

***Valerianella dentata* (L.) Pollich**

Narrow-fruited Cornsalad

Archaeophyte

GB & England: Endangered

VC5 Rare; VC6 Scarce

An annual plant of arable field margins, usually found on light calcareous loams, particularly on chalk, also on sandy loams and calcareous clays. Murray (1896) described this species as rather common in Somerset, White (1912) as frequent; however Roe (1981) stated that it was decreasing and now rare. In VC5, Murray (1896) listed records for Minehead, Watchet and Shurton Bars (near Hinkley Point) and there have been further records along the coast, the last in 1989 near Watchet. In the 1990s it was found at two sites on Exmoor. There are historic records for Radlet Common (west of the Quantocks) and Wellington (Murray, 1896); it was also recorded from Staplegrove, Taunton and Kingstone, Ilminster in the 1920s. In 1920 it was found between Hatch and Curry Rivel: the only currently known site in VC5 is Fivehead Arable Fields SSSI, which lies between West Hatch and Curry Rivel. Here it can be found in abundance in each of the three fields. In VC6 this species was formerly known at many scattered sites, including Brean Down, Weston-super-Mare and Uphill on the coast, cornfields near Abbot's Leigh and Failand in the north, several sites south of Bath and Nunney and Pen Selwood in the southeast of VC6 (Murray, 1896). It was still to be found at Twinhoe, Wellow and Hinton Charterhouse, south of Bath, in the 1970s and occurred on a road verge by a quarry near Nunney and on a forest ride at King's Wood Warren a little north of Pen Selwood, both last seen in 1991. The only recent records for VC6 are for arable fields south of Somerton and at Baltonsborough. All post-2000 Somerset sites for this species fall within the Mid-Somerset Hills Important Arable Plants Area identified by Plantlife. *Valerianella dentata* has declined substantially in Somerset, as it has elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, due to the increased use of fertilisers, the development of modern competitive cereal crop varieties, increased autumn-sowing of crops and the use of herbicides.



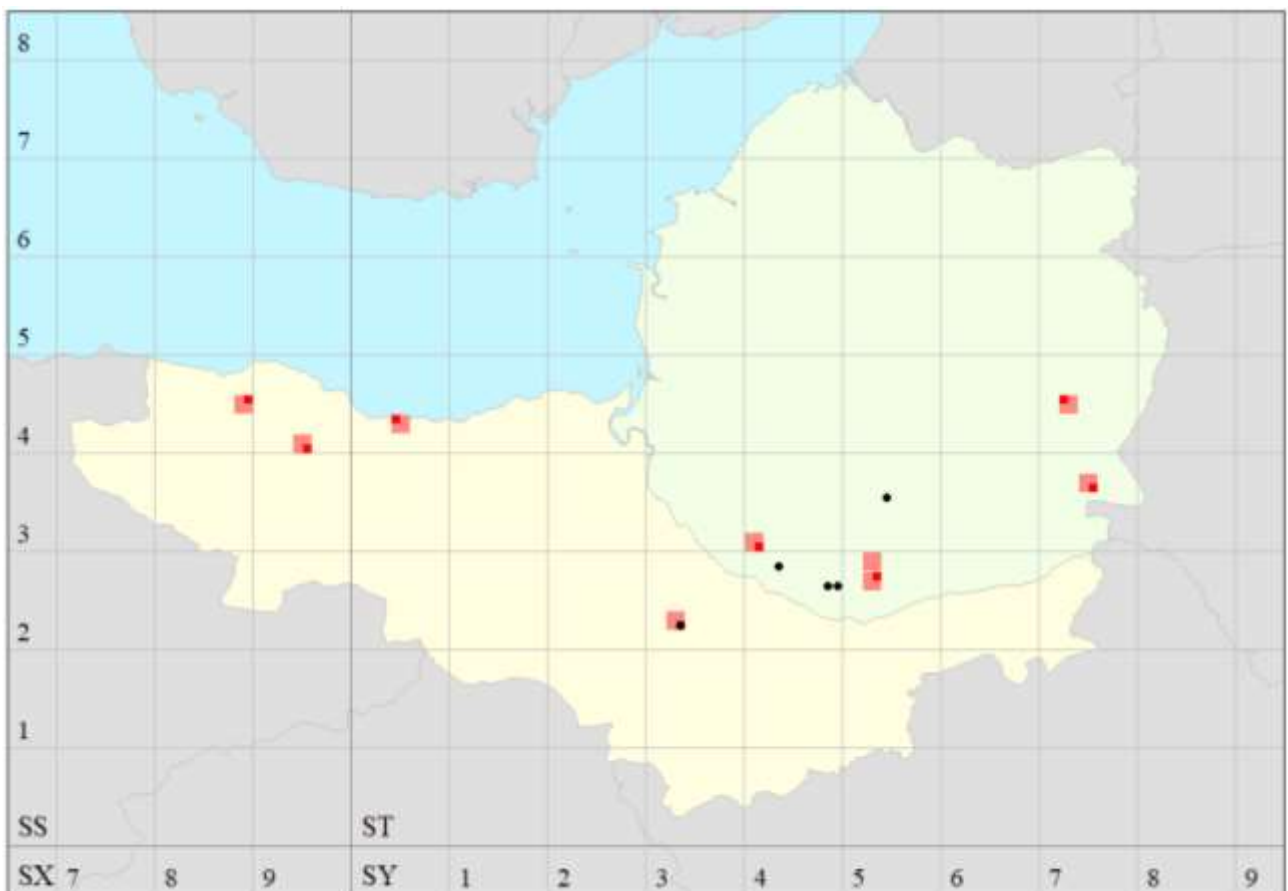
Valerianella dentata at Laverstoke Park, Hampshire (2013). Photo: CHS
[awaiting Somerset photo]

VC5

Horner		SS898455	1991	JIR	Wall-top [since demolished] in village
Timberscombe		SS952408	1996	JP	1 plant in flower and fruit in oat field
Chapel Cleeve, NE of		ST045436	1988	RFitzG	
Chapel Cleeve, NE of		ST045435	1989	IPG, CJG, DM	A few plants in corner of field
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST336224	2015	CHS	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST336225	2013	CHS, CH, AH	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST336226	2015	CHS	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST337223	2013	CHS, CH, AH	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST337224	2008	HJC, LIC	Masses at edges of field
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST33792243	2015	SJP, GL, ITS	By gateway
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST338224	2008	HJC, LIC	Masses at edges of field
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST338225	2015	CHS	

VC6

Low Ham, Hext Hill		ST433288	2011	JP	2 plants in fruit on wall top
Watt's Quarry Lane		ST484265	2009	JP	6 plants in fruit in arable field corner
Black's Moor Hill		ST48922682	2011	JP	14 plants in ripe fruit at field corner
Somerton, S of		ST49212642	2016	CHS & Plantlife	Winter wheat field
Breach Wood		ST412305	1991	JP	3 pl, 2 var. <i>mixta</i> , on newly bulldozed ride
Ridgeway Lane		ST534275	1987	RGBR	
Charlton Mackrell		ST52J	1998	IPG	1 plant on edge of arable field
Baltonsborough		ST54213553	2016	JP	1 pl, edge of field sown with seed mix
Holwell		ST723451	1991	PRG	10+ on super road verge, north side
King's Wood Warren		ST754365 - ST755364	1991	IPG	c. 30 plants mainly on N side of track



Distribution of *Valerianella dentata* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate.

Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999 records.