Gippsland Vegetation Types: Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's)

EVC description derived from Davies et.al (2001) Ecological Vegetation Mapping Class at 1:25 000 in Gippsland.

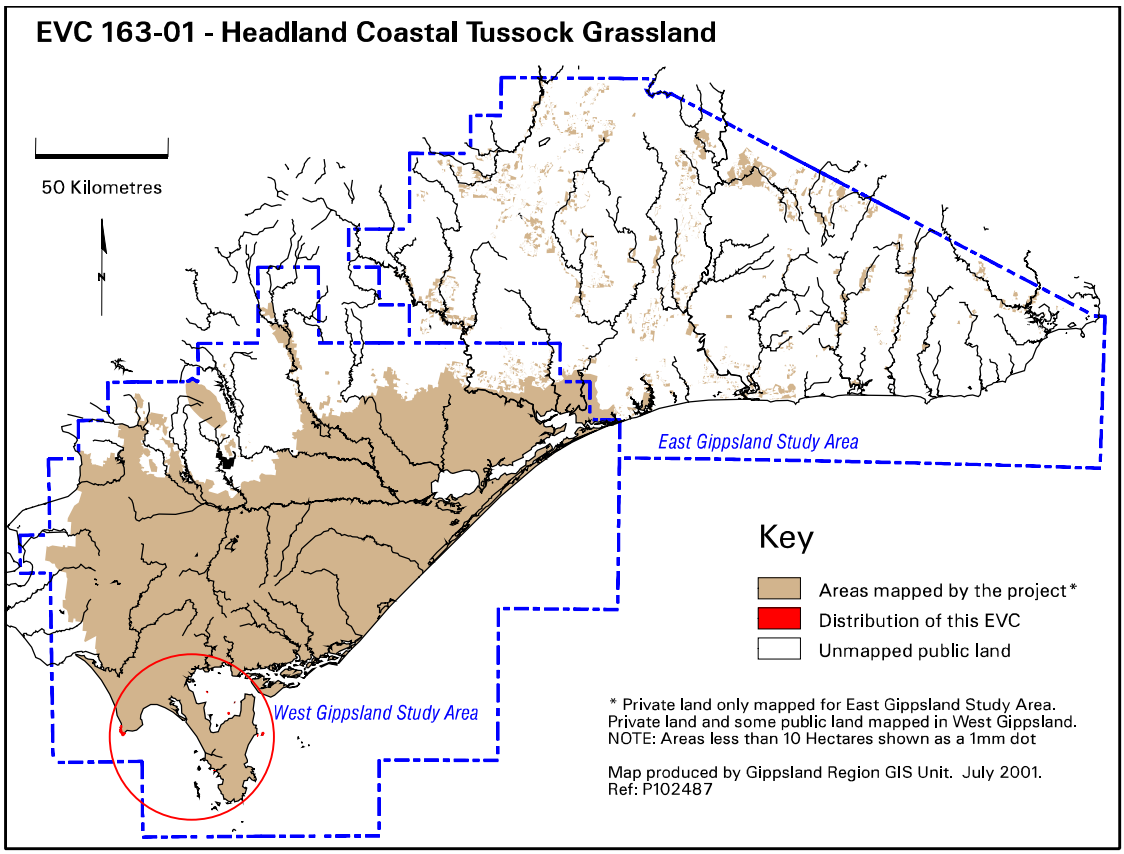
EVC 163 Coastal Tussock Grassland

A tussock grassland on coastal headlands exposed to strong salt-laden winds.

Floristic Community 163-01 *Headland* Coastal Tussock Grassland

Headland Coastal Tussock Grassland, Bennison Island. Photo: Tim Wills 1999.

