

***Orobanche purpurea* Jacq.**

Yarrow Broomrape

Error

Vulnerable

Nationally Scarce

VC5 Error; VC6 Absent

Annual or short-lived perennial parasitic on *Achillea millefolium*, found in dry grassland on somewhat basic soils, particularly near the sea. Recorded once in Somerset (VC5) near the Bell Inn at Merridge on the Quantocks, by Rev. W. Tuckwell in 1869. Although Murray (1896) accepted this record, Miller (1933) wrote "I have no doubt whatever that the plant was *O. minor*, which frequently assumes a striking blue colour. It is most unlikely that the Purple Broomrape was ever a Somerset plant." Others did not dismiss the record so readily: Roe (1981) included it as an extinct species in Somerset, as did Perring & Farrell (1983) and Green *et al.* (1997). Rumsey & Jury (1991), however, stated that "The Somerset record ... is, we believe, incorrect"; it is not mapped in Preston *et al.* (2002). Nationally this species has declined, the losses attributed to natural or human erosion and changes in land use (Rumsey & Jury, 1991), although in recent years, loss of this species at some sites has been balanced to an extent by appearance or reappearance at others (Foley in Preston *et al.*, 2002).