Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC)

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Community Synopsis

Scientific name	*Suaeda maritima* saltmarsh
Common name	Annual Sea-blite saltmarsh
Community code	SM1C

Vegetation

The chief plant in this species-poor coastal community is the annual *Suaeda maritima* which can provide dense cover and which is usually accompanied by some subordinate growth of *Salicornia* agg. Sparse shoots of *Puccinellia maritima* frequently occur and occasionally one finds some *Limonium humile* or *Atriplex portulacoides*. Mean maximum vegetation height = 18.3 cm, *n* = 3.

Ecology

This community may be found in the pioneer zone in the lower parts of saltmarsh on rather coarse sand-gravel substrates, but it also occurs higher up in the tidal frame, on shingle or sand-shingle mixtures and on driftlines. Conditions are base-rich (mean pH = 8.4, *n* = 3).

Sub-communities

No sub-communities have been described for this community

Similar communities

This community is fairly distinct. Stands lower down on the marsh may well transition into patches of SM1C *Salicornia* agg. saltmarsh, as *Salicornia* and *Suaeda* trade dominance.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	38
Transitional:	2
Total:	40

Number of records (mapped)

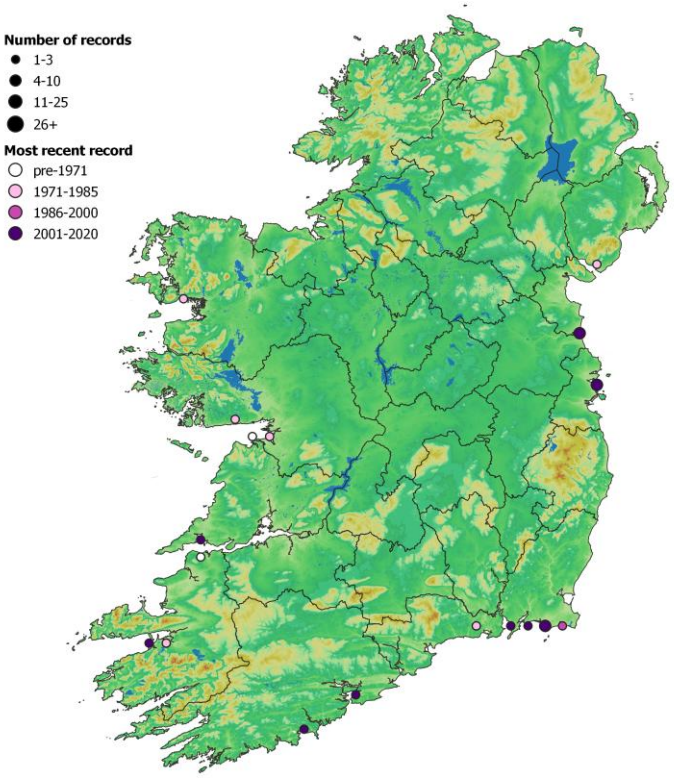
2001-2020:	18
1986-2000:	1
1971-1985:	17
Pre-1971:	4
Total:	40

Number of hectads (by most recent time period)

2001-2020:	10
1986-2000:	1
1971-1985	6
Pre-1971:	2
Total:	19

Number of hectads (records in each time period)

2001-2020:	10
1986-2000:	1
1971-1985	8
Pre-1971:	3



Synoptic table (*n* = 35)					
Species	**Frequency (from I-V)**	**Cover min (med) max**	**Species**	**Frequency (from I-V)**	**Cover min (med) max**
Suaeda maritima	V	3-(7)-9			
Salicornia agg.	IV	+-(4)-7			
Puccinellia maritima	III	1-(3)-5			
Limonium humile	II	1-(3)-8			
Atriplex portulacoides	II	2-(2)-4			
Spergularia media	I	2-(3)-3			
Spartina agg.	I	2-(3)-4			
Aster tripolium	I	2-(2)-4			
Atriplex prostrata	I	2-(2)-3			
Cochlearia officinalis agg.	I	2-(2)-3			
Glaux maritima	I	2-(5)-5			
Tripleurospermum maritimum	I	3-(3)-3			
Armeria maritima	I	5-(5)-5			
Cakile maritima	I	2-(2)-2			
Elytrigia juncea	I	2-(2)-2			
Plantago maritima	I	2-(2)-2			
Rumex crispus	I	2-(2)-2			
Spergularia marina	I	3-(3)-3			

Affinities

GHI: CM1 Lower salt marsh

ZM: ME01A Therosalicornion Br.-Bl.

EUNIS: A2.5512 *Suaeda maritima* pioneer saltmarshes

NVC: SM9 *Suaeda maritima* salt-marsh community (74.1%)

Annex I: 1310 *Salicornia* mud

Proxy environmental data

Light: 9.0 Reaction: 7.8 Wetness: 8.0 Fertility: 5.9 Salinity: 7.0

Conservation value

Almost all examples of this pioneer vegetation qualify as EU HD Annex I habitat 1310 *Salicornia* mud. It is typically a species-poor saltmarsh community (species/4 m^2 = 3.6, *n* = 23) but the species that do occur are specialists.

Management

These swards are typically unmanaged, although stands higher on the shore may be grazed by livestock. Sea-level rises as a result of climate change will have an impact, particularly in areas susceptible to coastal squeeze.

Key references

McCorry, M., Ryle, T. (2009) Saltmarsh Monitoring Project 2007-2008. 5 volumes. (unpublished). National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin.

Ní Lamhna, É. (1982). The vegetation of saltmarshes and sand-dunes at Malahide Island, County Dublin. *Journal of Life Sciences - Royal Dublin Society* 3, 111-129.

Boorman, L.A. (1966) Experimental studies in the genus *Limonium*. (Ph.D. thesis). University of Oxford, U.K.

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Photo 1. SM1C *Suaeda maritima* saltmarsh, Ballyteigue Burrows, Wexford (P. Perrin, July 2018)

Photo 2. SM1C *Suaeda maritima* saltmarsh, Ballyteigue Burrows, Wexford (P. Perrin, July 2018)