

***Blysmus compressus* (L.) Panz. ex Link Flat-sedge**

Native

GB & England: Vulnerable

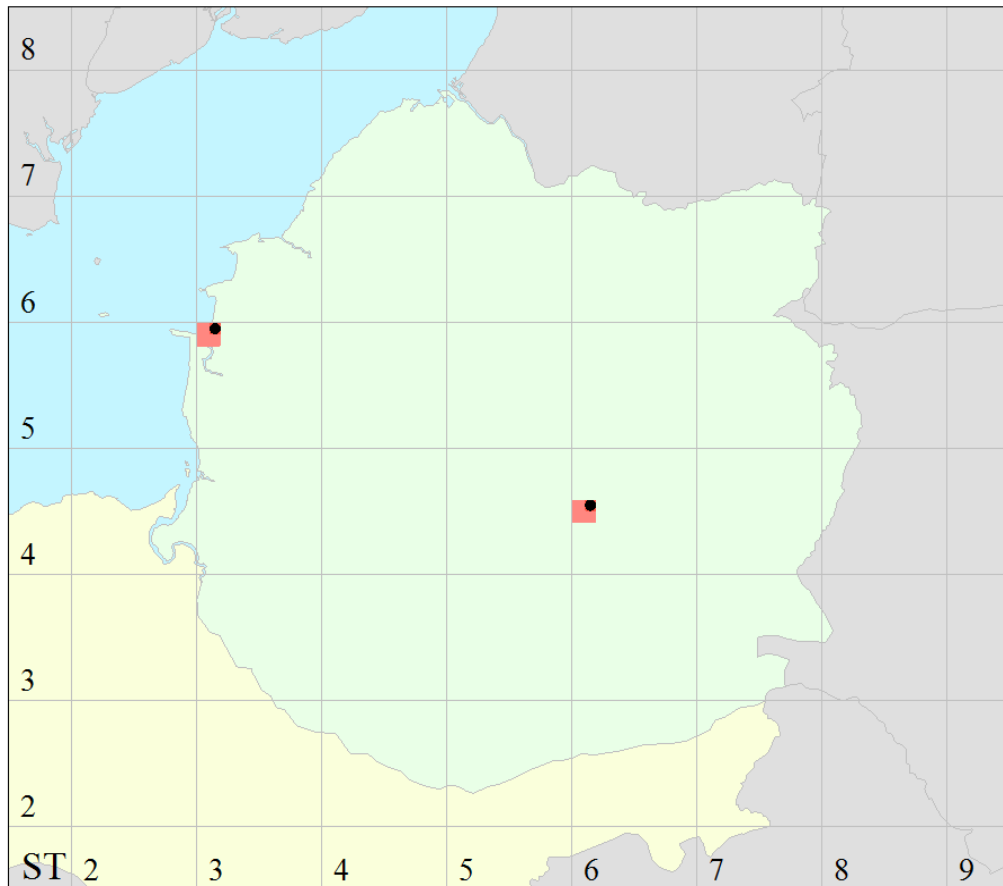
Section 41

VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

A rhizomatous perennial found in marshy, unimproved grassland. Always rare in Somerset and absent from VC5, this species has declined in VC6. Babington (1834) gave a single site, Claverton Wood, recorded by Dr. Davis. White (1912) considered later records for a "Bog between Hampton and the Quarry" (Babington, 1839) and "Wet ground below Hampton Rocks" (Murray, 1896) to be this same site and found it still plentiful in some seasons, tracing it for 200 yards along the hillside, which was boggy and full of trickling springs. He noted that it had spread to drier ground than might be thought suitable for this species. Also near Bath, it was recorded by L. Blomefield in wet places on Bannerdown (Murray, 1896), but there have been no records around Bath in the last century. At the coast, this species was found by Mrs Fry in good quantity in 1888 by a pond among the sandhills near Burnham, but the site was reported by White (1912) to be enclosed. White (1912) also knew this species on some boggy ground three miles west of the Clifton Suspension Bridge, but it has not been recorded there again. A record by St Brody "in muddy sand near Uphill" was reported by White (1912) to be unconfirmed. In 1916, however, a record was made for a sandy field southwest of the railway station at Weston-super-Mare, which may have been St Brody's site; in 1987 *Blysmus compressus* was found on damp ground beside a pond on the golf course at Weston-super-Mare, which is most likely to have been the site known to St Brody. It persists here, in an area of short rough grassland beside the footpath which crosses the golf course. The only other site in Somerset is at Windsor Hill Marsh, where this species was discovered in 1946 by J.P.M. Brenan and grows in very small quantity in one part of the marsh. The site was notified as an SSSI in 1983: it is threatened by scrub encroachment. In Britain this species has declined considerably throughout its range. In Somerset, it is at the southwest limit of its distribution, with the exception of a few sites in Cornwall.

VC6

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|--------------------|------|------------|------|------------|---|
| Windsor Hill Marsh | SSSI | ST61864538 | 2008 | HJC, EJMCD | 15 flowering spikes in localised patch in marsh |
| Weston-super-Mare | | ST31465914 | 2008 | HJC, RDR | Co-dominant in rough of golf course, by pond |
| Weston-super-Mare | | ST31475915 | 2008 | HJC, RDR | Co-dominant in rough of golf course, by pond |
| Weston-super-Mare | | ST31475916 | 2008 | HJC, RDR | Co-dominant in rough of golf course, by pond |



Distribution of *Blysmus compressus* in North Somerset (VC6) mapped using MapMate.
(Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999)



Blysmus compressus at Windsor Hill Marsh (2007). Photo: FJR