

SM7

Arthrocnemum perenne stands

Arthrocnemum perenne is a perennial halophyte with a restricted distribution in Britain: it occurs around the coast of south-east England from The Wash to Poole Harbour with isolated records from North Wales and Teesmouth (Perring & Walters 1962). It is encountered as an occasional in a variety of communities from both low and high marsh and only very locally is it an important constituent of salt-marsh vegetation.

At a number of sites in north Norfolk, *A. perenne* forms an open mosaic with *Halimione portulacoides*, *Puccinellia maritima* and *Suaeda maritima* at the lower limit of *Halimionetum* on sand or firm silt with abundant gravel and shell fragments. A similar community occurs very locally on firm clays with shell fragments elsewhere in south-east England.

Dense pure stands of *A. perenne* are found on drift litter over shell banks at a few sites, particularly around Chichester Harbour, Hampshire. Scattered bushes of *A. perenne* are associated with local erosion within low-marsh communities, especially where these occur on gravel-rich substrates (Beeftink 1965, 1977a; Beeftink & Géhu 1973).

Although Beeftink (1965, 1977a) recognises the occurrence of *Salicornietum radicans* Br.-Bl. 1931 in Britain we have insufficient data to characterise a community. The *A. perenne*-*Halimione portulacoides* mosaics could perhaps be regarded as an extreme form of *Halimionetum*.

Floristic table SM7

<i>Arthrocnemum perenne</i>	V (2–9)
<i>Halimione portulacoides</i>	V (2–9)
<i>Puccinellia maritima</i>	V (2–6)
<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	IV (2–4)
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<i>Salicornia</i> agg.	III (2–6)
Algal mat	III (4–8)
<i>Limonium</i> cf. <i>L. vulgare</i>	III (2–5)
<i>Aster tripolium</i> var. <i>discoideus</i>	III (2–7)
<i>Aster tripolium</i>	I (1–3)
<i>Bostrychia scorpioides</i>	I (4–5)
<i>Spergularia media</i>	I (1)
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Number of samples	12
Mean number of species/sample	6 (3–9)
Mean vegetation height (cm)	19 (8–30)
Mean total cover (%)	76 (40–100)

