

<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> – <i>Galium palustre</i> woodland
<b>Common name</b>	Ash – Marsh Bedstraw woodland
<b>Community code</b>	WL3A

### Vegetation

This highly diverse wet woodland community has a medium-height canopy (mean canopy height = 15.2 m,  $n = 51$ ) largely composed of *Fraxinus excelsior* and *Alnus glutinosa* with some *Salix cinerea* and *Betula pubescens*. *Ilex aquifolium* is usually found in the understorey while *Corylus avellana* and *Crataegus monogyna* are also frequent. The field layer has a large number of constant species including wetland indicators (*Filipendula ulmaria*, *Carex remota*, *Galium palustre* and *Ranunculus repens*) alongside species of drier but moist substrates (*Hedera helix*, *Rubus fruticosus* agg., *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Viola riviniana/reichenbachiana*, *Geranium robertianum* and *Circaea lutetiana*). The bryophyte layer is mainly composed of a standard woodland assemblage of *Thuidium tamariscinum*, *Plagiomnium undulatum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Isoetecium myosuroides* and *Hypnum cupressiforme*, but species that are common on damper soils, such as *Pellia epiphylla*, *Hookeria lucens* and *Calliergonella cuspidata*, are also frequent.

### Ecology

These stands most often occur on base-rich, gleyed soils, but sometimes on basin peats or the damper types of well-drained mineral soils and usually have a fairly low organic component (mean organic content = 38.5%,  $n = 51$ ). They are found chiefly in the lowlands on flat ground, in hollows, near rivers, along lakeshores, or on the flushed slopes of hillsides (mean altitude = 70 m,  $n = 51$ ; mean slope = 3.8°,  $n = 51$ ). Soils, which may be waterlogged but are not usually subject to inundation, are of medium fertility in relation to other woodlands.

### Sub-communities

No sub-communities have been described for this community.

### Similar communities

These stands are close to those of community WL3C in which *Alnus* and *Fraxinus* are also constants. The present community, however, is more species-rich with a greater component of *Salix cinerea* and *Betula pubescens* while *Acer pseudoplatanus* is seldom encountered.

### Records and distribution

#### Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	55
Transitional:	14
Total:	69

#### Number of records (mapped)

2001-2015:	65
1986-2000:	1
1971-1985:	0
Pre-1971:	0
Total:	66

#### Number of hectads (most recent records)

2001-2015:	56
1986-2000:	1
1971-1985:	0
Pre-1971:	0
Total:	57

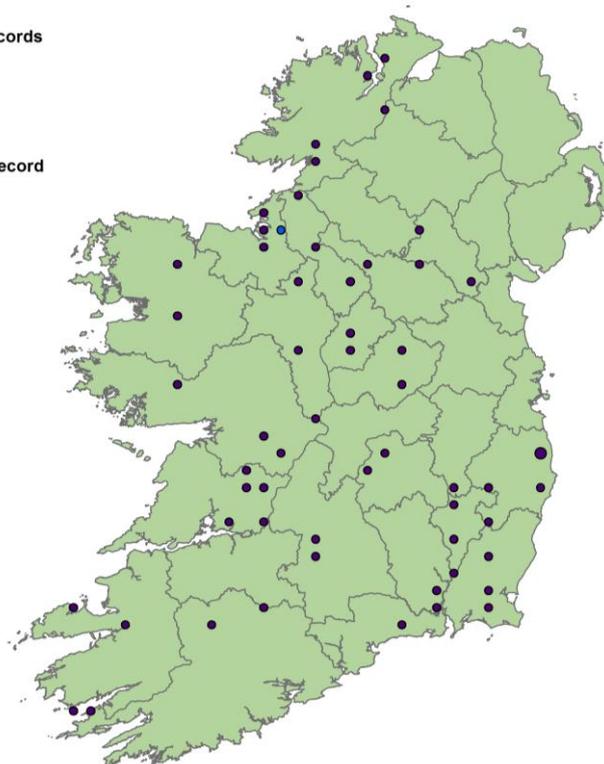
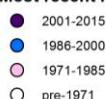
#### Number of hectads (all mapped records)

