

Hottonia palustris L.

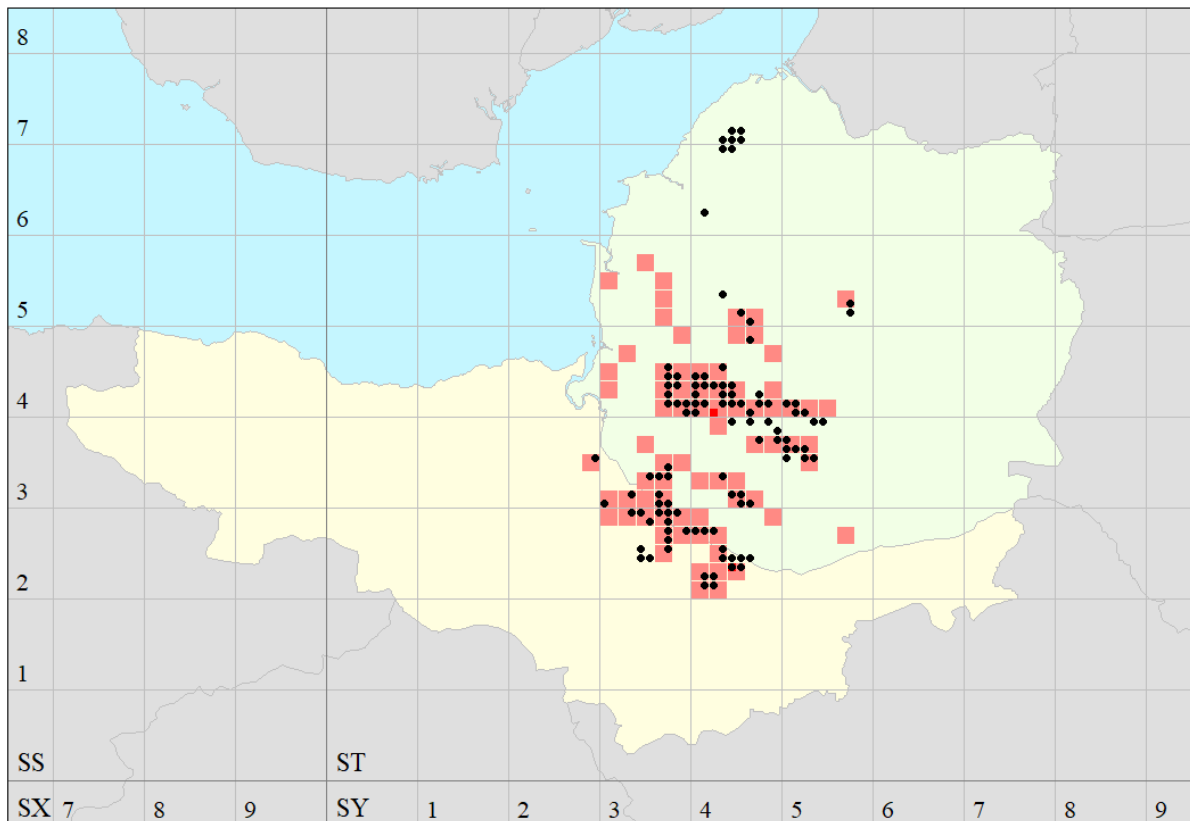
Water-violet

Native

GB & England: Vulnerable

VC5 Not Scarce; VC6 Not Scarce

A stoloniferous perennial herb of base-rich clear water in ditches, rhynes and shallow ponds. In Somerset described by Murray (1896) as common in ditches in the marsh-lands and by Roe (1981) as locally plentiful on the Levels but surprisingly rare on the North Somerset Levels, where he only had a recent record for Nailsea Moor. By the end of the twentieth century this species, although still locally common on the Levels, was considered to be declining in Somerset (Green *et al.*, 1997). In VC5 only ever recorded from the Levels, where it is found for example on North Moor, West Sedgemoor, West Moor and Wet Moor, all of which are SSSIs. In VC6 this species also has its stronghold on the Levels, particularly in the Brue Valley, north of the Poldens, which includes Catcott, Edington and Chilton Moors SSSI, Tealham and Tadham Moors SSSI and moors around Glastonbury. Further north, it has been found recently in a rhyne near Cheddar Reservoir, at Tickenham, Nailsea and Kenn Moors SSSI in the North Somerset Levels, and on Puxton Moor SSSI, where Roe (1981) noted that it had last been seen in 1956. Away from the Levels, this species has been known since 1974 by a pond in Eaker Hill Wood, where it was first recorded by Joan Appleyard. In the west of VC6, there have been no recent records from ditches towards the coast; here the ditches are often eutrophied and overgrown. *Hottonia palustris* has declined in England, particularly in the Southeast, due to eutrophication, drainage and changes in ditch management. The decline has been less noticeable in Somerset, although it appears to have been lost from sites at the edge of its distribution, particularly in the west.



Distribution of *Hottonia palustris* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate.
Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999 records