Merimbula saltmarsh checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common name</th>
<th>Scientific name</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bare Twig rush</td>
<td>Bausea juncea</td>
<td>Cyperaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaffy Saw Sedge</td>
<td>Gahnia flum</td>
<td>Cyperaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Speargrass</td>
<td>Austrostipa stiploides</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Reed</td>
<td>Phragmites australis</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Couch</td>
<td>Cynodon dactylon</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knobby Club-sedge</td>
<td>Vicinia nodosa</td>
<td>Cyperaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodding Club-sedge</td>
<td>Isopogon cernua</td>
<td>Cyperaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prickly Couch</td>
<td>Zygia macrantha</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltwater Couch</td>
<td>Sporobolus virgicus</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Rush</td>
<td>Juncus kraussil</td>
<td>Juncaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streaked Arrowgrass</td>
<td>Triglochin striatum</td>
<td>Juncaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toad Rush</td>
<td>Juncus bufonius</td>
<td>Juncaceae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ecological values of saltmarsh

Saltmarsh plants provide a buffer between the sea and the land. They stabilise and filter shore sediments, store carbon, cycle nutrients and support estuarine food chains.

Micro-organisms like cyanobacteria, diatoms and algae are important components of the ecosystem. Many invertebrates also live in the community, including worms, crabs, molluscs, spiders and insects. Saltmarsh provides feeding habitat for fish, shrimp and prawns during high tides and for invertebrates at low. Shorebirds like the threatened Pied Oystercatcher and Sandpiper use saltmarshes for feeding and high tide roosting.

About the Merimbula Lake Boardwalk

The Merimbula Lake Boardwalk is 1.7 kilometres long, running west from the bridge on Market Street. It is the most southerly mangrove boardwalk in Australia and the highest latitude mangrove boardwalk in the world. The Boardwalk was built by the Bega Valley Shire Council and State Government with Commonwealth assistance. There are toilets and a shop at the western end. Some other accessible saltmarshes in the region are at Pambula wetland ('Panboola') and Bermagui.

More information

National Parks Visitor Centre cnr Merimbula Drive and Sapphire Coast Drive, Merimbula ph 0496 5000
South East Local Land Services
Roof Top Level/106 Auckland St Bega NSW 2550 ph 0491 8200
NSW Fisheries, Far south Coast Fisheries Office
13 Cocosora Street, Eden ph 0496 1277,
Panboola - Pamboola Wetlands Heritage Project

Coastal saltmarsh endangered ecological community profiles
NSW: www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au

Saltmarsh is a rare vegetation community with specialised and fascinating plant life.

There are fine examples of saltmarsh around Merimbula Lake, and the Merimbula Boardwalk is a great way to see them. This brochure introduces the main plant species in the Merimbula saltmarsh.

About saltmarsh

Coastal saltmarsh is a wetland community of the upper intertidal zone of estuaries, bays, lakes and lagoons. At Merimbula, it occurs in a belt between Grey Mangroves and Honey Myrtle scrub.

Saltmarsh is a mosaic of rushbeds, sedgelands, grasslands, herbfields, chenopod shrublands and salt pans. Samphire, often with shrubs and mangrove seedlings, occupies the lowest and most saline parts of the community. Salt-tolerant rushes, sedges and grasses grow in the upper saltmarsh.

Saltmarsh plants have to cope with sea water during high tides, and fresh water during heavy rain, as well as long dry periods. They are ‘halophytes’, surviving in extremely saline soil conditions. These plants load their tissues with ions to maintain cell pressure, keeping salt out of their sap flow.

Some use succulent leaves and stems to reduce their uptake of salty water. Plants like Grey Mangrove and Sea Lavender have special gylands which excrete salt.

The community often contains a range of plant species, although from just a handful of families. Many species are endemic to saltmarsh (they grow nowhere else).

Unlike other communities, plant diversity in saltmarsh increases with distance from the equator. Some saltmarsh plants are found all over the world. Others, like Sea Rush and Samphire, originated in Gondwana and are also found in New Zealand, South Africa and South America.

