



Scientific name	<i>Molinia caerulea</i> – <i>Schoenus nigricans</i> bog/heath
Common name	Purple Moor-grass – Black Bog-rush bog/heath
Community code	HE4C

Vegetation

This assemblage is dominated by a mixture of *Schoenus nigricans* and *Molinia caerulea* which lend it a grassy and tussocky appearance. Dwarf shrub cover is low although both *Calluna vulgaris* and *Erica tetralix* are constants here, as is *Potentilla erecta*. Frequent species in the field layer comprise *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Polygala serpyllifolia*, *Narthecium ossifragum* and *Drosera rotundifolia*. The bryophyte layer is somewhat sparse with the following species frequent but none constant: *Racomitrium lanuginosum*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Odontoschisma sphagni*, *Sphagnum papillosum* and the vermicular *Pleurozia purpurea*.

Ecology

This is a community of lowland blanket bogs and wet heaths on the lower slopes of hills and mountains (mean altitude = 152 m, $n = 75$). Soils are wet, acidic and infertile ombrogenous peats.

Sub-communities

Two sub-communities are described. The *Myrica gale* – *Sphagnum papillosum* sub-community (HE4Ci) occurs in flushed or boggy situations and has a higher frequency of *Sphagnum* species than the *Racomitrium lanuginosum* – *Pleurozia purpurea* sub-community (HE4Cii) where *Cladonia* species are more prevalent.

Similar communities

The BG1C *Schoenus nigricans* – *Eriophorum angustifolium* bog is a rather degraded *Schoenus* bog with lower overall plant cover than HE4C. The BG2D *Erica tetralix* – *Schoenus nigricans* bog is more diverse than HE4C with less dominance of *Schoenus* and *Molinia*. In both those other communities, *Rhynchospora alba* is a constant, unlike in HE4C, which is more heathy and less boggy in character.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	278
Transitional:	42
Total:	320

Number of records (mapped)

2001-2015:	85
1986-2000:	151
1971-1985:	17
Pre-1971:	6
Total:	259

Number of hectads (most recent records)

2001-2015:	22
1986-2000:	10
1971-1985:	4
Pre-1971:	0
Total:	36

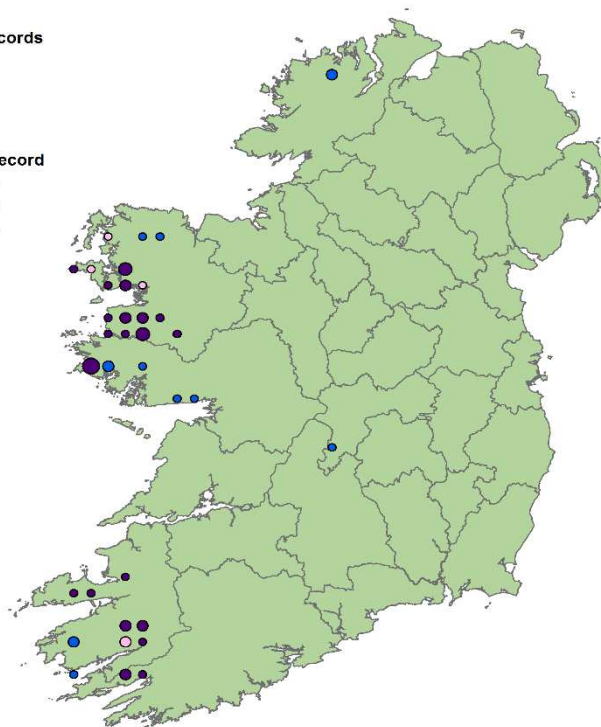
Number of hectads (all mapped records)

2001-2015:	22
1986-2000:	15
1971-1985:	8
Pre-1971:	4

Number of records



Most recent record



Synoptic table (n = 256)

