

## *Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull

## Heather / Ling

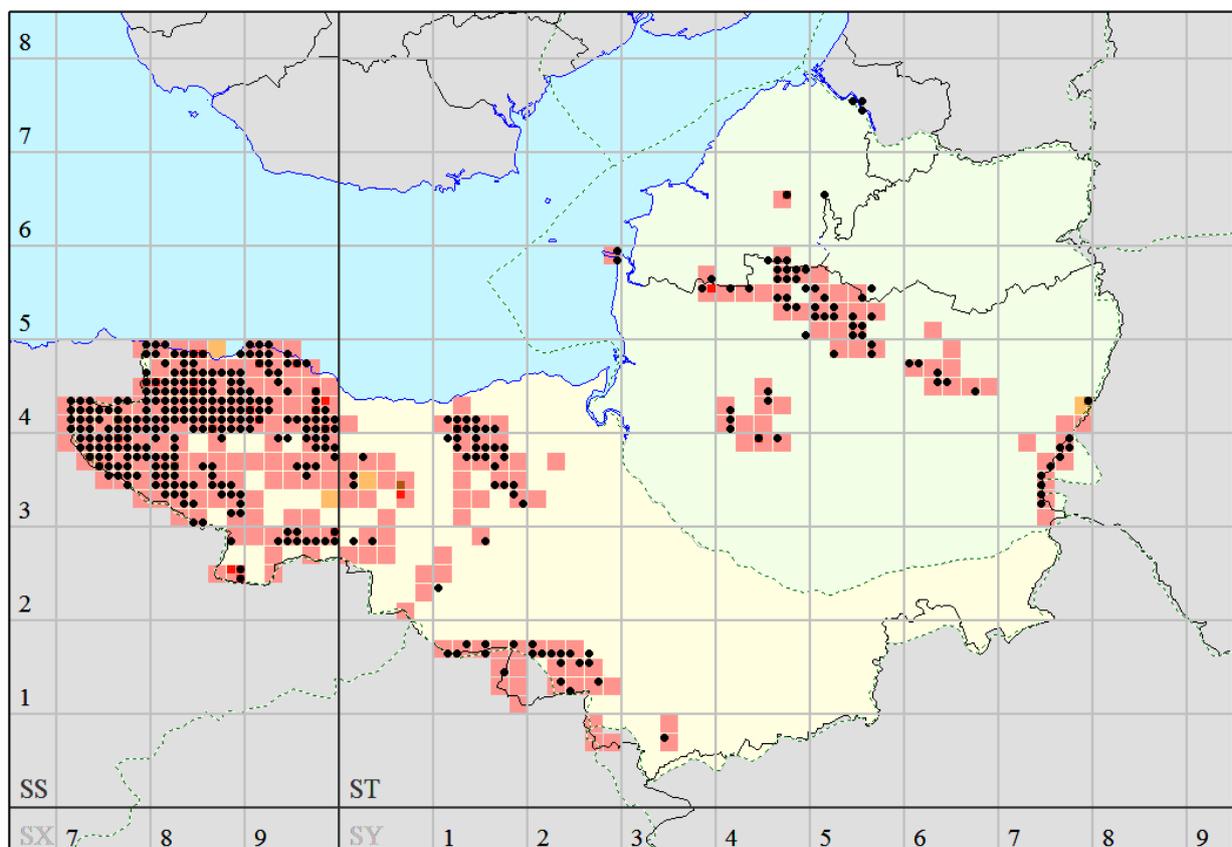
Native

GB: Least Concern

England: Near Threatened

VC5 Not Scarce; VC6 Not Scarce

A low upright or decumbent shrub of heaths, moorland, woodlands and bogs on acid soils. In Somerset this species has a distribution restricted by availability of suitable edaphic conditions. In VC5 it is locally abundant on Exmoor and the Brendons, the Quantocks and the Blackdowns. Away from these areas, it persists in a small area of remnant heath in Breach Copse (ST343073), but has not been seen recently at Spaxton (ST231) or around Milverton (ST12C, ST12D) and there are few recent records for the Brendons; some of this apparent loss may be due to lack of recent recording, but there may be genuine losses at the edges of the range. In VC6 *Calluna vulgaris* is found on the Peat Moors, along the Lower Greensand ridge at the far east of the county and on limestone heath and outcrops of Devonian sandstones on the Mendips. North of the Mendips, there are populations on limestone heath at Goblin Combe and Felton Common, and it is found on Old Red Sandstone in Leigh Woods. There are no recent records from the Pennant Sandstone at Clutton and Hunstrete (Roe, 1981): at Clutton it grew along a disused railway line, now smothered by brambles. It may also be lost from the Chilcompton area (ST65F), on the north edge of the East Mendips. *Calluna vulgaris* had declined in England due to loss of habitat: this decline has occurred to some extent in Somerset.



Distribution of *Calluna vulgaris* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999 records; sepia squares are pre-1987 records