

Scientific name	<i>Schoenus nigricans</i> – <i>Succisa pratensis</i> fen
Common name	Black Bog-rush – Devil's-bit Scabious fen
Community code	FE1B

Vegetation

This a tussocky fen community dominated *Schoenus nigricans* and *Molinia caerulea*. Other constant species in the field layer are *Succisa pratensis*, *Carex panicea* and *Potentilla erecta*, whilst *Cirsium dissectum* and *Carex flacca* are frequently found. There is usually a notable 'brown moss' bryophyte layer in which *Campylium stellatum* is the mainstay and *Ctenidium molluscum* is frequent, while, occasionally, one will find *Fissidens adianthoides* or the sickle-leaved *Drepanocladus cossonii/revolvens*, and less often *Scorpidium scorpioides*. *Calliergonella cuspidata* is also occasional.

Ecology

This community occurs in wet fens and flushes on mildly basic, nutrient-poor peats.

Sub-communities

No sub-communities are described.

Similar communities

The most closely related community is the FE1A *Schoenus nigricans* – *Campylium stellatum* fen. Both communities contain *Schoenus*, *Molinia* and a suite of 'brown mosses'. FE1A, however, contains many species of ombrotrophic bogs including *Eriophorum angustifolium*, *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Myrica gale*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius*, *Erica tetralix*, *Drosera* spp. and *Narthecium ossifragum*, which are absent from the more meadow-like FE1B. The HE4C *Molinia caerulea* – *Schoenus nigricans* – *Calluna vulgaris* peatland and the BG2D *Erica tetralix* – *Schoenus nigricans* bog both share with the present community the feature of tussocky *Schoenus* and *Molinia* vegetation, but the FE1B community clearly differs from them in the absence of *Calluna vulgaris* and *Sphagnum* spp. The *Molinia* grasslands of group GL1, in which *Cirsium dissectum* is also found, lack both *Schoenus* and brown mosses.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	257
Transitional:	42
Total:	299

Number of records (mapped)

2001-2020:	61
1986-2000:	95
1971-1985:	106
Pre-1971:	35
Total:	297

Number of hectads (by most recent time period)

2001-2020:	22
1986-2000:	25
1971-1985:	8
Pre-1971:	3
Total:	58

Number of hectads (records in each time period)

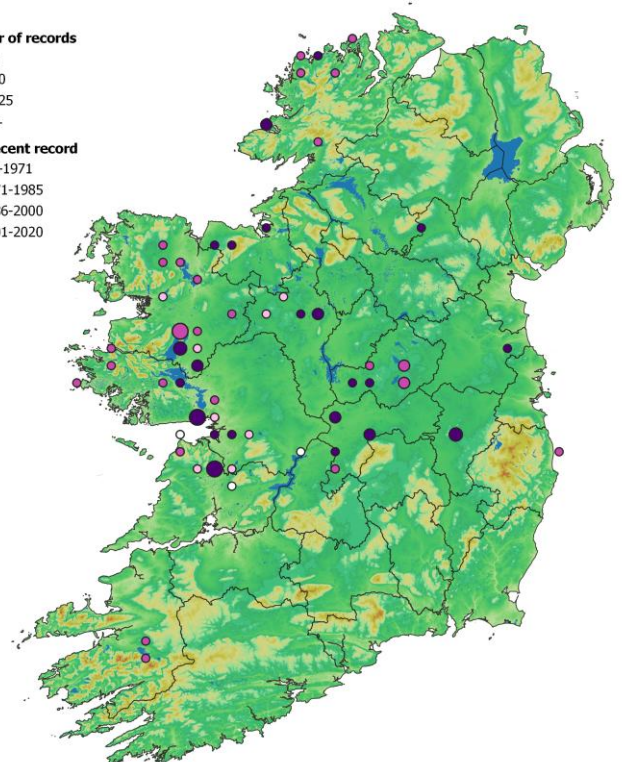
2001-2020:	22
1986-2000:	32
1971-1985:	16
Pre-1971:	7

Number of records

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

Most recent record

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



Synoptic table (n = 232)