2001-2015:	56
1986-2000:	1
1971-1985:	0
Pre-1971:	0

#### Number of records



#### Most recent record



### Synoptic table (n = 54)

Species	Frequency	Cover		Species	Frequency	Cover	
	(from I-V)	min (med) max	(from I-V)		min (med) max		
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	V	+- (6)-9		<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	IV	+- (2)-4	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	V	1-(3)-7		<i>Betula pubescens</i>	IV	+- (4)-8	
<i>Thuidium tamariscinum</i>	V	+- (4)-8		<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	IV	1-(3)-5	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	V	+- (4)-8		<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	IV	+- (2)-5	
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	V	1-(4)-8		<i>Geum urbanum</i>	III	+- (2)-5	
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	V	3-(6)-9		<i>Pellia epiphylla</i>	III	+- (1)-5	
<i>Plagiomnium undulatum</i>	V	+- (2)-5		<i>Corylus avellana</i>	III	1-(4)-8	
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	V	+- (3)-5		<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	III	+- (3)-5	
<i>Kindbergia praelonga</i>	IV	+- (3)-5		<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>	III	1-(2)-4	
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	IV	3-(4)-8		<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	III	+- (3)-5	
<i>Viola riviniana/reichenbachiana</i>	IV	+- (2)-4		<i>Juncus effusus</i>	III	+- (2)-7	
<i>Eurhynchium striatum</i>	IV	+- (3)-5		<i>Lophocolea bidentata</i>	III	+- (1)-2	
<i>Carex remota</i>	IV	2-(5)-9		<i>Ulota bruchii/crispa</i>	III	+- (+)-2	
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	IV	+- (2)-5		<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	III	+- (3)-6	
<i>Galium palustre</i>	IV	+- (2)-3		<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	III	+- (2)-5	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	IV	+- (3)-7		<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	III	+- (2)-3	
<i>Isoetes macrospora</i>	IV	1-(2)-4		<i>Metzgeria furcata</i>	III	+- (+)-2	
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	IV	1-(2)-5		<i>Frullania dilatata</i>	III	+- (+)-3	
<i>Hypnum cupressiforme</i>	IV	+- (2)-3		<i>Hookeria lucens</i>	III	+- (1)-2	
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	IV	+- (2)-5		<i>Rhizomnium punctatum</i>	III	+- (2)-5	

#### Affinities

GHI: WN6 Wet willow-alder-ash woodland (72.5%) / WN4 Wet pedunculate oak-ash woodland (19.6%) (n = 51)

ZM: Alnion incanae

EUNIS: G1.2132 West European tall herb ash-alder woods

NVC: W7 *Alnus glutinosa-Fraxinus excelsior-Lysimachia nemorum* woodland (46.1%)

Annex I: 91E0 Residual alluvial forests\* (37.3%) (n = 51)

#### Proxy environmental data

Light: 5.4      Reaction: 5.8      Wetness: 6.7      Fertility: 5.2      Salinity: 0.0

#### Conservation value

This is on average an exceptionally species-rich woodland community (total species/100 m<sup>2</sup> = 50.5, n = 51) with a diverse bryophyte flora (bryophyte species/100 m<sup>2</sup> = 16.9, n = 51). Stands along rivers and lakes which are subject to periodic inundation qualify as EU Annex I habitat 91E0 Residual alluvial forests\*.

#### Management

The main threats to these woodlands include changes to hydrological regimes, overgrazing by livestock (usually cattle), woodland clearance and invasion by non-native species.

#### Key references

Perrin, P.M., Martin, J.R., Barron, S.J., O'Neill, F.H., McNutt, K.E., Delaney, A. (2008) National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003-2008. Unpublished report submitted to National Parks & Wildlife Service

**Synopsis version:** V1.0

**Synopsis date:** December 2016

**Synopsis author(s):** P.M. Perrin



Photo 1. WL3A *Fraxinus excelsior* – *Galium palustre* woodland, Manch East, Cork (E. Cole/T. Higgins, September 2006)



Photo 2. WL3A *Fraxinus excelsior* – *Galium palustre* woodland, Mountain Wood, Sligo (F. O'Neill/P. Perrin, June 2006)