

Scientific name	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Hylocomium splendens</i> heath
Common name	Heather – Glittering Wood-moss heath
Community code	HE3A

Vegetation

Whilst *Calluna vulgaris* dominates this community, *Vaccinium myrtillus* is usually a conspicuous companion. Tufts of *Deschampsia flexuosa* are usually found poking through the dwarf shrubs, and stems of *Potentilla erecta* and *Galium saxatile* are frequent. Occasionally one will find some small specimens of *Erica cinerea* and, particularly in disturbed areas, the stiff rosettes of *Juncus squarrosus*. The bryophyte layer is well-developed and composed mainly of the typical heathland pleurocarps: *Hylocomium splendens*, *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*, *Hypnum jutlandicum* and *Pleurozium schreberi*.

Ecology

This heath community occurs on the middle to upper slopes of hills and mountains, at the lower end of the montane zone (mean altitude = 470 m, $n = 73$). Soils are relatively well-drained, acidic and infertile.

Sub-communities

No sub-communities have been described for this community.

Similar communities

From the lower altitude heaths of the HE2 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Erica cinerea* group, this community differs in the prevalence of *Vaccinium myrtillus* and the frequency of *Deschampsia flexuosa*. The other heaths in this group occur at higher altitudes in more windswept locations where *Racomitrium lanuginosum* is usually a prominent feature.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	150
Transitional:	25
Total:	175

Number of records (mapped)

2001-2015:	71
1986-2000:	94
1971-1985:	1
Pre-1971:	6
Total:	172

Number of hectads (most recent records)

2001-2015:	30
1986-2000:	12
1971-1985:	1
Pre-1971:	2
Total:	45

Number of hectads (all mapped records)

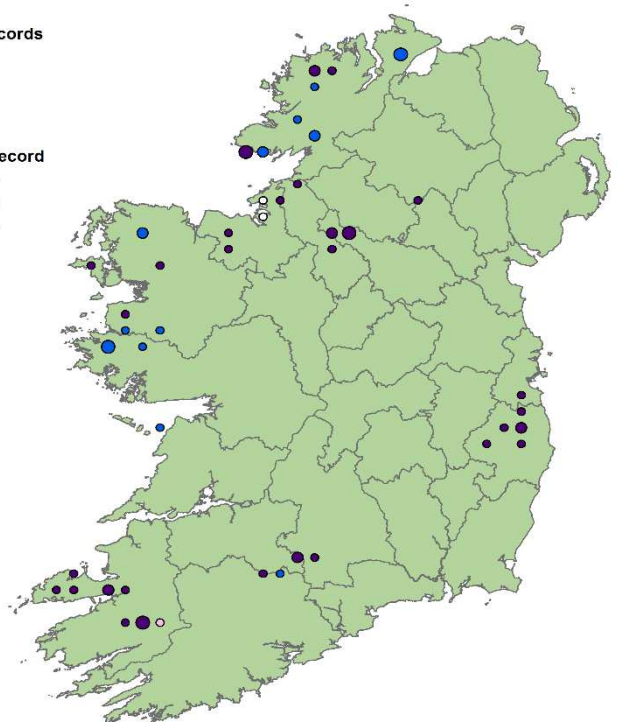
2001-2015:	30
1986-2000:	14
1971-1985:	1
Pre-1971:	4

Number of records

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

Most recent record

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



Synoptic table (n = 144)

Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover		Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover	
		min	(med) max			min	(med) max
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	V	2-	(8)-10	<i>Scapania gracilis</i>	II	+-	(2)-5
<i>Rhytidiadelphus loreus</i>	V	2-	(5)-9	<i>Scleropodium purum</i>	II	+-	(2)-7
<i>Hylocomium splendens</i>	V	1-	(5)-8	<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	I	+-	(3)-5
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	V	1-	(4)-9	<i>Empetrum nigrum</i>	I	1-	(3)-7
<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	IV	+-	(3)-8	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	I	1-	(3)-5
<i>Hypnum jutlandicum</i>	IV	+-	(3)-8	<i>Diplophyllum albicans</i>	I	+-	(2)-3
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	III	+-	(3)-5	<i>Campylopus flexuosus</i>	I	+-	(2)-3
<i>Pleurozium schreberi</i>	III	+-	(3)-7	<i>Calypogeia muelleriana</i>	I	+-	(2)-3
<i>Galium saxatile</i>	III	+-	(3)-5	<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	I	1-	(3)-7
<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>	II	+-	(5)-9	<i>Racomitrium lanuginosum</i>	I	+-	(3)-7
<i>Plagiothecium undulatum</i>	II	+-	(2)-5	<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>	I	1-	(3)-5
<i>Dicranum scoparium</i>	II	+-	(3)-7	<i>Carex binervis</i>	I	1-	(2)-5
<i>Polytrichum commune</i>	II	+-	(4)-7	<i>Lophozia ventricosa</i>	I	+-	(2)-3
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	II	+-	(3)-5	<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	I	+-	(3)-5
<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	II	+-	(2)-8	<i>Agrostis canina/vinealis</i>	I	1-	(2)-5
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	II	+-	(3)-5	<i>Sphagnum subnitens</i>	I	2-	(3)-7
<i>Lophocolea bidentata</i>	II	+-	(2)-5	<i>Polytrichum formosum</i>	I	+-	(2)-3
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	II	1-	(3)-7	<i>Cladonia portentosa</i>	I	2-	(2)-7
<i>Sphagnum capillifolium</i>	II	+-	(4)-7	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	I	2-	(4)-9
<i>Thuidium tamariscinum</i>	II	+-	(3)-6	<i>Cephalozia bicuspidata</i>	I	+-	(2)-3

