

***Coeloglossum viride* (L.) Hartm.**

Frog Orchid

Native

GB & England: Vulnerable

UKBAP/S41

VC5 Rare; VC6 Rare

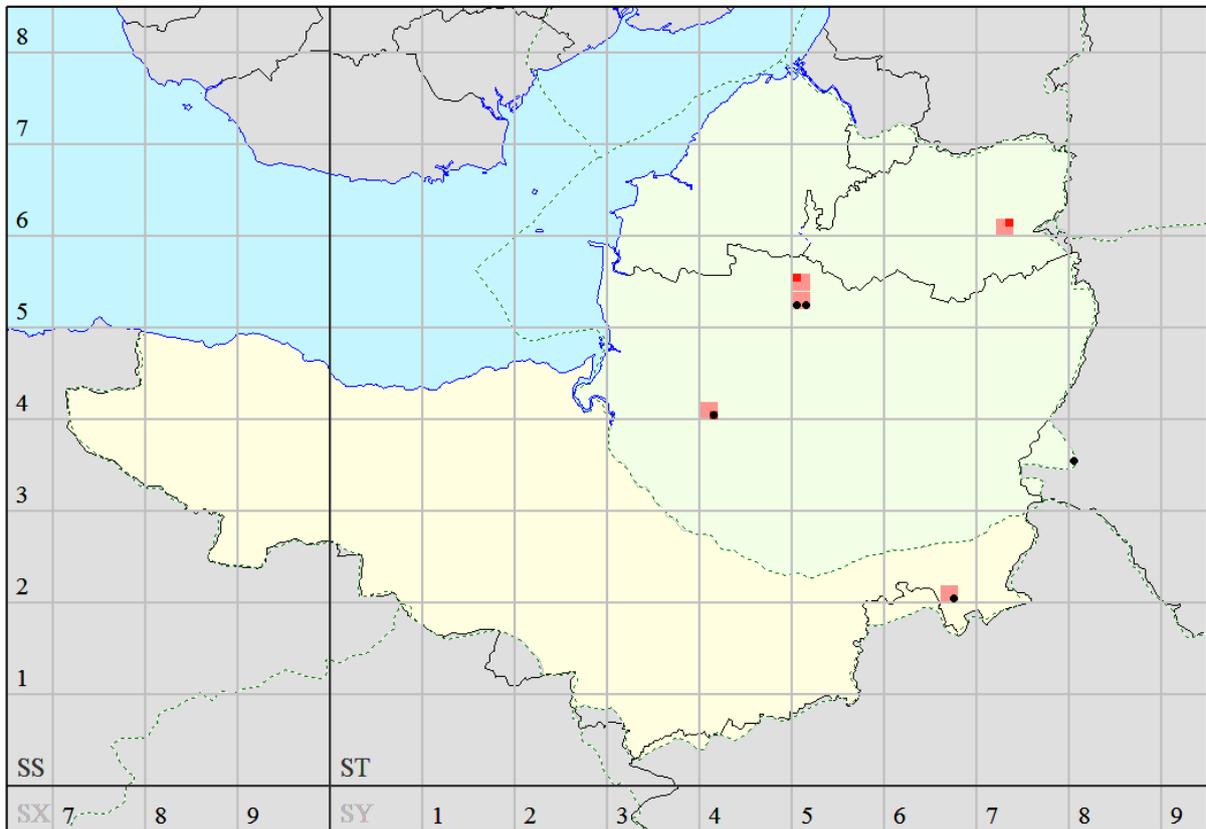
A small tuberous perennial herb, in southern England largely restricted to short calcareous grassland, for example ancient earthworks, disused quarries and spoil heaps, but also occasionally found in damp base-rich meadows. In Somerset this orchid was described as “Rather rare” by Murray (1896) who listed eleven sites. Roe (1981) described it as “Rare and apparently decreasing”, giving only six sites; it is now only known at four. In VC5 it was recorded by J. Sowerby at Hardington (Murray, 1896) and re-found by John Keylock at White Vine Farm, Hardington, where it was last seen in 1969. Although found at High Ham Hill by W. Watson (Marshall, 1914), there have been no further records for that site. Murray (1896) listed one other site in VC5: Templecombe, found by F.A. Lees. This was probably the first record for the only currently known site in VC5: Stout Hill, Milborne Wick, where this species was found by David Reid in 1988 and a healthy population of 57 plants was seen in 2013. In VC6 White (1912) regarded this species as “rather rare”, but listed sixteen sites south of Bristol and Bath, many of them hay meadows. It is still to be found at only one of these, “Pastures on Mendip above Cheddar”. In 1982, Ro FitzGerald found this species on a roadside bank between Priddy and Cheddar Gorge (Willis, 1984); it still occurs in very small numbers at a site answering this description, although there are no recent records for Ubley Warren Reserve, also above Cheddar, where it was recorded in 1994 by Paul Green. The last records south of Bath were for Binegar Bottom, recorded in 1966 by R.G.B. Roe, Wellow, recorded by Mrs P.H. Rowle in 1975 and Southstoke, found by Robert Cropper in 1988: it has not been re-found at any of these sites. E.J. Hamlin recorded this species on the Polden Hills near Shapwick (Marshall, 1914). In 1946 he recorded it in a wet meadow on Shapwick Heath; it persists in a meadow at Canada Farm, Shapwick Heath. The only other site in VC6 is White Sheet Downs, now in Wiltshire, where 24 plants were recorded on a tumulus and bank in 2012, at the very edge of VC6. *Coeloglossum viride* has declined considerably across Britain and Ireland, mostly due to loss of species-rich meadows and “improvement” of pastures; this loss has certainly occurred in Somerset.

VC5

Stout Hill		ST6720	2013	SRPG	57 plants scattered on hillside [Private Site]
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VC6

Canada Farm	SSSI	ST418403	2012	HJC & SBG	38 in damp meadow W of Station Road
Canada Farm	SSSI	ST419403	2012	HJC & SBG	21 in damp meadow W of Station Road
Canada Farm	SSSI	ST419404	2012	HJC & SBG	13 in damp meadow W of Station Road
Priddy, NW of		ST50995218	2013	HJC & IPG	4 plants in small quarried area on hillside
Priddy, NW of		ST51005218	2013	HJC & IPG	1 plant in super rich grassland on hillside
Ubley Warren	SSSI	ST509552	1994	PRG	1 in cage, E end of field of rocky gully
Southstoke		ST738610	1988	RSC	At least 50 flower spikes in meadow
White Sheet Downs	SSSI	ST80143510	2012	SRPG	6 on S-facing bank N of small path
White Sheet Downs	SSSI	ST80173508	2012	SRPG	8 plants c.3m N of small path, W of tumulus
White Sheet Downs	SSSI	ST80183507	2012	SRPG	7 plants c.2m N of small path, in short turf
White Sheet Downs	SSSI	ST80203509	2012	SRPG	1 in bud on E side of eastern tumulus
White Sheet Downs	SSSI	ST80233502	2012	SRPG	1 in bud and 1 in flower N of small path



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



Coeloglossum viride at Canada Farm, Shapwick Heath (2012). Photo: HJC