

Ranunculus flammula L.

Lesser Spearwort

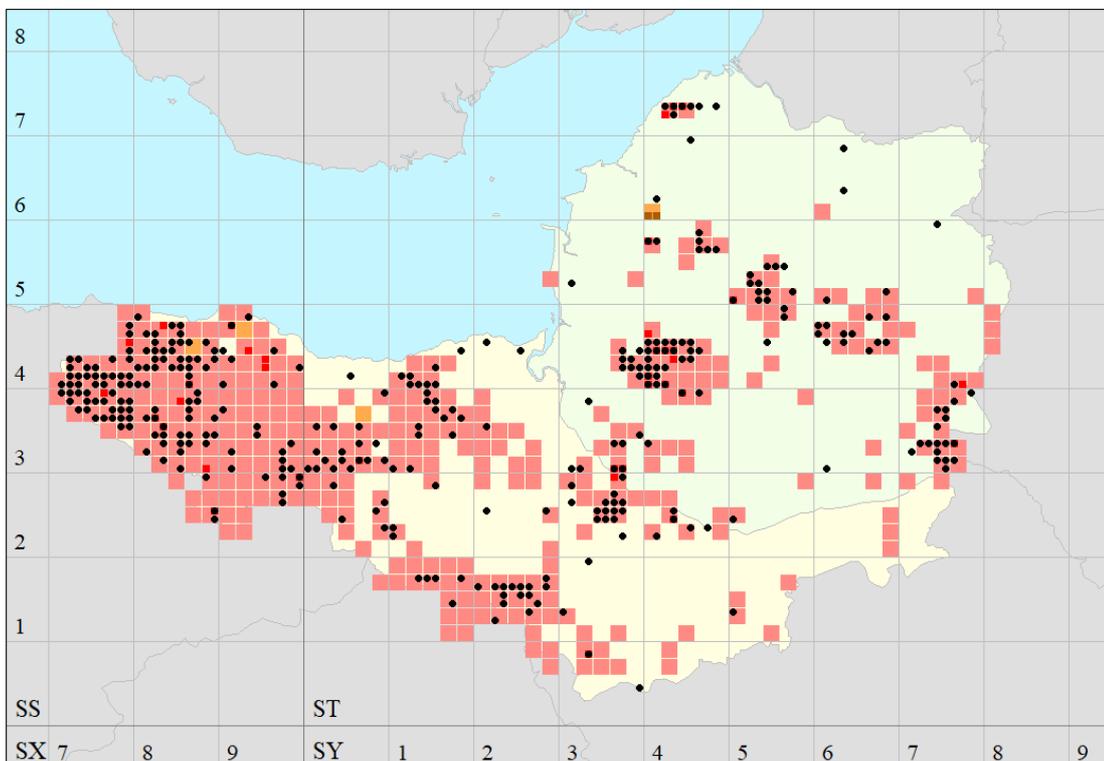
Native

GB: Least Concern

England: Vulnerable

VC5 Not Scarce; VC6 Not Scarce

A perennial herb of wet habitats, including flushes and springs, the shores of ponds and lakes, marshes, bogs, wet grassland and water meadows, usually found on neutral to acidic substrates. In Somerset this species has a distribution restricted by availability of suitable edaphic conditions. In VC5 it is common in flushes, bogs and stream-sides on Exmoor and the Brendons, the Quantocks and the Blackdowns, and in wet meadows on the Levels. There are scattered sites away from these areas, where suitable habitat occurs. In VC6 *Ranunculus flammula* is found in wet meadows and ditches on the Levels and in the Gordano Valley and the North Somerset Levels. On the Mendips it occurs in boggy fields and marshes on the more acidic soils over outcrops of Devonian Sandstones and it is not uncommon in the far east of the county along the Lower Greensand ridge, where it can be found in suitable wet habitats in boggy fields and woods. Away from these areas it is found at scattered sites, for example on the Coal Measures at Lord's Wood near Pensford (ST6360) and at Nailsea (ST4569). Preston *et al.* (2002) reported a decline in this species, particularly in southern England. It was assessed by Stroh *et al.* (2014) as Vulnerable because of a 32% decline in its area of occupancy. *Ranunculus flammula* appears to have declined slightly in Somerset, for example there are no recent records in the area north of Taunton; it is known to have been lost from a small marsh near Combe Hay, which has been overgrown by brambles and may have declined in other similar marginal sites away from the main areas of distribution.



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