



Scientific name	<i>Salicornia</i> agg. saltmarsh
Common name	Glasswort saltmarsh
Community code	SM1A

Vegetation

Annual *Salicornia* species may be the only vascular plants found in this community, which even later in the summer may remain distinctly open. Frequently, small clumps of *Puccinellia maritima* or *Spartina* agg. may occur, but these provide sparse cover. *Suaeda maritima* is only occasional but now and then can be abundant, giving this community a quite different appearance. Other vascular species are rare. Vegetation height is around 20 cm by the end of the growing season. There is often an extensive algal mat and macroalgae are also occasionally found persisting here; *Fucus spiralis* is probably the main species but small specimens of *Ascophyllum nodosum* and *Ulva lactuca* may also occur.

Ecology,

This is an annual community, mainly of the lower fringe of saltmarsh where it is regularly inundated. It may also occur elsewhere in the marsh, on creek sides, depressions and disturbed ground. It can develop on a range of substrates but they are usually fairly firm underfoot. Conditions are base-rich.

Sub-communities

No sub-communities have been described for this community.

Similar communities

This is a very distinct community with which the only confusion is probably offered by community SM2 in which *Salicornia* agg. is also a constant and sometimes abundant. That community, however, is found slightly higher in the marsh, allowing *Puccinellia maritima* to provide much greater cover and *Limonium humile*, *Spergularia media* and *Aster tripolium* to establish.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	154
Transitional:	3
Total:	157

Number of records (mapped)

2001-2015:	124
1986-2000:	5
1971-1985:	27
Pre-1971:	1
Total:	157

Number of hectads (most recent records)

2001-2015:	32
1986-2000:	2
1971-1985:	7
Pre-1971:	0
Total:	41

Number of hectads (all mapped records)

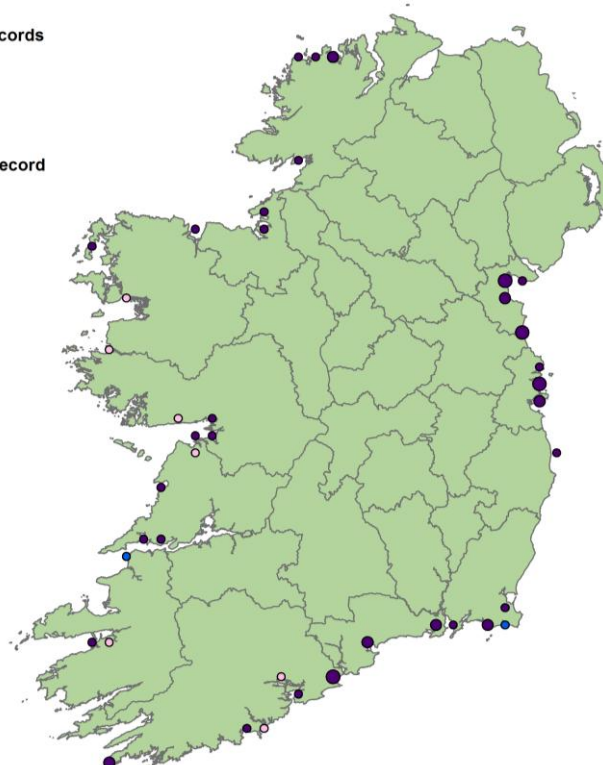
2001-2015:	32
1986-2000:	3
1971-1985:	15
Pre-1971:	1

Number of records

- 1-3
- 4-10
- 11-25
- 26+

Most recent record

- 2001-2015
- 1986-2000
- 1971-1985
- pre-1971



Synoptic table (n = 150)

Species	Frequency	Cover	Species	Frequency	Cover
	(from I-V)	min (med) max		(from I-V)	min (med) max
<i>Salicornia</i> agg.	V	2-(5)-9	<i>Bolboschoenus maritimus</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Puccinellia maritima</i>	III	2-(3)-5	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Spartina</i> agg.	III	2-(3)-5	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	II	2-(3)-9	<i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>	I	5-(5)-5
<i>Limonium humile</i>	I	2-(3)-4			
<i>Spergularia media</i>	I	2-(3)-6			
<i>Aster tripolium</i>	I	2-(3)-3			
<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	I	2-(2)-4			
<i>Plantago maritima</i>	I	2-(3)-3			
<i>Glaux maritima</i>	I	2-(2)-3			
<i>Triglochin maritimum</i>	I	2-(3)-3			
<i>Spergularia marina</i>	I	3-(3)-7			
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	I	2-(2)-3			
<i>Puccinellia distans</i>	I	3-(3)-3			
<i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i>	I	3-(6)-8			
<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>	I	2-(2)-2			
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	I	2-(2)-2			
<i>Juncus gerardii</i>	I	3-(3)-3			
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	I	3-(3)-3			
<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	I	6-(6)-6			

Affinities

GHI: CM1 Lower salt marsh

ZM: Thero-Salicornion

EUNIS: A2.5513 *Salicornia* spp. pioneer saltmarshes

NVC: SM13a *Puccinellia maritima* saltmarsh community, sub-community with *Puccinellia maritima* dominant (58.2%)
(Also clear affinity with SM8 Annual *Salicornia* salt-marsh community)

Annex I:1310 *Salicornia* mud

Proxy environmental data

Light: 8.9 Reaction: 7.9 Wetness: 7.3 Fertility: 6.0 Salinity: 7.5

Conservation value

Almost all examples of this pioneer vegetation qualify as EU HD Annex I habitat 1310 *Salicornia* mud. It is typically a very species-poor community (species/4 m² = 2.9, n = 124), but the species that do occur are specialists. *Puccinellia fasciculata* is a nationally rare species listed on the Flora Protection Order.

Management

These swards are typically unmanaged. The main threat to this saltmarsh community is perceived to be invasion by *Spartina* agg. Sea-level rises as a result of climate change could potentially have an impact, particularly in areas susceptible to coastal squeeze. Impacts from casual harvesting of *Salicornia* are not likely to be significant.

Key references

Devaney, F.M. & Perrin, P.M. (2015) Saltmarsh Angiosperm Assessment Tool for Ireland (SMAATIE), EPA Research End of Project Report (2013-W-DS-10), Environmental Protection Agency, Johnstown Castle, Wexford, Ireland.

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Photo 1. SM1A *Salicornia* agg. saltmarsh, Tramore Backstrand, Waterford (M. Penk, July 2016)



Photo 2. SM1A *Salicornia* agg. saltmarsh, Tramore Backstrand, Waterford (M. Penk, July 2016)