Affinities

GHI: HH1 Dry siliceous heath / HH4 Montane heath

ZM: ULI-02B Calluno – Genistion pilosae P. Duvigneaud 1945

EUNIS: F4.212 Sub-boreal *Vaccinium* heaths / F2.251 Hiberno-Scotian dwarf mountain heaths

NVC: H12a *Calluna vulgaris* – *Vaccinium myrtillus* heath *Calluna vulgaris* sub-community (69.3%)

Annex I: 4030 Dry heaths / 4060 Alpine and subalpine heath

Proxy environmental data

Light: 6.4 Reaction: 2.4 Wetness: 5.9 Fertility: 2.1 Salinity: 0.0

Conservation value

Most of the examples of this vegetation should qualify as EU Annex I habitat 4030 Dry heaths. In locations at higher altitudes where there is wind-clipping of the dwarf shrubs, vegetation may instead qualify as 4060 Alpine and subalpine heath. This is on average a moderately species-poor community (species/4 m² = 17.9 , n = 76).

Management

These heaths, which often form parts of commonages, may be used as rough grazing land (typically for sheep). Burning may be periodically used across large areas to suppress the dwarf shrubs and encourage grass growth. Overgrazing can also be a problem.

Key references

Perrin, P.M., Barron, S.J., Roche, J.R. & O’Hanrahan, B. (2014) Guidelines for a national survey and conservation assessment of upland vegetation and habitats in Ireland. *Irish Wildlife Manuals*, No. 79. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Synopsis version: V1.0

Synopsis date: November 2017

Synopsis author(s): P.M. Perrin

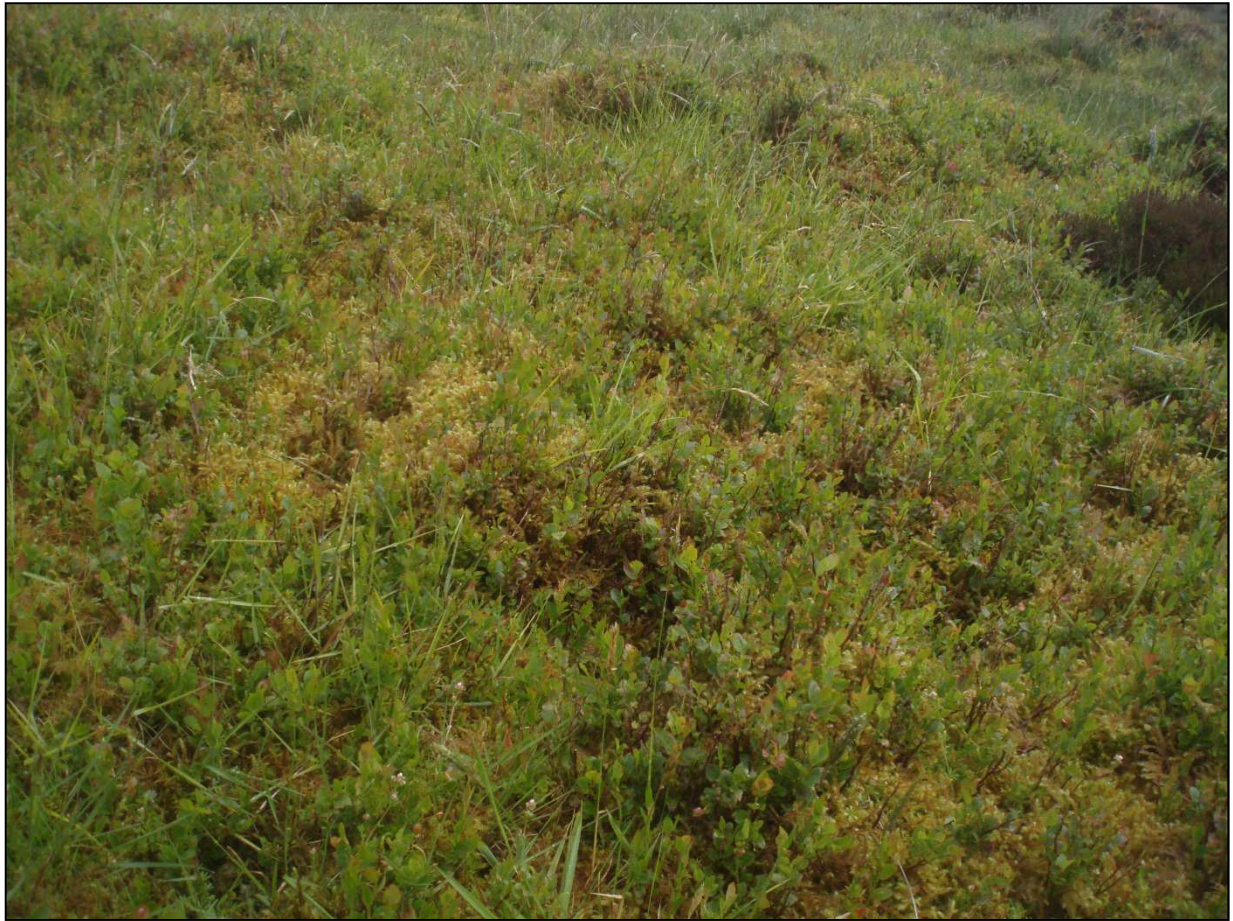


Photo 1. HE3A *Calluna vulgaris* – *Hylocomium splendens* heath, Tullyvella, Ox Mountains, Sligo (P. Perrin, June 2012)



Photo 2. HE3A *Calluna vulgaris* – *Hylocomium splendens* heath, Altnadarragh, Benbrack, Cavan
(E. O'Sullivan September 2012)