Elevation (metres above sea level)	<80
Average rainfall p.a. (mm)	1000
Topography	Steep stony slopes on exposed windswept coastal headlands which are subject to frequent gale-force, salt-laden winds
Geology	Variable: Cretaceous sediments (Cape Liptrap), Devonian granite (Wilsons Promontory)
Soils	Shallow, stony loam or sand
Related/adjacent EVCs/FCs	Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic, *Granitic* Coastal Headland Scrub, *South Gippsland* Coastal Headland Scrub
Present land use	Nature conservation, recreation
Present distribution	Cape Liptrap and exposed headlands at Wilsons Promontory, as well as islands in Corner Inlet and Rabbit Island
Examples of sites/quadrats/lists	Corner Inlet islands, southern end of Squeaky Beach and small patches at South East Point (Wilsons Promontory National Park), Cape Liptrap (U23489)
Total Area(ha)/ Number of polygons	68/16



Vegetation: structure/floristics:

Usually dominated by Blue Tussock-grass *Poa poiformis*. The herbaceous groundcover includes Coast Sow-thistle *Actites megalocarpa*, Coast Groundsel *Senecio spathulatus*, Buck's-horn Plantain *Plantago coronopus*, Austral Carrot *Daucus glochidiatus*, *Crassula* spp. and Wood-sorrel *Oxalis* spp.

Salt-adapted coastal species include the shrubs White Correa *Correa alba*, Bower Spinach *Tetragonia implexicoma*, Coast Beard-heath *Leucopogon parviflorus*, Thyme Rice-flower *Pimelea serpyllifolia*, and Coast Tea-tree *Leptospermum laevigatum.* Common herbs found are Sea Celery *Apium prostratum* and Rounded Noon-flower *Disphyma crassifolium* and the sedge Knobby Club-sedge *Isolepis nodosa*.

Comments:
Floristically, *Headland* Coastal Tussock Grassland is closely related to Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic but the latter differs in that it develops on deep, uniform, sandy soils rather than on the shallower loams and clay loams.

This floristic community is also related to *South Gippsland* Coastal Headland Scrub which may be present nearby.

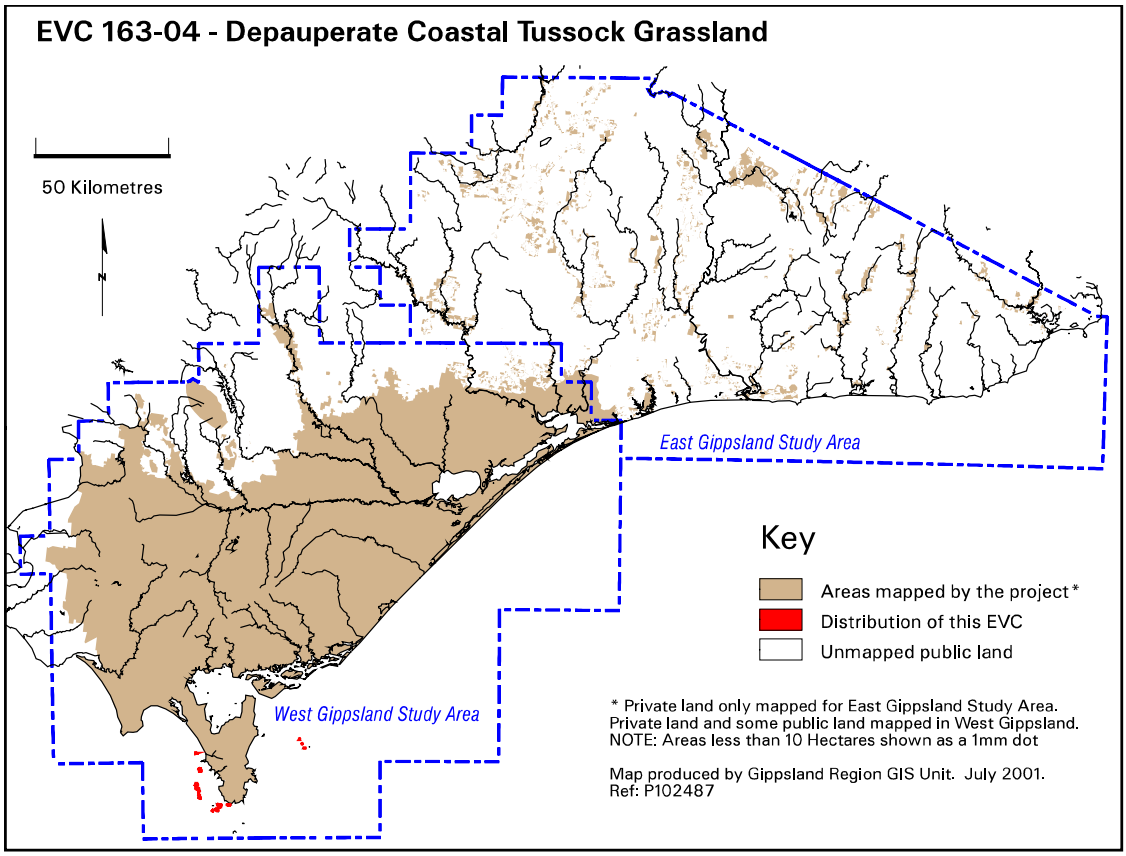
Floristic Community 163-04 *Depauperate* Coastal Tussock Grassland

