



<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i> – <i>Eleocharis palustris</i> swamp
<b>Common name</b>	Water Horsetail – Common Spike-rush swamp
<b>Community code</b>	FW3G

### Vegetation

The community comprises rather variable stands united by the presence of *Equisetum fluviatile*, whose cover tends to be rather low, due in part to the narrow and erect nature of the plant, but nevertheless this is the sole constant species. Only *Eleocharis palustris* is also frequent here. Occasionally, one may only find some *Sparganium erectum*, *Iris pseudacorus*, *Persicaria amphibia* or *Mentha aquatica* growing here and these can each be plentiful. Floating patches of *Lemna minor* may also occur amongst the horsetails.

### Ecology

This swamp community is found in fairly basic and mildly eutrophic waters fringing lakes.

### Sub-communities

Four sub-communities are tentatively described. Three are named after the main species associating with *Equisetum fluviatile*: the *Nuphar lutea* sub-community (FW3Gi), the *Eleocharis palustris* sub-community (FW3Gii) and the *Iris pseudacorus* sub-community (FW3Giii). In the *Equisetum fluviatile* sub-community (FW3Giv) there are no frequent associates.

### Similar communities

The high frequency of *Equisetum fluviatile* and scarcity of *Phragmites australis* help separate this vegetation type from the other communities in group FW3. From the FE2A *Equisetum fluviatile* – *Menyanthes trifoliata* mire the present community differs in its lesser presence of *Menyanthes trifoliata* and *Carex rostrata*.

### Records and distribution

#### Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	81
Transitional:	76
Total:	157

#### Number of records (mapped)

2001-2015:	32
1986-2000:	79
1971-1985:	41
Pre-1971:	4
Total:	156

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

2001-2015:	21
1986-2000:	22
1971-1985:	8
Pre-1971:	2
Total:	53

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

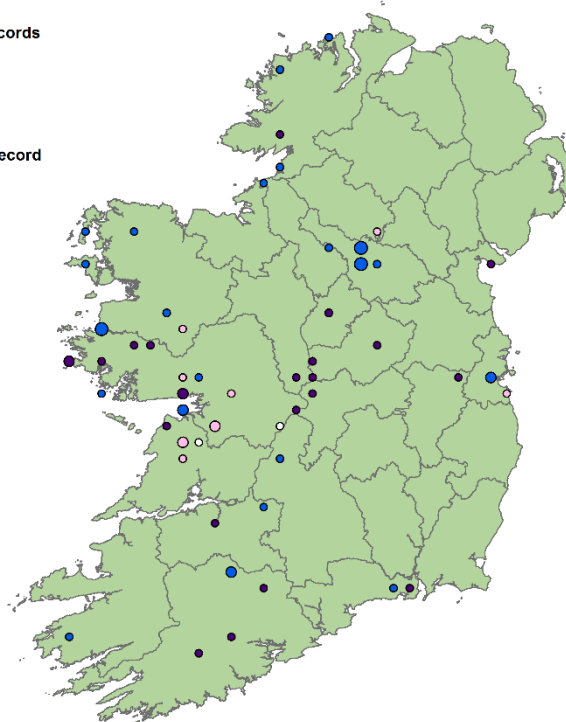
2001-2015:	21
1986-2000:	24
1971-1985:	11
Pre-1971:	3

#### Number of records

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

#### Most recent record

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



### Synoptic table (n = 74)

Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max	Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max
<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	V	2-(3)-8	<i>Nuphar lutea</i>	I	2-(7)-8
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	III	2-(3)-7	<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	I	2-(2)-3
<i>Sparganium erectum</i>	II	2-(3)-9	<i>Potamogeton natans</i>	I	2-(2)-4
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	II	2-(3)-5	<i>Carex vesicaria</i>	I	3-(5)-9
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	II	2-(5)-9	<i>Utricularia australis/vulgaris</i>	I	2-(2)-5
<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	II	2-(5)-8	<i>Potamogeton pectinatus</i>	I	2-(2)-3
<i>Lemna minor</i>	II	1-(4)-7	<i>Galium palustre</i>	I	2-(2)-8
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	I	1-(2)-5	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	I	2-(5)-9
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	I	1-(3)-9	<i>Carex rostrata</i>	I	2-(2)-3
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	I	2-(3)-5	<i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i> agg.	I	2-(3)-8
<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	I	2-(3)-4	<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	I	2-(2)-3
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	I	+(2)-5	<i>Carex elata</i>	I	7-(8)-8
<i>Carex nigra</i>	I	2-(3)-7	<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	I	2-(3)-3
<i>Hippuris vulgaris</i>	I	2-(3)-5	<i>Leptodictyum riparium</i>	I	2-(3)-4
<i>Schoenoplectus lacustris</i>	I	2-(3)-3	<i>Lemna trisulca</i>	I	3-(4)-5
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	I	2-(3)-5	<i>Cicuta virosa</i>	I	3-(4)-5
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	I	1-(3)-5	<i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>	I	2-(6)-9
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	I	2-(2)-5	<i>Potentilla palustris</i>	I	2-(3)-5
<i>Potamogeton bertholdii</i>	I	2-(3)-8	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	I	1-(2)-3
<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	I	2-(3)-9	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	I	2-(2)-3

#### Affinities

GHI: FS1 Reed and large sedge swamps

ZM: PHR-01A Phragmites communis Koch 1926

EUNIS: C3.247 Water horsetail beds

NVC: S10a *Equisetum fluviatile* swamp *Equisetum fluviatile* sub-community (50.5%)

Annex I: No significant correspondence

#### Proxy environmental data

Light: 7.3      Reaction: 6.3      Wetness: 9.9      Fertility: 5.2      Salinity: 0.3

#### Conservation value

This is species-poor plant community, with relatively low recognised conservation value.

#### Management

These swamp stands are essentially unmanaged. The main threats to them are through lake eutrophication and drainage.

#### Key references

Brock, T., Frigge, P., van der Ster, H. (1979) A vegetation study of the pools and surrounding wetlands in the Dooaghry area, Co. Mayo (unpublished). National Parks & Wildlife Service, Dublin, Ireland.

Conaghan, J. (1999) The vegetation, ecology and conservation of the Lough Oughter lake system, Co. Cavan. (unpublished). National Parks & Wildlife Service, Dublin, Ireland.

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.

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Photo 1. FW3G *Equisetum fluviatile* - *Eleocharis palustris* swamp, near Lough Owell, Westmeath (J. Brophy, October 2014)