

Persicaria minor (Huds.) Opiz

Small Water-pepper

Native

GB: Vulnerable

England: Least Concern

VC5 Rare; VC6 Rare

A branched decumbent annual found beside ditches, ponds and lakes, in damp pasture and other wet marshy places. Always rare in Somerset and believed extinct since 1960, but refound for the county in 2003. In VC5, first recorded at Stogumber, in 1938, by A.E. Ellis. Not seen again until 2003, when it was discovered by W. Bleeker and T.C.G. Rich beside a stream in the draw-down zone of Clatworthy Reservoir. In VC6, listed as abundant on Burtle Moor by Sole and recorded on the Turf moor by Clark (White, 1912), but not then seen on the peat moors until a few fine plants were found by J.W. White on the peat between Catcott and Shapwick Drove in 1895. Seen in another place on the peat moors by Mrs Sandwith in 1917 and at the west end of the peat moors in 1927, but not then recorded until 1960, when it was found by D. Munro-Smith on a drove on Meare Heath. In the east of the county, found once by Rev. E.F. Linton in August 1892 "In small quantity near Gasper Common on half-dried ground where there had been a water-cress bed" (Murray, 1896). Also found once at the Mineries near Priddy in 1917, by B.W. Tucker and in two spots by Mrs C.I. and N.Y. Sandwith, in 1920 and 1921, on the moors between Nailsea and Kenn. In 2010, fifty years after the last record for VC6, this species was found by Robert Cropper growing in a small recently excavated ditch (a grip) in a damp pasture field on Tealham Moor. *Persicaria minor* is widely scattered in Britain and Ireland and rather rare throughout its range, having declined nationally before 1962.

VC5

Clatworthy ST034304 2003 WB, TCGR By stream in draw-down zone of reservoir

VC6

Tealham Moor SSSI ST41434573 2010 HJC, SJP 6 plants in shallow ditch across meadow



Persicaria minor at Tealham Moor (2010). Photo: HJC