

Vole Ears

Erioderma mollissimum

STATUS	Endangered 	Not Listed 
Endangered 	Endangered 	Not Listed 

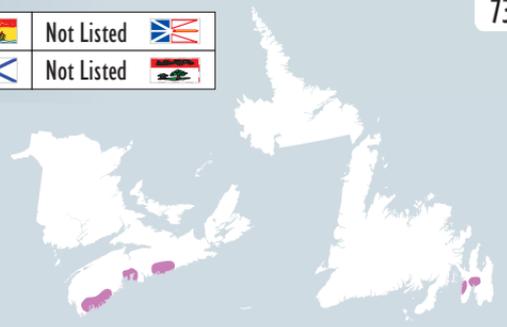


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Species Description

Vole Ears is a large, foliose (leaf-like) cyanolichen that is made up of loosely attached lobes (each up to 1 cm wide) that are a lighter grey-brown when dry, and darker grey-green when wet. Light bluish, granular soredia (asexual reproductive structures) occur along the lobe margins and in small areas on the upper surface, which make it look lightly frosted. The upper surface is covered in fine hairs. The lower surface is a light whitish-brown and the lower outer margins are covered with fine brown brushes (rhizohyphae). Vole Ears can reach diameters of up to 12 cm. Apothecia (sexual reproductive structures) are very rare.

Known to occur in 20 locations along the Atlantic Coast of NS and 4 locations on the Avalon Peninsula in NL.



Habitat

Vole Ears lichen is found in foggy, humid, cool, mature coniferous or mixed forest coastal habitats that receive high amounts of rainfall. It has been observed growing on Balsam Fir, Red Maple and Yellow Birch, often in forests with numerous deadwood trees. It is found on trees in depressions that are poorly drained, and the surrounding vegetation is typically dominated by Sphagnum moss and Cinnamon Fern. Like all cyanolichens, it requires excellent air quality, with minimal air pollution and acid rain.



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Vole Ears occurs in foggy Balsam Fir dominated habitats, within 30 km of the Atlantic Coast.

Interesting Points

- Vole Ears lichen also occurs (among many other places) in Brazil, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic in tropical rainforest habitats! Cyanolichens as a group typically are tropical or subtropical species.
- Over 80% of the sites known to have Vole Ears in the 1980s (including a few in NB), no longer contain this species.



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Dry



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Wet

Similar Species

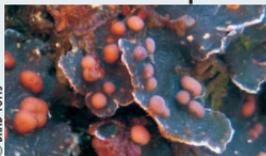
Vole Ears lichen looks most similar to Boreal Felt Lichen (page 75). The biggest difference between these two species is they have different reproductive structures. Boreal Felt Lichen has bright red apothecia on the surface whereas Vole Ear lichen has bluish granular soredia that are concentrated along the edges.

Vole Ears soredia



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Boreal Felt Lichen apothecia



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Textured Lungwort

(*Lobaria scrobiculata*): pale grey-blue (dry) to rich blue-grey (wet); lobes 10-12 mm; no hairs.



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Threats to Survival

- Air pollution and acid rain (industrial developments: smelting, oil refineries, etc).
- Declines in the frequency of fog in coastal forests.
- Forestry operations (loss of habitat and ecosystem function in mature forests).
- Coastal development (loss of coastal forest habitat, road construction).
- Gastropod grazing (native and alien slug species).



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How You Can Help

Learn how to recognize rare cyanolichens and report sightings. Be an advocate of sustainable forestry practices. Woodlot owners can maintain old growth forests on their properties. Promote green technologies that reduce air pollution.



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Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

Contact: NS Environment (902) 424-3600, or NL DEC Wildlife Division (709) 637-2026

Info: www.sararegistry.gc.ca

Sighting Reports: 1-866-727-3447 or www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings