

## ***Valerianella rimosa* Bast.**

## **Broad-fruited Cornsalad**

Archaeophyte

GB & England: Endangered

Section 41

GB Scarce

VC5 Rare; VC6 Lost

An annual plant of arable fields, growing on many soil types including calcareous sandy loams, chalky loams and clays. This species was first recorded for VC5 by J. Sowerby at Hardington “only after crops” (Murray, 1896). It was found at Clatworthy in 1929 by G. Watts and at Nether Stowey in 1946 by W. Watson. All other VC5 records have been for Fivehead Arable Fields SSSI, now the only known site in Somerset. It was first seen in this area by W.D. Miller in 1914 and is still to be found in each of the three fields of the reserve. In 2019 a total of 3036 plants were recorded here in a survey for Plantlife’s Colour in the Margins project. In VC6 this species has been recorded from several sites but is now considered extinct. It was found sparingly in a field above the church at Barton St David in 1883 (Murray, 1896); there was an undated specimen in Herb. Stephens from Eastwood, Brislington (White, 1883); it was recorded in considerable abundance by D. Fry in an arable field between Keynsham and Stockwood in 1886, collected as a garden weed in Bath in 1893, specimen in Herb. Dunn (White, 1912) and found at Avonside, Bath in 1918 by T.H. Green (White, 1927). In 1931 this species was found by T.J. Foggitt at Burnham-on-Sea; it was re-found there in 1936 by A. Miller, D.M. Heath and J.C. Davy but there have been no further records from that site. It was recorded at Charlton Mackrell in 1938 by F.K. Makins and was re-found in 1978 by R.G.B. Roe, who recorded only a few plants in a rough stony field bordering a quarry (ST533291). He recorded one plant in 1986 at ST534291, but there have been no subsequent records, despite searches. In 1979 Edward Pratt recorded this species at Moat House Farm, Wraxall (ST486731), but it has not been seen there again. *Valerianella rimosa* has declined dramatically due to susceptibility to herbicides and the increased use of nitrogen fertilisers: it is a poor competitor with modern cereal crop varieties. The single site in Somerset is one of only a few remaining in southern England.



*Valerianella rimosa* at Fivehead Arable Fields (2013). Photo: CHS

## VC5

Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST336224	2015	CHS	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST336225	2013	AH, CH, CHS	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST336226	2015	CHS	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST337223	2013	AH, CH, CHS	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST337224	2015	GL, SJP, IS	Frequent
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST33832227	2015	GL, SJP, IS	Scattered in Field 1
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST338224	1987	PRG	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST338225	2015	CHS	



*Valerianella rimosa* at Fivehead (2017). Photo: HJC