

Scientific name	<i>Puccinellia maritima</i> – <i>Aster tripolium</i> saltmarsh
Common name	Common Saltmarsh-grass – Sea Aster saltmarsh
Community code	SM2D

Vegetation

This saltmarsh community is strongly dominated by *Puccinellia maritima*, which can form dense monospecific lawns. Usually, however, there is some *Aster tripolium* dotted throughout the sward. *Plantago maritima*, *Triglochin maritimum*, *Glaux maritima*, *Spergularia media*, *Cochlearia officinalis* and *Spartina* agg. are all occasional. Where the *Puccinellia* has lodged, some of these other species may not be immediately apparent. *Salicornia* agg. is also occasional, generally occurring where the sward is a bit more open. Mean maximum vegetation height = 47.2 cm, $n = 15$.

Ecology

This is a lower marsh community that is fairly frequently inundated. Conditions are base-rich (mean pH = 7.6, $n = 15$).

Sub-communities

No sub-communities have been described for this community

Similar communities

From the other communities in this group, community SM2D is chiefly differentiated by the dominance of *Puccinellia maritima*.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	269
Transitional:	9
Total:	278

Number of records (mapped)

2001-2020:	200
1986-2000:	40
1971-1985:	30
Pre-1971:	8
Total:	278

Number of hectads (by most recent time period)

2001-2020:	65
1986-2000:	3
1971-1985:	8
Pre-1971:	2
Total:	78

Number of hectads (records in each time period)

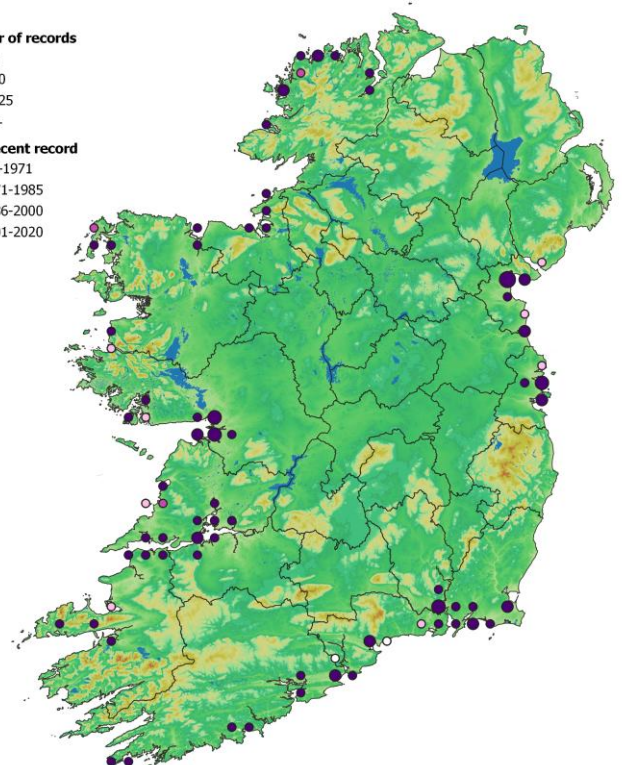
2001-2020:	65
1986-2000:	10
1971-1985:	19
Pre-1971:	5

Number of records

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

Most recent record

- pre-1971
- 1971-1985
- 1986-2000
- 2001-2020



Synoptic table (n = 267)

Species	Frequency	Cover	Species	Frequency	Cover
	(from I-V)	min (med) max		(from I-V)	min (med) max
<i>Puccinellia maritima</i>	V	5-(9)-10	<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	I	3-(3)-5
<i>Aster tripolium</i>	IV	1-(3)-7	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	I	2-(2)-3
<i>Salicornia</i> agg.	II	2-(3)-5	<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	I	2-(2)-7
<i>Plantago maritima</i>	II	1-(3)-4	<i>Seriphidium maritimum</i>	I	4-(5)-6
<i>Triglochin maritimum</i>	II	+- (3)-8	<i>Apium graveolens</i>	I	2-(2)-2
<i>Glaux maritima</i>	II	1-(2)-8	<i>Atriplex laciniata</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Spergularia media</i>	II	2-(2)-7	<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	I	2-(3)-4
<i>Spartina</i> agg.	II	2-(3)-7	<i>Parapholis strigosa</i>	I	+- (3)-3
<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i> agg.	II	2-(2)-5	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	I	3-(5)-6
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	I	2-(3)-4	<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	I	2-(3)-3
<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	I	2-(2)-7	<i>Carex extensa</i>	I	2-(2)-2
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	I	+- (2)-5	<i>Chenopodium rubrum</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	I	2-(3)-7	<i>Elytrigia juncea</i>	I	2-(2)-2
<i>Limonium humile</i>	I	1-(2)-6	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	I	2-(2)-2
<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	I	+- (4)-6	<i>Plantago major</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Juncus gerardii</i>	I	2-(3)-7	<i>Poa palustris</i>	I	5-(5)-5
<i>Bolboschoenus maritimus</i>	I	2-(3)-5	<i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i>	I	2-(2)-2
<i>Cochlearia anglica</i>	I	+- (3)-9	<i>Samolus valerandi</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	I	2-(3)-6	<i>Sarcocornia perennis</i>	I	3-(3)-3
<i>Spergularia marina</i>	I	2-(3)-4	<i>Viola palustris</i>	I	2-(2)-2

Affinities

GHI: CM1 Lower salt marsh

ZM: MF03A Festucion maritimae Christiansen 1927)

EUNIS: A2.541 Atlantic saltmarsh grass lawns / A2.546 *Puccinellia maritima* low-mid saltmarshes

NVC: SM13 *Puccinellia maritima* saltmarsh community (71.6%)

Annex I: 1330 Atlantic salt meadows / 1420 Halophilous scrub

Proxy environmental data

Light: 8.9 Reaction: 7.0 Wetness: 7.9 Fertility: 5.9 Salinity: 4.9

Conservation value

Almost all examples of this vegetation qualify as EU HD Annex I habitat 1330 Atlantic salt meadows. Where *Sarcocornia perennis* occurs, however, the vegetation is instead referable to habitat 1420 Halophilous scrub. This rare species of the southeast is also listed on the Flora Protection Order, 2015, as is *Puccinellia fasciculata*. This is typically a rather species-poor saltmarsh community (species/4 m² = 5.5, n = 204), but the species that are present are specialists.

