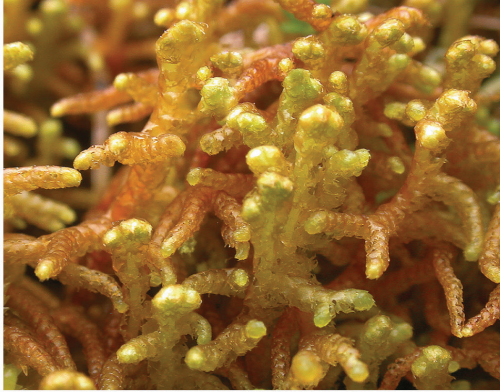
syn. *Jungermannia woodsii* Hook.

Status in Ireland: Near Threatened; **Status in Europe:** Rare

Identification

This is an easily recognised leafy liverwort that forms loose mats with other bryophytes or quite large cushions. It is medium-sized to large, with yellowish-brown, well-branched shoots up to c. 12 cm long and 1.5 mm wide.

The branches tend to become narrow and attenuate at the apices. The leaves are imbricate and essentially bilobed, but the margins are ornamented with long teeth and cilia, so the lobes are difficult to discern. The underleaves are similar to, and only a little smaller than, the lateral leaves.



M. woodsii could be mistaken for *Ptilidium* spp., but *Ptilidium* has even more abundantly ciliate leaves and non-attenuate branches. *Trichocolea* has much more finely divided leaves and a characteristic pale green colour.

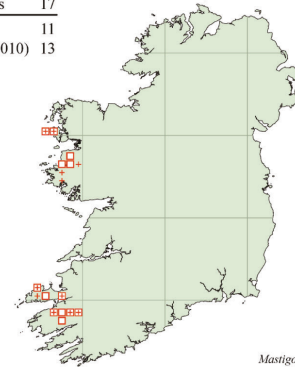
Distribution in Ireland

Confined in Ireland to the Atlantic fringe, the distribution of *M. woodsii* is centred on Kerry, with a few populations further north in Galway and Mayo. There are recent records from 17 localities in three vice-counties: S. Kerry (Brandon Mountain, 1829–2009; Connor Pass, 2006–2009; Derrymore Lough, 1950, 2006; Coomacullen Lake, 2006; Ballaghbeama Gap, 1983; Coomloughra, 2007; Coom Callee, 1983; Cloghernooosh, 1972; Lough Googh, 1972–2009; Lough Cummeenoughter, 1983–2009; Lough Cummeenapeasta, 1983); N. Kerry (Coumbrack Lake, 2009; Mangerton Mountain, 1885–2009) and W. Mayo (Croaghaun, 1987; Slievemore, 1951–1999; Mweelrea, 1970–2010; W. of Lough Bawn, Sheeffry Hills, 2010), with a small number of older records from other sites. It may be extinct in W. Galway, having been seen on Benbaun (1957) and Maumtrasna (1963), but not refound, in spite of searching. Ratcliffe (1968) classifies *M. woodsii* as a Northern Atlantic species.

Ecology and biology

M. woodsii is one of the group of Northern Atlantic hepatic mat species, confined to N.- and NE-facing slopes in the hills in hyperoceanic areas. It often grows under open cover of heather and in boulder scree, and is normally associated with other oceanic bryophytes such as *Bazzania pearsonii*, *B. tricrenata*, *Breutelia chrysocoma*, *Herbertus aduncus* subsp. *hutchinsiae*, *Mylia taylorii*,

Number of Hectads	17
+ Old (pre-1970)	11
□ Recent (1970–2010)	13



Mastigophora woodsii

Scapania gracilis and *S. ornithopodioides*, as well as common species such as *Diplophyllum albicans*, *Lophozia ventricosa* and *Racomitrium lanuginosum*. Its range is subalpine and alpine, recorded at altitudes of 400–940 m in Ireland.

Inflorescences, sporophytes and gemmae are not known to occur, so presumably this species spreads vegetatively by fragmentation.

World distribution

In Europe, it is known only from Ireland, the Faeroe Islands and Scotland, where it is confined to the western highlands (*Nationally Scarce* in Britain). Its European distribution pattern is considered to be Oceanic Boreal-montane. Elsewhere, this is a disjunct species occurring in the Himalaya, Taiwan and the Pacific coast of north-western N. America (Queen Charlotte Islands and Pitt Island). There is also a report from Australasia (Henygren *et al.* 2006). Schofield (FNA 2007) considers *M. woodsii* to be relictual in its whole range, but there is evidence now that such disjunct distributions arose from long-distance dispersal rather than representing very ancient relict populations.

Threats

Overstocking in the uplands, afforestation and burning are the main threats. It appears that *M. woodsii* may have disappeared from W. Galway, where its habitat has been hit particularly hard by overstocking with sheep in Connemara.

Conservation

This is a widely disjunct species and the Irish populations are of European and global significance. Populations at

RARE AND THREATENED BRYOPHYTES OF IRELAND

the more important sites should be monitored and reinstatement of a less intensive grazing regime at key sites should be a priority.

Protected sites with recent records: Croaghaun/Slievemore SAC; Killarney National Park,

Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC; Mount Brandon SAC; Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC; Slieve Mish Mountains SAC;
Unprotected sites with recent records: none.