

***Isolepis cernua* (Vahl) Roem. & Schult.**

Slender Club-rush

Native

GB & England: Least Concern

VC5 Lost; VC6 Rare

A small tufted perennial of bare damp sand or peat, or short turf, usually near the sea. In VC5, found at several sites in the past, all near the coast in the Minehead area. Murray (1896) knew it in a wet place on Grabbist Hill, near Minehead, noting that Rev. W.H. Coleman had included this species in his list of plants recorded in 1849 in that area. Marshall (1914) recorded this species at Selworthy (a few miles west of Minehead) and included a record by C.E. Salmon for near Horner, where it was found again in 1933 by N.G. Hadden, at Horner Combe. A.H.W. Dod found it in a lane above Alcombe (near Minehead) in 1914 and it was recorded in Alcombe Combe from 1966 until last seen in 1984 by Mrs S.C. Holland. In 1991, it was found by Miss O. Russell at Woodcock Gardens Nature Reserve, Huntscott (SS9243), slightly further inland than other sites in VC5; it was last seen there in 1994. In VC6, first discovered in 1900 by J.W. White and C. Bucknall, in the peaty valley near Walton-in-Gordano, "on clods recently thrown out in clearing a *Cyperus* ditch". A week later, they found "a fair quantity on the banks of several other ditches in that locality" (White, 1912) and it can still be found in this area. In 1945, C.I. and N.Y. Sandwith recorded a single tuft at Berrow. It was not seen here again until 2008, when Robert Cropper found several clumps growing in short damp turf in front of the church at Berrow. A third site for VC6 was found in 1967 by Miss M.J. Bailey on Black Down, on Mendip, where she recorded a number of plants growing with *Juncus bufonius* in a wet hollow of fairly bare peat adjoining a track, at about 1000ft. There have been no further records for Black Down. In 2012 hundreds of plants were discovered by Helena Crouch and Fred Rumsey at a new site in a coastal field near Walton-in-Gordano, currently the strongest population in Somerset. This species has a largely western coastal distribution in Britain and Ireland, but is also found along the south coast and in East Anglia; sites in Somerset are within this range.



Isolepis cernua at Walton-in-Gordano (2012). Photo: HJC

VC6

Berrow church		ST29465248	2014	PRG	Hundreds of plants on green E of church
Walton-in-Gordano		ST422739	2014	SRPG, BNS	Several plants in flush E of footpath
Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43397264	2015	HJC, FJR	Few plants on edge of ditch
Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43357263	2017	HJC, FJR	Several on poached mud, N edge of ditch
Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43347262	2017	HJC, FJR	Hundreds on poached mud, N edge of ditch



Distribution of *Isolepis cernua* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate.
Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999, monad or tetrad records