Species	Frequency	Cover	Species	Frequency	Cover
	(from I-V)	min (med) max		(from I-V)	min (med) max
<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>	V	2-(7)-10	<i>Selaginella selaginoides</i>	II	+- (2)-3
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	V	1-(5)-8	<i>Linum catharticum</i>	II	+- (2)-3
<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	IV	1-(3)-7	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	II	+- (2)-5
<i>Campylium stellatum</i>	IV	+- (3)-8	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	II	+- (2)-5
<i>Carex panicea</i>	IV	1-(3)-8	<i>Carex hostiana</i>	II	1-(3)-6
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	IV	+- (3)-5	<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	I	+- (2)-7
<i>Cirsium dissectum</i>	III	+- (3)-8	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	I	+- (2)-5
<i>Carex flacca</i>	III	1-(3)-7	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	I	+- (2)-5
<i>Ctenidium molluscum</i>	III	1-(3)-7	<i>Galium boreale</i>	I	2-(2)-5
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	II	+- (2)-5	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	I	1-(3)-5
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	II	1-(2)-5	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	I	+- (2)-5
<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	II	1-(3)-9	<i>Scorpidium scorpioides</i>	I	1-(2)-8
<i>Carex viridula</i>	II	1-(3)-6	<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	I	1-(2)-3
<i>Parnassia palustris</i>	II	+- (2)-5	<i>Sesleria caerulea</i>	I	1-(2)-5
<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	II	+- (2)-5	<i>Briza media</i>	I	+- (3)-5
<i>Euphrasia officinalis</i> agg.	II	1-(2)-5	<i>Carex pulicaris</i>	I	+- (3)-5
<i>Fissidens adianthoides</i>	II	+- (2)-5	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	I	1-(2)-5
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	II	2-(2)-5	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	I	+- (2)-5
<i>Anagallis tenella</i>	II	+- (2)-5	<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	I	+- (2)-3
<i>Drepanocladus cossonii/revolvens</i>	II	1-(3)-8	<i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>	I	1-(4)-8

Affinities

GHI: PF1 Rich fen and flush

ZM: PA01A Caricion davallianae Klika 1934

EUNIS: D4.111 Hiberno-Britannic black bogrush fens

NVC: M10a *Carex dioica*-*Pinguicula vulgaris* mire *Carex demissa*-*Juncus bulbosus/kochii* sub-community (46.7%), but also, M13 *Schoenus nigricans*-*Juncus subnodulosus* mire (45.1%)

Annex I: 6410 *Molinia* meadows / 7230 Alkaline fens

Proxy environmental data

Light: 7.6 Reaction: 5.8 Wetness: 7.7 Fertility: 2.3 Salinity: 0.1

Conservation value

Examples of this community with high cover of *Schoenus nigricans*, *Carex* spp. and brown mosses should correspond with the EU HD Annex I habitat 7230 Alkaline fens. Examples with *Cirsium dissectum* or *Dactylorhiza incarnata* may correspond with the fen variant of habitat 6410 *Molinia* meadows. Geyer's whorl snail (*Vertigo geyeri*), an EU HD Annex II species, has been recorded from this community at several sites. It is a community of medium species richness (species/4 m² = 20.8, n = 117).

Management

These stands are typically unmanaged but may be grazed by livestock. The main threats are from peat extraction, infilling, drainage, reclamation and eutrophication.

Key references

Mooney, E. (1991) A phytosociological and palaeoecological study of the wetlands of the Lower Corrib Basin, Co. Galway, Ireland. (Ph.D. thesis). National University of Ireland Galway.

O'Criodain, C. (1988) Parvocaricetea in Ireland (Ph.D. thesis). University College Dublin.

Synopsis version: V2.1

Synopsis date: March 2025

Synopsis author(s): P.M. Perrin



Photo 1. FE1B *Schoenus nigricans* – *Succisa pratensis* fen, Drimmon Lough, Roscommon (J. Brophy, June 2014)



Photo 2. FE1B *Schoenus nigricans* – *Succisa pratensis* fen, Sheskinmore, Donegal (J. Brophy, August 2014)