

SM22

Halimione portulacoides-*Frankenia laevis* salt-marsh community

Limonio vulgaris-*Frankenietum laevis* Géhu & Géhu-Franck 1975

Synonymy

Halimiono-Frankenietum laevis Adam 1976 *p.p.*; Sussex *Frankenia laevis* stands Brightmore 1979.

Constant species

Armeria maritima, *Frankenia laevis*, *Halimione portulacoides*.

Rare species

Frankenia laevis, *Inula crithmoides*, *Arthrocnemum perenne*.

Physiognomy

This community has a short uneven open sward dominated by *Halimione portulacoides* and *Frankenia laevis* with scattered plants of *Armeria maritima* and *Puccinellia maritima*. *Festuca rubra*, *Limonium vulgare*, annual *Salicornia* spp. and *Spergularia media* are frequent at low cover values and at some sites *Inula crithmoides* is conspicuous.

Habitat

The community generally occurs on mixtures of silt, sand and shingle at salt-marsh/sand-dune interfaces. Similar vegetation but lacking *H. portulacoides* has been recorded from Chalk undercliffs and rubble (Brightmore 1979).

Distribution

The community is confined to the south coast of Sussex where the best stands are developed at East Head, Chichester Harbour. *Frankenia laevis* has recently been reported from Anglesey (Roberts 1975) where it has become well established (after original planting?) among *Festuca rubra*, *Armeria maritima* and *Puccinellia maritima* to produce vegetation rather similar to this community.

Affinities

The community is distinguished from the *Suaeda vera*-*Limonium binervosum* salt-marsh by the absence here of *S. vera* and the replacement of *Limonium bellidifolium* and *L. binervosum* by *L. vulgare*. Géhu & Géhu-Franck (1975) and Géhu & Delzenne (1975) regard the Sussex stands as representing a species-poor parallel to the *Frankenio-Limonietum lychnidifolii* of north-west France and have provisionally assigned them (and the Anglesey vegetation) to the *Limonio vulgaris*-*Frankenietum laevis*. This association and the *Suaeda vera*-*Limonium binervosum* community could be placed together in the Frankenio-Armerion.

Floristic table SM22

<i>Frankenia laevis</i>	V (3–8)
<i>Halimione portulacoides</i>	IV (3–9)
<i>Puccinellia maritima</i>	IV (2–5)
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	III (2–4)
<i>Spergularia media</i>	III (1–2)
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	II (3–5)
<i>Salicornia</i> agg.	II (1–3)
<i>Elymus farctus</i>	II (3–4)
<i>Limonium vulgare</i>	II (1–5)
<i>Parapholis strigosa</i>	II (1–4)
<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	I (1–2)
<i>Arthrocnemum perenne</i>	I (1–2)
<i>Plantago maritima</i>	I (1–2)
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	I (1–5)
Number of samples	18
Mean number of species/sample	8 (6–13)
Mean vegetation height (cm)*	3 (2–5)
Mean total cover (%)	86 (80–100)

* Data of four samples only.

