

***Trifolium squamosum* L.**

Sea Clover

Native

GB & England: Least Concern

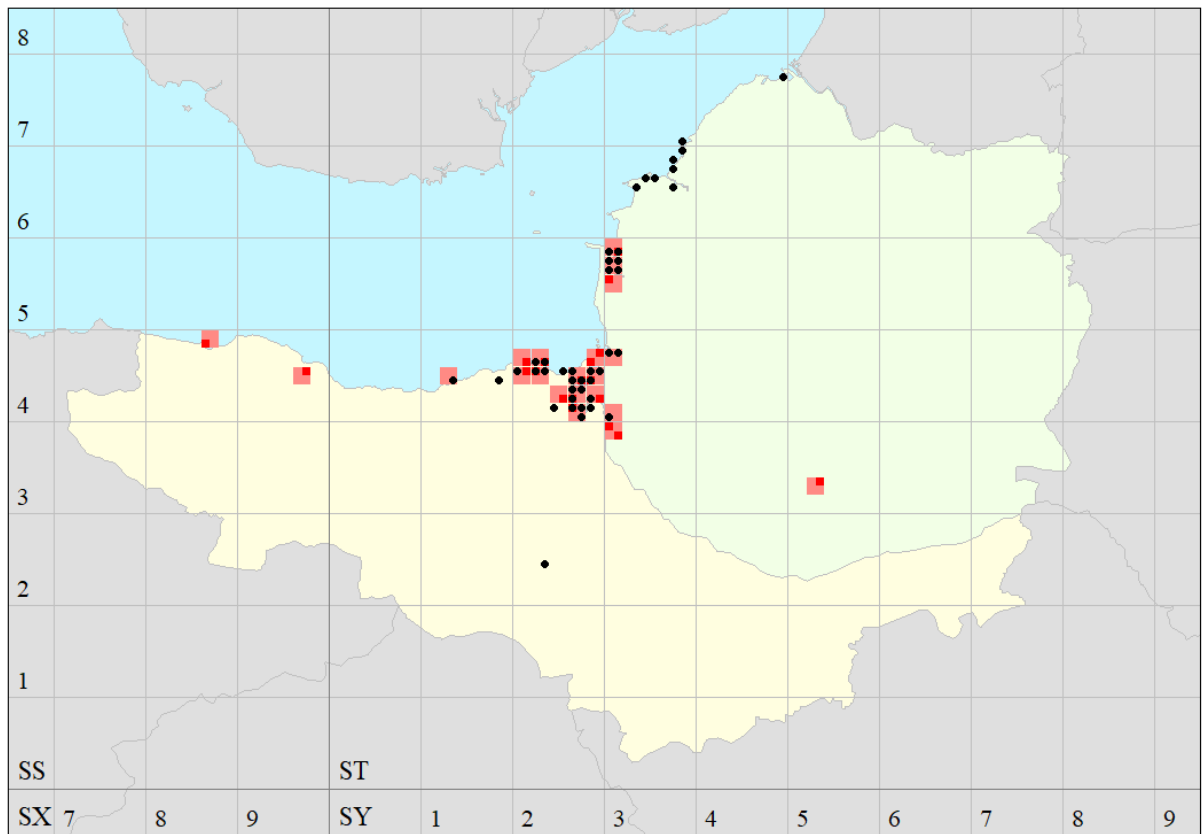
GB Scarce

VC5 Not Scarce; VC6 Not Scarce

An erect annual of saltmarshes, tidal rivers and eroded saltings, sea walls and brackish meadows, arable margins near the sea, and occasionally a casual in waste places. In VC5 first recorded by J.C. Collins as abundant about Shurton Bars, Stoke Couray [Stogursey] (Watson, 1837), collected at Kilve by T. Clark (Murray, 1896) and known at Stolford (Marshall, 1914). It is still to be found along that stretch of coast, at East Quantoxhead and further east at Stringston, Hinckley Point, Stolford and Catsford Common. Found by C.C. Babington at Dunster Marshes (Murray, 1896), but not seen there since. Recorded in 1918 by W. Watson at Porlock Weir and re-found there in 1962 by D.A.C. Long and in 1998 by Mrs I.G. Perry, but last seen in 1999 and there have been no further records west of East Quantoxhead (ST1344). East of Catsford Common, this species is found at Wall Common and was formerly known at Stert Point. There are recent records along the Parrett Estuary, at Steart Marshes, Comwich, Tuckett's Clyce and Starsland Clyce. Inland, it has been found as a casual in gardens in Minehead and Taunton, and also in arable field margins at Stringston and Cannington.

In VC6, recorded at Huntspill by W.C. Trevelyan (Watson, 1835) and by H.S. Thompson on the banks of the River Parrett near Dunball (Murray, 1896). Still found on the sea wall and saltmarsh by the River Brue at Highbridge and West Huntspill, and along Parrett Estuary at The Island, Pawlett Level, around Pawlett Hams and inland to Dunball Wharf. Further north, found abundantly in places along the sea walls on both sides of the Axe Estuary. In 1879, collected at Sand Bay by J.T. Harris (see <http://herbariaunited.org/specimen/304530/>) Found here again in 2002 by Robert Cropper, but last seen in 2005. In 2014 a good population was discovered in a car park at Woodspring Priory, where it persists, and it was also recorded in abundance along the sea wall of the Banwell Estuary and at Wick Warth, with scattered plants further north by the Yeo Estuary and on the sea wall and saltmarsh of Woodspring Bay, south of Clevedon. In 1904 this species was collected in a field near the sea at Portishead by E.S. Gregory (see <http://herbariaunited.org/specimen/237634/>). It was found by Rupert Higgins at Portbury in 1988, and although Green *et al.* (2000) reported that several colonies had been destroyed by tipping around Royal Portbury Dock, a small clump was found by Phil Quinn at Royal Portbury Dock in 2008. Inland, known to Murray (1896) in a very old lane near Yarley, but Marshall (1914) reported that it was destroyed at that site. Also known to Murray (1896) in a hedge by a drove at the head of the moor in the parish of Barton St David, over 17 miles from the present coast, where he suggested it indicated an ancient shore-line. It was re-found by Ian Green on a drove at Barton St David in 1993, and seen there thinly scattered along the green lane for several yards by Robert Cropper later that year, but there have been no subsequent records despite searches.

Trifolium squamosum has its main centres of distribution around the Severn Estuary and Thames Estuary, with scattered locations along the coast of South Wales and southern and eastern England, north to the Humber Estuary. It has declined due to coastal development and under-grazing of coastal grasslands. In Somerset this species has been lost from sites in the west and old sites inland, but persists in many former sites, particularly along sea walls.



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



Trifolium squamosum at Bleadon Level (2019). Photo: HJC