

***Potamogeton nodosus* Poir.**

Loddon Pondweed

Native

GB & England: Vulnerable

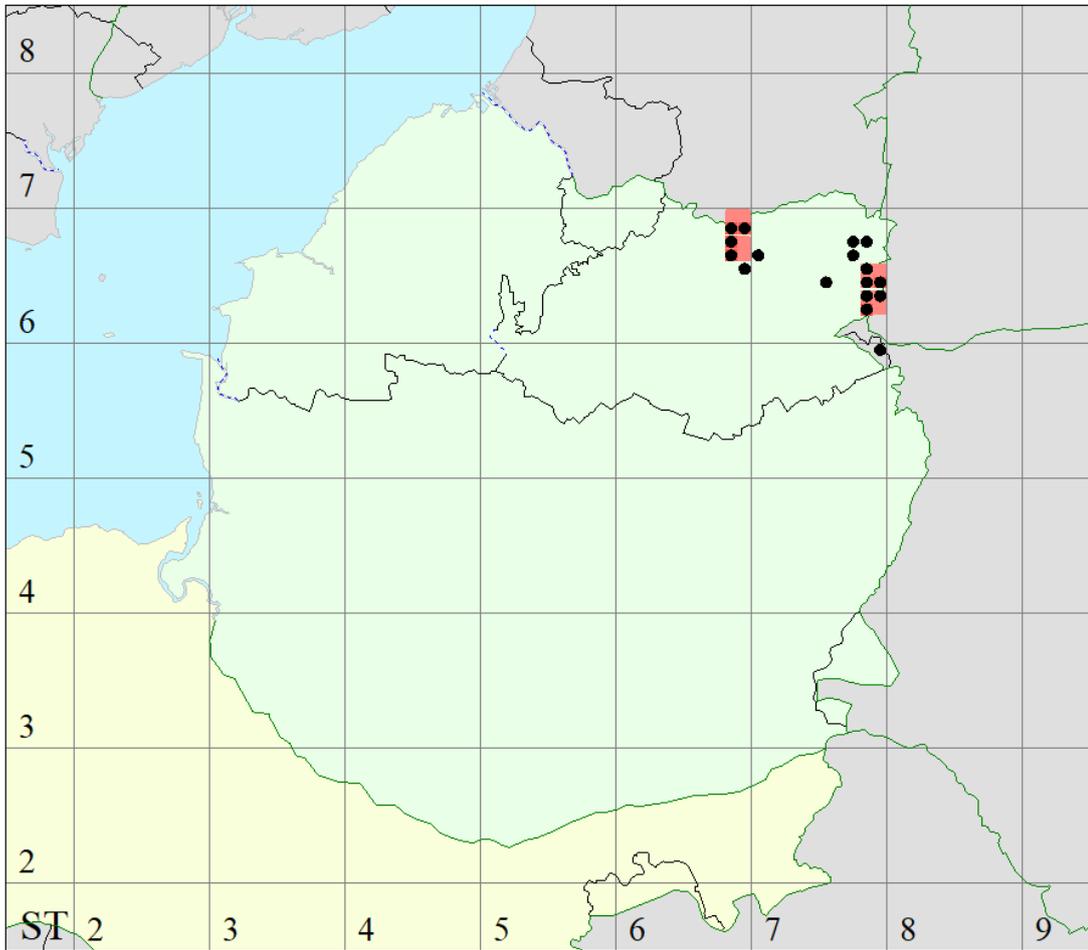
GB: Rare

VC5 Absent; VC6 Not Scarce

A robust rhizomatous aquatic perennial of calcareous rivers, where it grows in slow to moderately flowing, shallow or deep water. Absent from VC5 and restricted to the River Avon between Saltford and Freshford in VC6. This species was first found in Britain in the River Loddon, Berkshire, by G.C. Druce in 1893, believed to be new to science and named as *Potamogeton drucei* by Alfred Fryer in 1898. Plants gathered in the Avon at Saltford by C. Bucknall and Mrs Wedgewood in 1916 were confirmed as this species (White, 1919). By 1922 it had greatly increased (White, 1922). In 1940 it was found abundantly in the Avon from Conham up to Bathford (Sandwith, 1941). By then, *P. drucei* had been shown to be identical to the widespread continental species *P. nodosus* (Dandy & Taylor, 1939). This pondweed is still found in the Avon near Conham, but on the VC34 side of the river. In VC6 there are recent records west of Bath from near Swineford Lock, Saltford and Kelston. In 2017 it was recorded beneath the railway bridge in Bath. East of Bath it is found in the Avon near Bathampton and in the oxbow lake at Bathampton Meadows. Roe (1981) reported that *Potamogeton nodosus* was “quite plentiful, particularly near Claverton”: this is still the area where it is most frequently found, upstream as far as the Dundas Aqueduct, with an outlying site to the south, near Freshford. This species is restricted to southern England, where it is also found in the River Stour in Dorset, the River Loddon and the Blackwater River in Berkshire, and in the River Thames, where it was feared lost by Preston (1995) and Preston *et al.* (2002), but has since been recorded at several locations. Sites in the Bristol Avon are the most westerly.



Potamogeton nodosus at Claverton (2017). Photo: HJC



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



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