Species	Frequency	Cover	Species	Frequency	Cover
	(from I-V)	min (med) max		(from I-V)	min (med) max
<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>	V	3-(6)-10	<i>Cladonia uncialis</i>	II	+-(2)-5
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	V	4-(7)-10	<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>	II	+-(3)-5
<i>Erica tetralix</i>	V	+-(3)-7	<i>Sphagnum subsecundum</i> agg.	II	+-(2)-7
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	V	+-(4)-7	<i>Rhynchospora alba</i>	II	+-(3)-5
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	IV	+-(2)-5	<i>Erica cinerea</i>	II	+-(2)-5
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	III	+-(3)-7	<i>Carex panicea</i>	I	+-(2)-5
<i>Racomitrium lanuginosum</i>	III	+-(3)-7	<i>Breutelia chrysocoma</i>	I	+-(2)-7
<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>	III	+-(2)-4	<i>Sphagnum palustre</i>	I	+-(3)-5
<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>	III	+-(3)-6	<i>Campylopus atrovirens</i>	I	+-(3)-7
<i>Hypnum jutlandicum</i>	III	+-(2)-5	<i>Diplophyllum albicans</i>	I	+-(2)-4
<i>Pleurozia purpurea</i>	III	+-(3)-9	<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	I	+-(2)-3
<i>Odontoschisma sphagni</i>	III	+-(2)-5	<i>Campylopus flexuosus</i>	I	+-(2)-5
<i>Sphagnum papillosum</i>	III	+-(4)-7	<i>Sphagnum cuspidatum</i>	I	+-(3)-5
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	III	+-(2)-5	<i>Leucobryum glaucum</i>	I	+-(2)-5
<i>Sphagnum capillifolium</i>	II	+-(3)-7	<i>Carex echinata</i>	I	+-(3)-5
<i>Cladonia portentosa</i>	II	+-(2)-5	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	I	+-(2)-7
<i>Sphagnum subnitens</i>	II	+-(3)-7	<i>Hylocomium splendens</i>	I	+-(1)-4
<i>Trichophorum cesp./germanicum</i>	II	+-(3)-7	<i>Kurzia pauciflora</i>	I	+-(2)-2
<i>Myrica gale</i>	II	+-(3)-8	<i>Eleocharis multicaulis</i>	I	+-(3)-8
<i>Sphagnum tenellum</i>	II	+-(2)-5	<i>Sphagnum compactum</i>	I	+-(3)-5

Affinities

GHI: HH3 Wet heath / PB3 Lowland blanket bog

ZM: OXY-01A *Ericion tetralicis* Schwickerath 1933 / OXY-01B *Oxycocco* – *Ericion tetralicis* Nordhagen et. Tx 1937

EUNIS: F4.11 Northern wet heaths / D1.21 Hyperoceanic low-altitude blanket bogs, typically with dominant *Trichophorum*

NVC: M17a *Scirpus cespitosus* – *Eriophorum vaginatum* blanket mire *Drosera rotundifolia* – *Sphagnum* sub-community (74.2%)

Annex I:4010 Wet heath / 7130 Blanket bog (active)*

Proxy environmental data

Light: 7.4 Reaction: 3.6 Wetness: 7.7 Fertility: 1.8 Salinity: 0.0

Conservation value

This is on average a fairly species-poor peatland community (species/4 m² = 16.7, n = 134). Most examples will qualify as either EU HD Annex I habitat 4010 Wet heath or habitat 7130 Blanket bog (active)*.

Management

Where it occurs as heathland this community often forms parts of commonages and is usually used as rough grazing land (typically for sheep); overgrazing may be a problem. Burning may be periodically used across large areas to suppress the dwarf shrubs and encourage grass growth. Where it occurs as bog it is often used for turf-cutting, either by hand or machine. The other main threats are afforestation and agricultural improvement.

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. HE4C *Molinia caerulea* – *Schoenus nigricans* bog/heath, Canshanavoe, Caha Mountains, Cork
(E. O'Sullivan, August 2014)



Photo 2. HE4C *Molinia caerulea* – *Schoenus nigricans* bog/heath, Glena, Killarney National Park, Kerry (J. Denyer, July 2011)