

Eriophorum gracile W.D.J. Koch ex Roth

Slender Cottongrass

Native

Near Threatened

Schedule 8

Nationally Rare

VC5 Extinct; VC6 Absent

A creeping rhizomatous perennial found in extremely wet neutral, acidic or slightly calcareous bogs and mires. In Somerset, only ever known from one site in VC5. Found in 1915 by E.S. Marshall in a very wet swamp on Britty Common, growing quite close to the other three species of *Eriophorum* at an altitude of nearly 275m. In 1924 it was reported to be in fine condition in the original spot, when visited by Lady Davy, T.J. Foggitt and W.D. Miller; however it has not been seen since. Roe (1981) attributed the loss of this species in Somerset to drainage and afforestation, factors which have caused its demise elsewhere too. *Eriophorum gracile* is now restricted to one site in Surrey, two in Hampshire, a few in Wales and several in Ireland.