

***Cyperus fuscus* L.**

Brown Galingale

Native

GB & England: Vulnerable

Schedule 8

Section 41

GB Rare

VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

An annual plant of the margins of ponds and ditches, found in damp open ground created by poaching by livestock or ditch management works. First found in Somerset in September 1900, when it was so conspicuous that the finder, Mr S.J. Coley of Stroud, spotted it as he cycled across the moor (White, 1912). Populations have been found at a few different sites on Walton Moor over the years, with numbers of plants fluctuating wildly. In 1921 a luxuriant crop was recorded in ditches following drought. In 1969 several dozen small plants were seen on earth thrown from a ditch. A site where a single plant was found in 1975 has yielded no further plants. The only site now known is a 50m length of ditch edge on Walton Moor, where the species is regularly monitored by local botanists and staff of Natural England. The population size fluctuates: in 2003, following re-profiling of the ditch by the Environment Agency, 160 plants were found, none were seen in 2005, but further management resulted in 30 plants in 2006. Numbers have continued to fluctuate, peaking after management or poaching by cattle, with 53 plants seen in 2022. This species, which germinates in early summer (Rich, 1999), requires careful control of grazing and water levels, and appropriate ditch management. In Somerset it is at considerable risk of being lost without regular conservation action. Although widespread in Europe, in Britain *Cyperus fuscus* is restricted to a few sites in southern England and one in Jersey; the Somerset site is the most westerly in England.

VC6

Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43337262	2022	HJC, FJR	15 pl on poached mud, N side of ditch
Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43347262	2022	HJC, FJR	16 pl on poached mud, N side of ditch
Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43377263	2022	HJC, FJR	21 pl on poached mud, N side of ditch
Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43377264	2017	HJC, FJR	8 pl on poached mud, N edge of ditch
Walton Moor	SSSI	ST43387264	2022	HJC, FJR	1 pl on poached mud, N side of ditch



Cyperus fuscus at Walton Moor (2021). Photo: HJC