



### RARE AND THREATENED BRYOPHYTES OF IRELAND

Neil Lockhart,  
Nick Hodgetts & David  
Holyoak

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This book provides Ireland with a much needed bryophyte Red List. However, it goes much further than this. The nine chapters also cover Irish bryophyte habitats, bryophyte recording in Ireland (past and present) and Important Bryophyte Areas (IBrAs). It is the product of a collaborative project between the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in the Republic of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. The project was co-ordinated by Neil Lockhart of the NPWS, with co-authors and surveyors Nick Hodgetts and David Holyoak.

Although the Red List only occupies 35 pages or so, it is underpinned by over 10 years of field work, and revision of herbarium material and historic records by David and Nick. From 1999 to 2010, they undertook annual field surveys of 325 targeted bryophyte taxa. Two-thirds of the survey time was spent revisiting historic sites; the remainder to explore new, potential localities for the target taxa. These records were supplemented by records from BBS summer meetings, visiting BBS members (especially Sam Bosanquet and Chris Preston) and the newly formed BBS Dublin regional group.

For bryologists who do not record or work in Ireland, the appeal of the book is likely to be the 400 or so pages of species accounts. 251 taxa, including all rare and threatened bryophytes on the Red List, are given a full account. In addition there are short accounts for 146 taxa. As Ireland supports approximately 48% of Europe's bryoflora, the species accounts should interest bryologists from a wide geographical area. Those species with a full account have useful identification notes prepared by Nick and David, an Irish distribution map and text on the species' European distribution, ecology and biology. Best of all is the accompanying close-up photos for all 397 species, many of which were specially taken by the photographer Robert Thompson, with others donated by a range of European bryologists. It is worth buying the book for the photos alone as many of these rare taxa are not covered in standard field guides and other publications.

The book is beautifully produced, with over 500 photos (including some stunning, specially commissioned, aerial photography). The authors write clearly and scientifically, with statements backed up by references. At just under 3.5 kg it is a coffee table book. Perhaps in the future it would be possible to publish some sections of the books (such as the species accounts and IBrAs) as separate pocket-sized guides.

As with all books of this nature, they are slightly out of date before they have left the printers; recent recording in Ireland has added several species to the lists (both in the Republic and Northern Ireland) and many new records of rare and threatened taxa. However, this is all good news and I am sure that the book will raise the profile of bryophytes in Ireland and inspire keen resident bryologists to keep adding new records.

**Dr Joanne Denyer**

[e joanne@denyerecology.com](mailto:joanne@denyerecology.com)