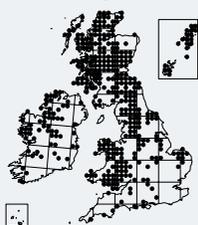


# *Palustriella falcata*

*Cratoneuron commutatum* var. *falcatum*

Claw-leaved Hook-moss

Key 313, 319



**Identification** *P. falcata* is very closely related to *P. commutata*, but without neatly pinnate branching. The branches of *P. falcata* are fewer and less regular, and the shoots (which typically grow to about 3 cm long) do not have a distinct feather-like shape. Generally the difference in width between the main stems and the branches is much less marked in *P. falcata*. The stem leaves are about 2.5 mm long, tend to taper more evenly from base to tip than in *P. commutata* and are therefore more like the branch leaves, though larger. Branch leaves are about 1.75 mm long. As in *P. commutata*, the stem leaves are pleated and have a very stout nerve. However, the pleats are not always very distinct in the field, especially when the leaves overlap and the base is hidden. Capsules are rare.

**Similar species** Like *P. commutata* (p. 698), *P. falcata* resembles other mosses with curved leaves that occur in mires, and is particularly likely to be confused with *Scorpidium revolvens* (p. 723), *S. cossonii* (p. 722) and *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (p. 724), especially as the latter also has pleated leaves (strongly so towards the base). Careful observation with a hand lens should reveal the strong nerve of *P. falcata*. *P. falcata* may be dark green or brown, but never develops the reddish colours often found in *Scorpidium* and (at the leaf base) in *Hamatocaulis*. *Cratoneuron filicinum* (p. 701) is smaller and more slender than *P. falcata* (the shoots mostly 1–2 cm long), the fronds are normally regularly pinnate, and the branch leaves are straight or only moderately curved. It is further distinguished by the absence of pleats on the leaves.

**Habitat** *P. falcata* is characteristic of base-rich flushes, mires and seepages in the open, but may occur in slightly less calcareous habitats than *P. commutata*. It occurs in a narrower range of habitats than *P. commutata*, and does not occur on wet cliffs or in wet woodland.