



Scientific name	<i>Carex nigra</i> – <i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i> fen
Common name	Common Sedge – Pointed Spear-moss fen
Community code	FE3D

Vegetation

A striking feature of this fen community is the typical presence of a mossy carpet of the pointy shoots of *Calliergonella cuspidata*. Through this grows a modest sward of *Agrostis stolonifera*. Other constant species are *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Carex nigra*, *Juncus articulatus*, *Galium palustre* and *Ranunculus flammula*. *Trifolium repens*, usually an indicator of agricultural improvement, is frequent, as are *Mentha aquatica*, *Eleocharis palustris* and *Cardamine pratensis*. Bryophytes other than *Calliergonella* are seldom seen.

Ecology

This wetland community occurs in mildly base-rich and mildly nutrient-poor situations, often where there is a fluctuating water table. It has predominantly been recorded from dune-slacks in coastal systems as well as more typical fens, lake margins and wet grasslands.

Sub-communities

No sub-communities are currently described.

Similar communities

The abundance of *Calliergonella cuspidata* will help separate FE3D from other communities in this group. Two *Agrostis stolonifera* grassland communities are also similar. The GL1B *Agrostis stolonifera* – *Filipendula ulmaria* marsh-grassland differs in that *Filipendula ulmaria* is a constant there but seldom seen in FE3D, while in the rather species-poor GL2A *Agrostis stolonifera* – *Ranunculus repens* marsh-grassland, *Carex nigra* is only occasional and *Ranunculus repens* a constant.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	156
Transitional:	63
Total:	219

Number of records (mapped)

2001-2015:	23
1986-2000:	126
1971-1985:	67
Pre-1971:	2
Total:	218

Number of hectads (most recent records)

2001-2015:	17
1986-2000:	33
1971-1985:	5
Pre-1971:	2
Total:	57

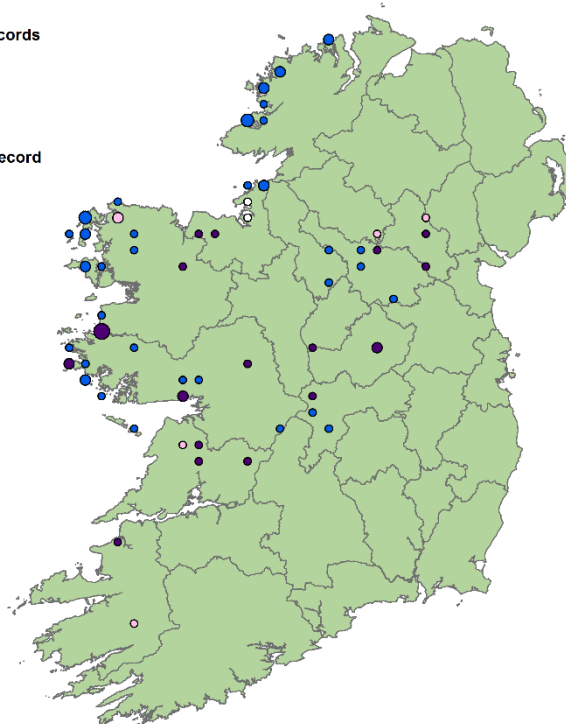
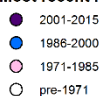
Number of hectads (all mapped records)

2001-2015:	24
1986-2000:	2
1971-1985:	1
Pre-1971:	6

Number of records



Most recent record



Synopsis table (n = 147)

Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max	Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max
<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	V	3-(7)-10	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	II	2-(4)-6
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	V	2-(4)-8	<i>Triglochin palustre</i>	II	+-(3)-5
<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	IV	2-(4)-9	<i>Myosotis laxa</i>	II	1-(3)-8
<i>Carex nigra</i>	IV	2-(5)-9	<i>Sagina nodosa</i>	II	+-(3)-5
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	IV	1-(3)-9	<i>Carex flacca</i>	II	2-(3)-5
<i>Galium palustre</i>	IV	1-(3)-7	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	II	1-(3)-6
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	IV	+-(3)-5	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	II	+-(3)-5
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	III	1-(3)-7	<i>Anagallis tenella</i>	II	2-(3)-7
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	III	2-(3)-7	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	II	+-(3)-5
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	III	1-(3)-8	<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	I	2-(4)-7
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	III	1-(3)-5	<i>Carex panicea</i>	I	1-(3)-6
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	II	1-(3)-5	<i>Samolus valerandi</i>	I	1-(2)-4
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	II	1-(3)-5	<i>Sagina procumbens</i>	I	2-(3)-4
<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	II	1-(3)-7	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	I	1-(3)-5
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	II	1-(3)-6	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	I	1-(3)-5
<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	II	1-(3)-5	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	I	+-(4)-8
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	II	+-(3)-7	<i>Glaux maritima</i>	I	1-(3)-6
<i>Epilobium palustre</i>	II	1-(3)-5	<i>Potentilla palustris</i>	I	2-(2)-7
<i>Poa pratensis/humilis</i>	II	2-(3)-5	<i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i> agg.	I	+-(3)-5
<i>Senecio aquaticus</i>	II	+-(3)-7	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	I	1-(2)-5

Affinities

GHI: CD5 Dune slacks / PF1 Rich fen and flush

ZM: SCH-01A Caricion davallianae Klika 1934

EUNIS: B1.83 Dune-slack fens / E3.4422 Creeping bent flood swards

NVC: SD17 *Potentilla anserina* – *Carex nigra* dune-slack community (69.0%)

Annex I: 2190 Dune slack

Proxy environmental data

Light: 7.3 Reaction: 6.0 Wetness: 7.5 Fertility: 4.0 Salinity: 0.4

Conservation value

This is a fairly species-rich community. Examples from coastal dune-systems may correspond with the EU HD Annex I habitat 2190 Dune slack. It has also been recorded adjacent to areas corresponding to priority habitat 1150 Lagoon*

Management

These stands may be subject to livestock grazing. The main threats are groundwater pollution, drainage, inappropriate grazing and reclamation.

Key references

Beckers, A., Brock, T., Klerkx, J. (1976) A vegetation study of some parts of Dooaghtry, Co. Mayo, Republic of Ireland (unpublished). National Parks & Wildlife Service, Dublin, Ireland.

Crawford, I., Bleasdale, A., Conaghan, J. (1996) BIOMAR survey of Irish machairs sites. Vol. I. Site information. (No. 3), Irish Wildlife Manuals. Dúchas, The Heritage Service, Dublin, Ireland.

Synopsis version: V1.0

Synopsis date: November 2018

Synopsis author(s): P.M. Perrin



Photo 1. FE3D *Carex nigra* – *Calliergonella cuspidata* fen, Tawnamore, Sligo (R. Hodd, June 2012)



Photo 2. FE3D *Carex nigra* – *Calliergonella cuspidata* fen, near Lough Owel, Westmeath (J. Brophy, October 2014)