

***Valerianella dentata* (L.) Pollich**

Narrow-fruited Cornsalad

Archaeophyte

GB & England: Endangered

VC5 Scarce; VC6 Scarce

An annual plant of arable field margins, usually found on light calcareous loams, particularly on chalk, also on sandy loams and calcareous clays. Murray (1896) described this species as rather common in Somerset, White (1912) as frequent; however Roe (1981) stated that it was decreasing and now rare. In VC5, Murray (1896) listed records for Minehead, Watchet and Shurton Bars (near Hinkley Point) and there have been further records along the coast, the last in 1989 near Watchet. In the 1990s it was found at two sites on Exmoor. There are historic records for Radlet Common (west of the Quantocks) and Wellington (Murray, 1896); it was also recorded from Staplegrove, Taunton and Kingstone, Ilminster in the 1920s. In 1920 it was found between Hatch and Curry Rivel: the only currently known site in VC5 is Fivehead Arable Fields SSSI, which lies between West Hatch and Curry Rivel. Here it can be found in abundance in each of the three fields. In VC6 this species was formerly known at many scattered sites, including Brean Down, Weston-super-Mare and Uphill on the coast, cornfields near Abbot's Leigh and Failand in the north, several sites south of Bath and Nunney and Pen Selwood in the southeast of VC6 (Murray, 1896). It was still to be found at Twinhoe, Wellow and Hinton Charterhouse, south of Bath, in the 1970s and occurred on a road verge by a quarry near Nunney and on a forest ride at King's Wood Warren a little north of Pen Selwood, both last seen in 1991. The only recent records for VC6 are for arable fields south of Somerton and at Baltonsborough. All post-2000 Somerset sites for this species fall within the Mid-Somerset Hills Important Arable Plants Area identified by Plantlife. *Valerianella dentata* has declined substantially in Somerset, as it has elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, due to the increased use of fertilisers, the development of modern competitive cereal crop varieties, increased autumn-sowing of crops and the use of herbicides.



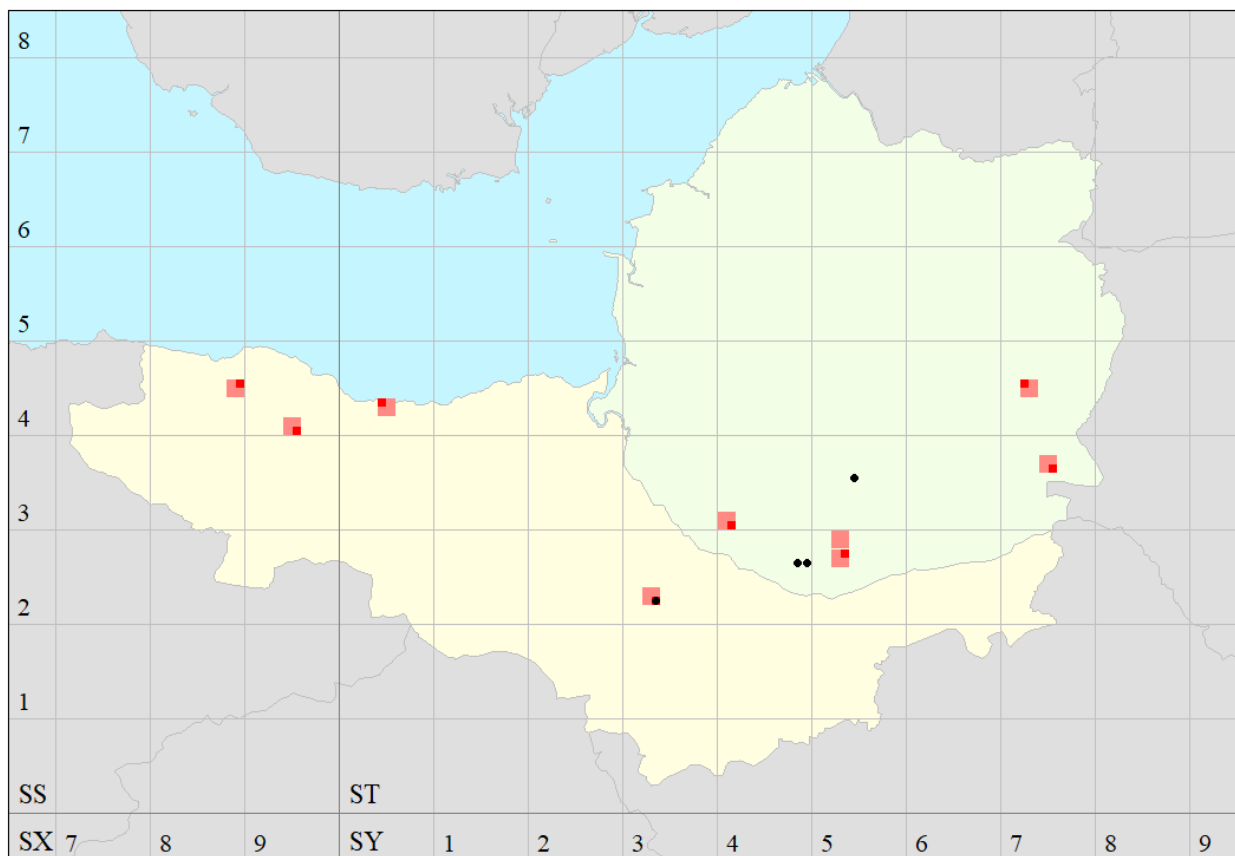
Valerianella dentata at Laverstoke Park, Hampshire (2013). Photo: CHS
[awaiting Somerset photo]

VC5

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|------------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|---|
| Horner | SS898455 | 1991 | JIR | Wall-top [since demolished] in Horner village |
| Timberscombe | SS952408 | 1996 | JP | Single plant in flower and fruit in oat field |
| Chapel Cleeve, NE of | ST045436 | 1988 | RFitzG | |
| Chapel Cleeve, NE of | ST045435 | 1989 | IPG, CJG, DM | A few plants in corner of field |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST336224 | 2015 | CHS | |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST336225 | 2013 | CHS, CH, AH | |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST336226 | 2015 | CHS | |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST337223 | 2013 | CHS, CH, AH | |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST337224 | 2008 | HJC, LIC | Masses at edges of field |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST33792243 | 2015 | SJP, GL, ITS | By gateway |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST338224 | 2008 | HJC, LIC | Masses at edges of field |
| Fivehead Arable Fields | SSSI ST338225 | 2015 | CHS | |

VC6

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|--------------------|------------------------|------|----------------|--|
| Breech Wood | ST412305 | 1991 | JP | 3 plants, 2 var. <i>mixta</i> , on newly bulldozed ride |
| Watt's Quarry Lane | ST484265 | 2009 | JP | 6 plants in fruit in arable field corner |
| Black's Moor Hill | ST48922682 | 2011 | JP | 14 plants in ripe fruit at field corner |
| Somerton, S of | ST49212642 | 2016 | CHS, Plantlife | Winter wheat field |
| Ridgeway Lane | ST534275 | 1987 | RGBR | |
| Charlton Mackrell | ST52J | 1998 | IPG | 1 plant on edge of arable field 1 plant at edge of large field sown with seed mix |
| Baltonsborough | ST54213553 | 2016 | JP | |
| Holwell | ST723451 | 1991 | PRG | 10+ on super road verge, north side |
| King's Wood Warren | ST754365 - ST755364 | 1991 | IPG | c. 30 plants mainly on N side of track |



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