Depauperate Coastal Tussock Grassland, Shellback Island. Photo: Alison Oates 1998.

Depauperate Coastal Tussock Grassland on Anser Island. Flowering is Island Everlasting *Bracteatha papillosa.* Photo: Tim Wills 1998.

Elevation (metres above sea level)	<80
Average rainfall p.a. (mm)	1000
Topography	Exposed slopes and crests of ocean islands and headlands
Geology	Devonian granite
Soils	Dark brown, loamy sand

Related/adjacent EVCs/FCs	*Headland* Coastal Tussock Grassland
Present land use	Nature conservation
Present distribution	Mainly restricted to exposed islands of Wilsons Promontory National Park
Examples of sites/quadrats/lists	Norman Island (F48839), Anser Island (F48840), Great Glennie Island (F48846), Shellback Island (F48851)
Total Area(ha)/ Number of polygons	172/28



Vegetation: structure/floristics:

This tussock grassland is characterised by its depauperate species composition and is dominated by Blue Tussock Grass *Poa poiformis*. It probably lacks herb development because of desiccation due to exposure to frequent, strong, salt-laden winds and intense trampling pressure from the extremely high densities of sea birds. Other species occasionally present are Kangaroo Apple, *Solanum aviculare,* White Elderberry *Sambucus gaudichaudiana* and Variable Groundsel *Senecio pinnatifolius*. The rare Island Everlasting *Bracteantha papillosa* is sometimes found in this grassland.

Comments:
The soil is subject to periods of intense trampling and tunnelling by large Shearwater bird colonies. Penguins and Pacific Gulls are also present in large numbers. The unstable, undermined substrate is prone to continuous cycles of soil collapse, erosion, deposition and excavation due to the bird burrows. The bird droppings add fertility to the soils. Conspicuous areas of bare ground (inter-tussock spaces) are evident but weed species and native herbs are notably absent or rare, perhaps due to the combined stress of wind exposure, salt spray and soil disturbance by burrowing birds.

Gippsland species list including species frequency and fidelity.

Fidelity: **Rating of faithfulness of a species to an EVC or Floristic Community. Highest fidelity rating indicated by an "F" ie species only recorded in respective group.**

% Frequency: **Percentage occurrence of a species/taxa in an EVC or Floristic Community – NB. Species highlighted in red are the most frequent and important.**
*** = weed ie: non native**
Rarity categories from NRE's Flora Information System (FIS).

EVC 163-04: *DEPAUPERATE* COASTAL TUSSOCK GRASSLAND

Species	% Frequency	Fidelity
Bracteantha papillosa	20.00	123.36
Poa poiformis	100.00	56.10
Solanum aviculare	40.00	27.42
Senecio pinnatifolius	60.00	5.61
Sambucus gaudichaudiana	40.00	5.48