

***Potamogeton coloratus* Hornem.**

Fen Pondweed

Native

GB & England: Least Concern

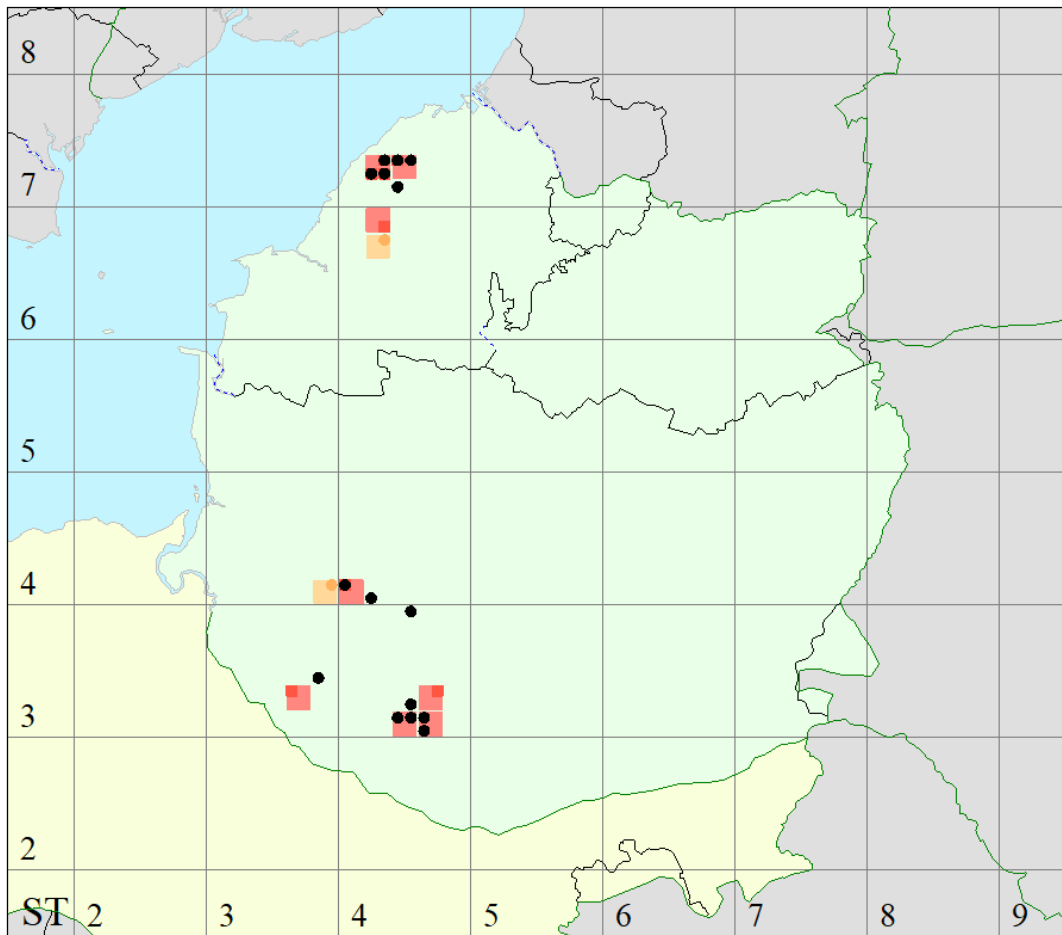
GB: Scarce

VC5 Absent; VC6 Not Scarce

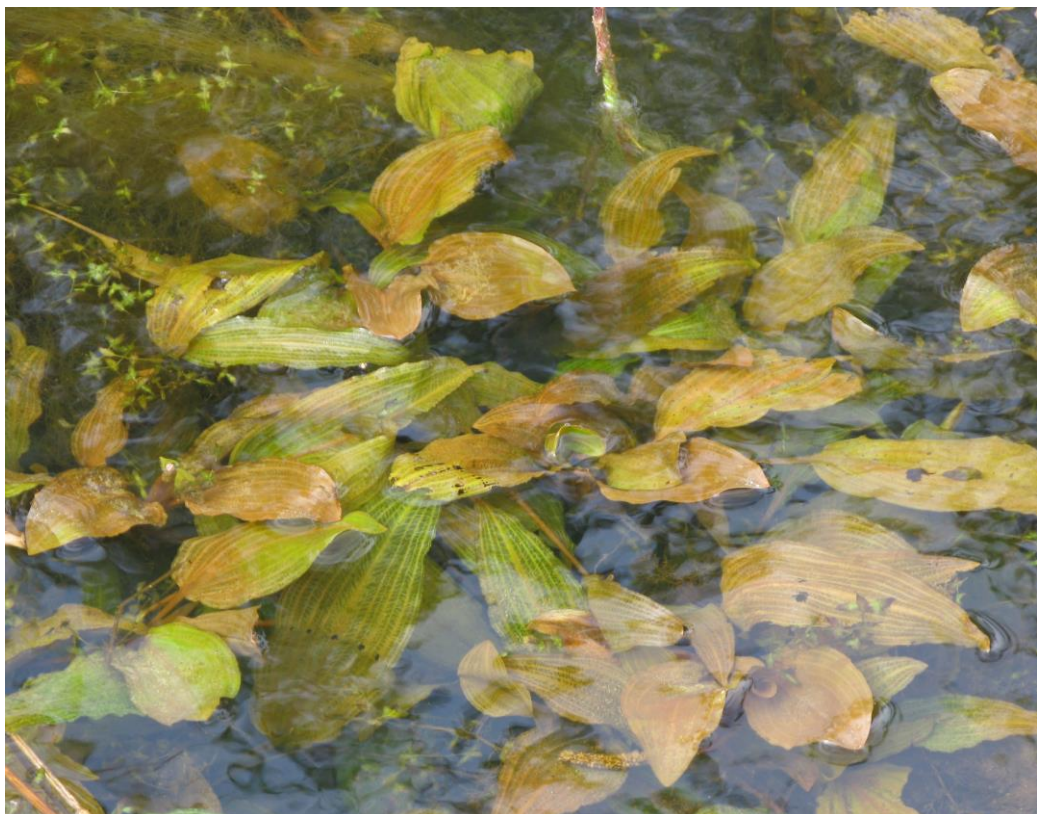
A rhizomatous aquatic perennial of shallow calcareous nutrient-poor water, usually less than 1m deep, found in ditches and runnels, pools and lake margins, fens and flooded clay and marl pits. In Somerset, only known from VC6 where it was reported by Murray (1896) in moor ditches below Compton Dundon, where he collected a specimen in 1891 (**BM**); at Axbridge, recorded by Waterfall, and at Walton-in-Gordano. It is still found in several ditches on Somerton Moor below Compton Dundon, and on the adjacent Pitney Moor, however there are no records since 1992 for nearby Street Moor. There have been no records from the Axbridge area since Augustin Ley collected a specimen in a ditch near Cheddar in 1902 (<http://herbariaunited.org/specimen/256718/>). Near Walton-in-Gordano, however, this species is still found in many ditches on Walton Moor, Weston Moor, Clapton Moor and other parts of the Gordano Valley NNR. It was recorded nearby on Kenn Moor in 1901 (White, 1912), but was last seen there in 1991. In 1987 it was found on Nailsea Moor and in 1999 in a pond at Chelvey (Green *et al.*, 2000), but there are no recent records for these sites. It was found on Tickenham Moor in 2010, where it had first been recorded in 1902, and the North Somerset Levels remain a stronghold for this species. White (1912) recorded *Potamogeton