Merimbula has lost a third of its saltmarsh in the last 50 years. Saltmarsh is threatened by infilling, weeds, vehicles, grazing, pollution, encroaching mangroves, as well as rising sea levels caused by climate change. Coastal Saltmarsh is listed as an Endangered Ecological Community under NSW and Commonwealth legislation, and is also protected under State fisheries legislation.

Printed on environmentally friendly paper
River Mangrove
*Avicennia marina*
**FAMILY:** **Acanthaceae**
A small tree with opposite leaves and aerial roots ('pneumatophores'). It flowers in autumn. Like the unrelated River Mangrove, the seed germinates on the parent plant before falling.

Grey Mangrove
*Aegiceras corniculatum*
**FAMILY:** **Asteraceae**
A small shrub with alternate leaves dotted with salt glands. It grows in wet grassy areas. It is a dominant shrub in some saltmarshes.

Creeping Brookweed
*Selliera radicans*
**FAMILY:** **Aizoaceae**
A prostrate perennial with large, succulent leaves rounded in cross-section, and dry fruit. It is common in the region. This is the only Disphyma species and it is endemic to Australia.

Water Buttons
*Cotula coronopifolia*
**FAMILY:** **Asteraceae**
A spreading annual or short-lived perennial with large, slightly fleshy triangular leaves, flowering spring-summer. It is widespread in Australia and New Zealand and was widely used as a green vegetable by early settlers.

Sea Lavender
*Limonium australe*
**FAMILY:** **Plumbaginaceae**
A shrub to one metre high with succulent green to purple leaves, flowers in short axillary or terminal inflorescences and a small, succulent fruit plerish. It is a dominant shrub over large areas in some saltmarshes.

New Zealand Spinach
*Tetragonia tetragonoides*
**FAMILY:** **Aizoaceae**
A prostrate herb with glossy linear or spoon-shaped leaves. It flowers spring-summer. It is the only Disphyma species and it is endemic to Australia.

Beaded Glasswort
*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*
**FAMILY:** **Chenopodiaceae**
A small, succulent, jointed and nearly leafless branches. It is dominant in the lower saltmarsh, tolerating prolonged inundation. It sheds the tiny leaf bases to remove excess salt.

Bracelet Honey-myrtle
*Melaleuca armillaris*
**FAMILY:** **Myrtaceae**
A tall shrub to 5 metres high with linear curved leaves and dense white flower spikes. It dominates the estuarine wetland scrub which intergrades with saltmarsh which is at its south-ern limit right here.

Shrubby Glasswort
*Tecticornia arbuscula*
**FAMILY:** **Chenopodiaceae**
A small shrub with opposite leaves. The tiny terminal flowers appear in autumn in groups of three. In NSW, the species is restricted to saltmarshes south from Jarvis Bay.

Angled Lobelia
*Lobelia anceps*
**FAMILY:** **Campanulaceae**
A sprawling herb with linear leaves and angled branches. The tiny terminal flowers appear Nov-July, and have the corolla tube split to the base. It is abundant at the eastern end of the Boardwalk.

Pigface
*Carpobrotus glaucescens*
**FAMILY:** **Aizoaceae**
A tall shrub with alternate leaves dotted with salt glands. It grows in wet grassy areas. It is the only Disphyma species and it is endemic to Australia.

Round-leaved Pigface
*Diaphyma crossifolium*
**FAMILY:** **Aizoaceae**
A mat-forming herb with opposite succulent leaves rounded in cross-section, and dry fruit. It is uncommon in the region. This is the only Diaphyma species and it is endemic to Australia.

Grass Daisy
*Brachyscome grahamiae*
**FAMILY:** **Asteraceae**
A perennial herb with narrow stem leaves. The flowers are white, pale blue or pink, sometimes coloured only on the underside of the ‘petals’. It flowers most of the year, and grows in wet grassy areas.

Tasmanian Sandspurry
*Spergularia tasmanica*
**FAMILY:** **Caryophyllaceae**
An erect pink-flowered herb with glandular hairs on the sepals and opposite narrow fleshy leaves. It flowers spring-autumn. Similar to introduced Sandspurry species, it differs by having wings around the seeds.

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