

Some of Raasay's Saltmarsh Plants
In the eighth of a series of articles on Raasay's flora, botanist **STEPHEN BUNGARD** takes a look at Saltmarsh Plants

The only significant area of saltmarsh on Raasay is at Oskaig, but there are other small coastal patches where some of the same salt-tolerant plants occur.



Frog Rush (c. Stephen Bungard)

The Oskaig saltmarsh is the only known Raasay site for *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush) and almost so for *Carex extensa* (Long-bracted Sedge) – a single plant of the latter at Manish in 1993 has not been recorded again. *J. ranarius* was not separated from the similar *J. bufonius* (Toad rush) in Britain until 1978. Both of these plants can have a swirled appearance, though this is not apparent in the accompanying images.



Long Bracted Sedge (c. S Bungard)

Some of the pools at Oskaig contain *Ruppia maritima* (Beaked Tasselweed) which at first glance looks more like an alga than the flowering plant it actually is. The accompanying image was taken especially for this article in late October. Earlier in the year it is green!



Beaked Tasselweed (c. S Bungard)

Suaeda maritima (Annual Sea-blite) was recorded at Oskaig in the 1930s, but has not been seen there recently. Usually thought of as a plant of the middle and lower parts of saltmarshes, it is also an early coloniser of intertidal mud-flats, sometimes also occurring on shell and shingle banks. In 2001 there was a large population in the Raasay harbour, but the numbers declined over a few years and now there is none. This is a plant whose distribution is very dependent on the tides and the effects of storms but overall it does just fine and is quite widespread around the coast of Skye.



Annual Sea Blite (c. S Bungard)

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