

V.A.5.N.n.11. SPARTINA PATENS - (DISTICHLIS SPICATA) TIDAL HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE

Saltmeadow Cordgrass - (Saltgrass) Tidal Herbaceous Alliance

Physiognomic Class Herbaceous Vegetation (V.)
Physiognomic Subclass Perennial graminoid vegetation (grassland) (V.A.)
Physiognomic Group Temperate or sub-polar grassland (V.A.5.)
Physiognomic Subgroup Natural/Semi-natural (V.A.5.N.)
Formation Tidal temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5.N.n.)

Alliance SPARTINA PATENS - (DISTICHLIS SPICATA) TIDAL HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE (V.A.5.N.n.11.)

Spartina patens - Distichlis spicata - Plantago maritima Herbaceous Vegetation

Saltmeadow Cordgrass - Saltgrass - Seaside Plantain Herbaceous Vegetation

Spartina-High Salt Marsh

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL: 2

USFS WETLAND SYSTEM: ESTUARINE

RANGE:

Fire Island National Seashore

This association occurs in salt marshes on the bay side of Fire Island and of the William Floyd Estate.

Globally

This association occurs along the Atlantic coast from Delaware (discontinuously south to Virginia) north to the Canadian maritime provinces.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:

Fire Island National Seashore

This high salt marsh vegetation occurs above low salt marsh on the bay side of barrier beaches. The substrate is characterized by shallow peat over sand.

Globally

This type occupies the zone extending from mean high tide landwards to the limit of spring tides and is subjected to irregular tidal flooding. The substrate is peat overlying mineral soil.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES:

Fire Island National Seashore

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Herbaceous	<i>Spartina patens, Distichlis spicata</i>

Globally

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Herbaceous	<i>Spartina patens, Distichlis spicata</i> and <i>Juncus gerardii</i>

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES:

Fire Island National Seashore

Distichlis spicata, Juncus gerardii, Spartina patens, Salicornia europea, Limonium carolinianum

Globally

Spartina patens, Distichlis spicata, Juncus gerardii, Limonium carolinianum

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION:

Fire Island National Seashore

High salt marsh vegetation occurs between low salt marsh and maritime forest or maritime shrubland. *Distichlis spicata* and *Spartina patens* are co-dominant and often form dense cover. *Juncus gerardii* is a common associate. *Salicornia virginica* can form dense patches and *Spartina alterniflora* and *Potentilla*

USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program
Fire Island National Seashore

anserina often occurs as scattered clumps. *Limonium carolinianum* and *Solidago sempervirens* can occur sporadically.

Globally

This high salt marsh vegetation occurs along the north Atlantic coast. The most characteristic and dominant species of this marsh community are *Spartina patens*, *Distichlis spicata* and *Juncus gerardii*. Other associates include *Limonium carolinianum*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Aster tenuifolius*, *Solidago sempervirens*, and a short form of *Spartina alterniflora*. At the northern end of the range, other associates include *Carex paleacea*, *Glaux maritima*, *Juncus balticus*, *Triglochin maritima*, and *Sueda maritima*.

COMMENTS:

Fire Island National Seashore

Globally

States/Provinces: CT:S?, DE:S?, MA:S?, MD:S?, ME:S?, NH:S?, NJ:S?, NY:S?, RI:S?, VA:S?

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES:

CONSERVATION RANK: G5
DATABASE CODE: C EGL006006
MAP UNITS: FIIS plots 622, 55

REFERENCES:

Dowhan and Rozsa 1989
Maine Natural Heritage Program 1991
Nixon 1982
Sperduto 1997