Management

The main immediate threats to this saltmarsh community are probably grazing by livestock and invasion by *Spartina* agg. Sea-level rises as a result of climate change will have an impact, particularly in areas susceptible to coastal squeeze.

Key references

McCorry, M., Ryle, T. (2009) Saltmarsh Monitoring Project 2007-2008. 5 volumes. (unpublished). National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin.

McCorry, M. (2007) Saltmarsh Monitoring Project 2006. (unpublished). National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin.

Irvine, K. M. (2004). The comparative ecology of *Puccinellia fasciculata*, *P. distans* and *P. maritima*. (M.Sc. Thesis). University College Dublin.

Synopsis version: V2.1

Synopsis date: March 2025

Synopsis author(s): P.M. Perrin



Photo 1. SM2D *Puccinellia maritima* – *Aster tripolium* saltmarsh, River Suir, Cheekpoint, Waterford (M. Penk, August 2016)

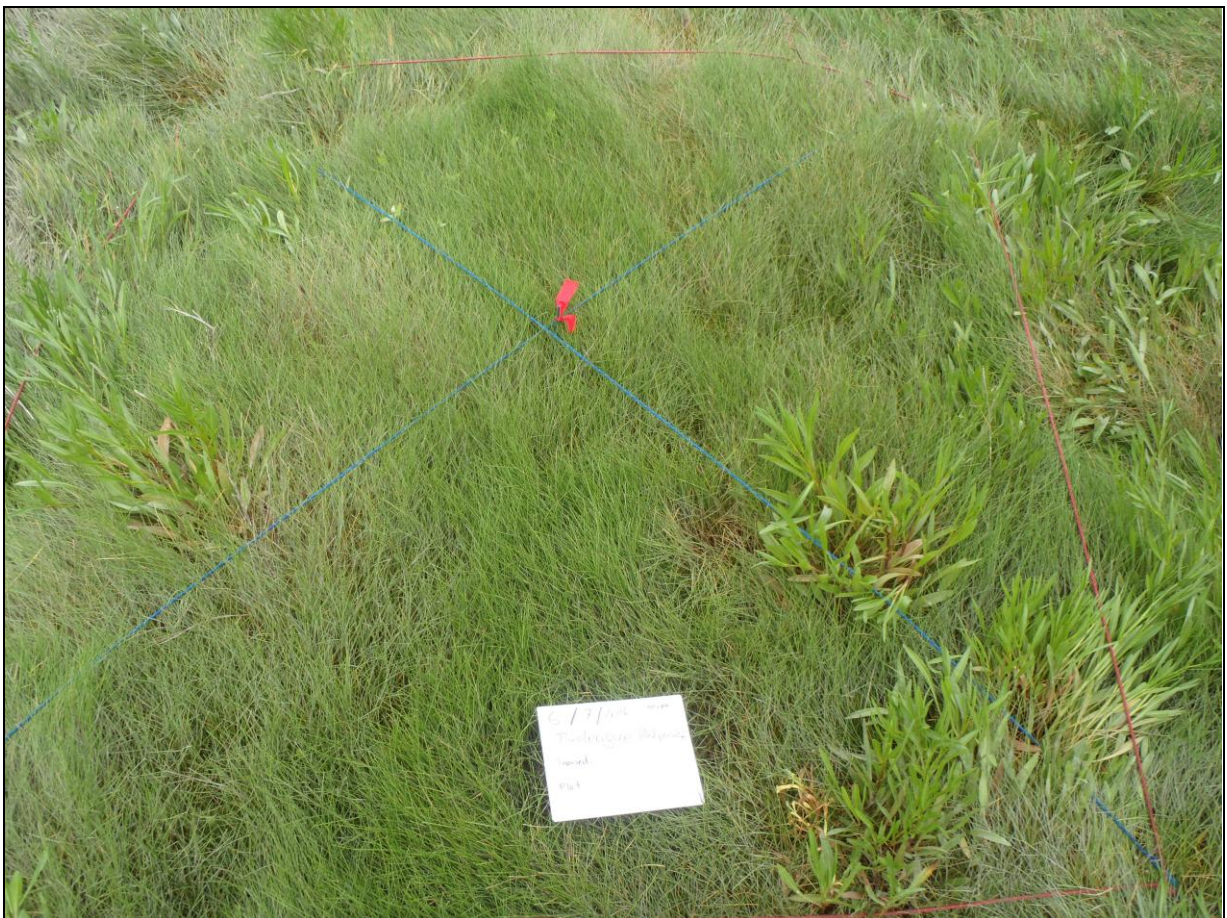


Photo 2. Plot recording in SM2D *Puccinellia maritima* – *Aster tripolium* saltmarsh, Argideen Estuary, Timoleague, Cork (M. Penk, July 2016)