

***Gnaphalium sylvaticum* L.**

Heath Cudweed

Native

GB: Endangered

England: Endangered

VC5 Extinct; VC6 Extinct

A short-lived perennial of dry acidic substrates on heathland, dunes, open woodland and forest rides. Murray (1896) declared this species rare and very uncertain in its appearances, listing seven sites. In VC5, he knew it only from Quantock Farm (recorded by H.S. Thompson) and on the Blackdown Hills, a little west of the Wellington Monument, where he saw it in 1883. It had also been found by C. Parish at Combe Wood, Combe St Nicholas in 1844 and was subsequently recorded at Bellinger Farm, Porlock, by N.G. Hadden in 1918; at Skilgate, by Colonel Watts in 1926; and at Stoke Pero by E.J. Hamlin in 1935. The last record for VC5 was made above Newhouse Copse near Huish Champflower, by W. Watson in 1941. In VC6, Murray knew this species at Gasper Common; in poor pasture near Penridge Farm, where he found it plentiful in 1892; at Portishead, found by L. Rogers in a wood towards Weston-in-Gordano; near Lord's Wood, Houndstreet [Hunstrete], where W.S. Browne found a single specimen about 1880 and another in 1890; and near Cranmore Tower, recorded by H.F. Parsons and again by J.W. White in 1892. White (1912) added records for a steeply sloping hillside above the sea beyond Ladye Bay, where a few small plants were discovered in short turf among gorse and brambles by Miss Livett, Miss W. Mather and S.T. Dunn, and a field near Asham Woods, found by Rev. S. Laing. Marshall (1914) added one more site: old pastures on the Greensand near Alfred's Tower, recorded by C.E. Moss. In 1917 it was seen again on the coast north of Clevedon by Rev E. Ellman and on a drove in Asham Wood by Miss I.M. Roper (White, 1919). A single plant was found in woodland on the Tickenham side of Cadbury Camp, by H.J. Gibbons in 1930. The last record for VC6 was for a small patch in Engine Lane, Nailsea, found by E.S. Smith in 1965 (Willis, 1966). This species, once distributed throughout Britain, has declined dramatically in most areas and is now absent from the southwest peninsular.