coloratus* in peat ditches near Edington in 1902. It was found again in a ditch near Edington in 1981 but there are no subsequent records, although it persists in a pit at Catcott Heath Reserve, to which it was introduced. Nearby, this species was collected by E.S. Marshall near Shapwick station in 1917 (**CGE**) and still occurs in that area. In 2019 it was found at Ham Wall, southeast of Shapwick. In the southwest of VC6, this species was collected near Westonzoyland by G.R. Bullock-Webster in 1895, the specimen (**BM**) determined by Dandy; it was refound in several rhynes on Langmead, near Westonzoyland, by Paul Green in 1993 (Green *et al.*, 1997). In 2011 it was found on King's Sedgemoor and in 2020 in a shallow rhine at nearby Greylake. *Potamogeton coloratus* declined over much of its British range as a result of drainage and eutrophication. In Somerset, whilst lost from the Axbridge area, it can still be found in all other areas where it has been recorded historically, and although apparently lost from some sites within those areas, it has been found at several new sites. This species has a scattered distribution in Britain and is relatively frequent in parts of Ireland: sites in Somerset are towards the southwest edge of its distribution.



Potamogeton coloratus at Catcott Heath Reserve (2019). Photo: HJC



Distribution of *Potamogeton coloratus* in North Somerset (VC6), mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999; sepia squares are pre-1987



Potamogeton coloratus at Weston Moor (2009). Photo: HJC