

## Identification and survey guidance

**Aims of the survey:** To learn about the distribution of Marsh Clubmoss populations across the New Forest.

- **Equipment:** It's helpful to take a camera to take confirmatory photos of Marsh Clubmoss.
- **Survey timing:** Marsh Clubmoss is an evergreen fir-like clubmoss, with spore producing strobili (see below) which are at their peak from October to November.
- **Where to look:** Marsh Clubmoss typically grows within wet heaths on bare peat - found at the edges of trackways, where surface water runnels expose bare ground, and on the edges of sphagnum pools. This species particularly likes eroded, vertical faces. In the New Forest, Marsh Clubmoss is often found where a track meets the edge of a bog (tracks are often too dry and bogs too wet, so this meeting point creates ideal conditions).
- **Likely habitats:** Typical plant associates to look out for include White-beaked Sedge *Rhynchospora alba*, Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*, Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Intermediate-leaved sundew *Drosera intermedia*, Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, Bulbous Rush *Juncus bulbosus*, Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea* and Sphagnum mosses. Marsh Clubmoss has an interesting relationship with *Zygodonium ericetorum*, a purple alga which forms a crusty cover over bare, peaty soil maintaining a moist environment underneath, which supports species like Marsh Clubmoss and sundews – look out for purple tinted areas of bare peat.
- **Confusable species:** Marsh Clubmoss may appear similar in appearance to Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), which is also found in wet heath habitat; the two appear particularly similar when Cross-leaved Heath has been flattened to the ground, giving it the same creeping appearance as Marsh Clubmoss. Colour is often the easiest distinction between the two species when Cross-leaved Heath is not in flower.
- **Check other likely habitats in the surrounds:** Finding out if Marsh Clubmoss occurs in other likely habitats within the New Forest helps us to understand the overall species distribution and population size, which may be important for its survival. After you have completed a survey, you may visit other areas within the New Forest to see if Marsh Clubmoss is present elsewhere. Please submit any records.
- **Recording absence:** If Marsh Clubmoss is **not found**, please record this and submit the record via the 'Still searching' form.
- **Recording presence:** If Marsh Clubmoss is **found**, please record this and submit the record via the 'Species found' form. There is no need to count individual plants for this survey.

**Once completed, enter your results online:** <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/our-work/conservation-and-practical-delivery/catchment-partnerships/new-forest-catchment-partnership/new-forest-species-survey/>

**What it looks like:** Marsh Clubmoss is a distinctive evergreen clubmoss. The plant grows along the ground (up to 20cm) in a characteristic v-shape (a). Plants will grow and divide, and it is common to find v-shaped plants in the process of sub-division, or divided plants with only half of the v developed. If there is no visible connection between stems, count them as separate plants. The strobili (b) form at the junction of the v and may be up to 10cm high.



**Marsh Clubmoss: (a) A single plant with characteristic v-shape stems and additional stem in the process of subdivision; (b) Marsh Clubmoss with strobili and (c) Marsh Clubmoss habitat.**

