Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC)

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Community Synopsis

Scientific name	*Ammophila arenaria – Festuca rubra* duneland
Common name	Marram – Red Fescue duneland
Community code	DU2A

Vegetation

Tall tussocks of *Ammophila arenaria* are the striking feature of this duneland community, but *Festuca rubra* is usually co-dominant. Amongst the dune grasses, *Galium verum* with its tiny yellow flowers is a constant and can form reasonable patches. Frequently found are *Lotus corniculatus*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Senecio jacobaea*, *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and *Trifolium repens*.

Ecology

This assemblage mainly represents a transition between marram dune and fixed dune vegetation, occurring on sands which are still somewhat mobile. Also included here are rank, ungrazed fixed dune swards with *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Holcus lanatus* or *Dactylis glomerata*.

Sub-communities

No sub-communities are described.

Similar communities

Ammophila arenaria can also be abundant in the DU1B *Ammophila arenaria* duneland, but there *Festuca rubra* is far less abundant and fixed dune species are scarce.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	320
Transitional:	25
Total:	345

Number of records (mapped)

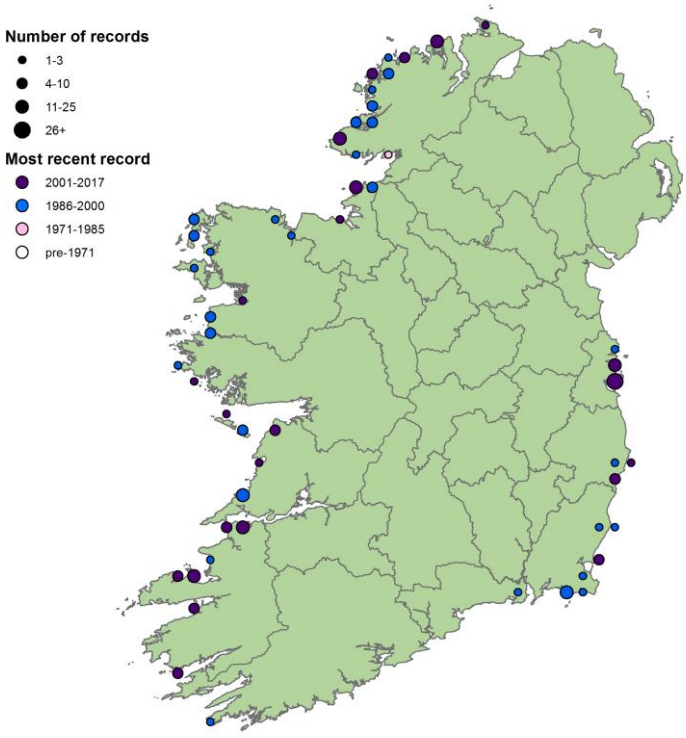
2001-2017:	108
1986-2000:	191
1971-1985:	36
Pre-1971:	10
Total:	345

Number of hectads (most recent records)

2001-2017:	24
1986-2000:	29
1971-1985	1
Pre-1971:	0
Total:	54

Number of hectads (all mapped records)

2001-2017:	24
1986-2000:	43
1971-1985	5
Pre-1971:	4



Synoptic table (*n* = 298)

Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max	Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max
Ammophila arenaria	V	3-(7)-10	*Daucus carota*	I	+-(3)-7
Festuca rubra	V	3-(7)-9	*Homalothecium lutescens*	I	+-(3)-8
Galium verum	IV	+-(4)-9	*Bellis perennis*	I	+-(2)-5
Lotus corniculatus	III	+-(3)-8	*Cerastium diffusum*	I	+-(2)-5
Plantago lanceolata	III	+-(3)-6	*Cerastium fontanum*	I	+-(2)-5
Senecio jacobaea	III	+-(2)-7	*Syntrichia ruraliformis*	I	+-(3)-7
Trifolium repens	III	+-(3)-8	*Veronica chamaedrys*	I	+-(2)-4
Taraxacum officinale agg.	III	+-(2)-5	*Luzula campestris*	I	+-(2)-4
Hypochaeris radicata	II	+-(2)-7	*Agrostis stolonifera*	I	1-(3)-7
Poa pratensis/humilis	II	+-(3)-7	*Euphrasia officinalis* agg.	I	+-(2)-5
Ranunculus bulbosus	II	+-(3)-7	*Heracleum sphondylium*	I	+-(3)-5
Carex arenaria	II	+-(3)-8	*Euphorbia paralias*	I	+-(2)-3
Holcus lanatus	II	1-(3)-7	*Leontodon autumnalis*	I	+-(2)-4
Leontodon saxatilis	I	+-(3)-6	*Thymus polytrichus*	I	+-(3)-5
Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus	I	+-(4)-7	*Brachythecium rutabulum*	I	+-(2)-7
Anthyllis vulneraria	I	+-(3)-8	*Cirsium arvense*	I	+-(2)-5
Dactylis glomerata	I	+-(4)-8	*Crepis capillaris*	I	+-(2)-4
Scleropodium purum	I	+-(4)-8	*Tussilago farfara*	I	+-(2)-7
Ononis repens	I	1-(3)-9	*Anacamptis pyramidalis*	I	+-(1)-3
Rumex acetosa	I	+-(2)-4	*Arrhenatherum elatius*	I	+-(4)-7

Affinities

GHI: CD2 Marram dunes / CD3 Fixed dunes

ZM: CM Molinio-Arrhenatheretea (62.8%)

EUNIS: B1.411 Crested-hairgrass dune communities

NVC: SD7c *Ammophila arenaria – Festuca rubra* semi-fixed dune community *Ononis repens* sub-community (71.0%)

Annex I: 2120 Marram dunes (white dunes) / *2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes)

Proxy environmental data

Light: 7.9 Reaction: 6.0 Wetness: 4.5 Fertility: 3.8 Salinity: 1.6

Conservation value

Vegetation from semi-fixed dunes typically corresponds to EU HD Annex I priority habitat *2130 Fixed dunes (grey dunes) but where cover of *Festuca rubra* and other fixed dune species is lower and the cover of bare sand is higher, it corresponds to habitat 2120 Marram dunes (white dunes). Examples of rank dune swards are likely to represent habitat *2130.

Management

Semi-fixed dunes are unstable habitats and part of the dynamic duneland system. They may be naturally removed by storms and high tides. Anthropogenic impacts include recreation and modification of the coastline. Rank dune swards develop in areas of fixed dune due to undergrazing or abandonment.

Key references

Gaynor, K. (2007) Flora and vegetation of Irish sand dune systems. (Ph.D. thesis). University College Dublin.

Crawford, I., Bleasdale, A., Conaghan, J. (1996) Biomar survey of Irish machair sites 1996. Volume 2: Plant communities. (unpublished). National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin.

Long, M.P., Brophy, J.T. (2019) Monitoring of sites and habitat for three Annex II species of whorl snail (*Vertigo*). *Irish Wildlife Manuals*, No. 104. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin.

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Photo 1. DU2A *Ammophila arenaria – Festuca rubra* duneland, Rossbehy, Kerry (A. Delaney, September 2011)

Photo 2. DU2A *Ammophila arenaria – Festuca rubra* duneland, Brittas Bay, Wicklow (A. Delaney, August 2011)