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Disentangling the concept of *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* Br.-Bl. 1936

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Abstract

The association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* Braun-Blanquet 1936 was described in North-Western Tunisia. During the almost one hundred years after the its typification, the name of this association was applied to plant communities of several different localities in Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy and Crete Island) and North-Africa. The aim of this research was to verify whether the application of this name have drifted the original idea. We collected 110 phytosociological relevés and processed them basing on semi-supervised fuzzy classification and indirect gradient (chorological) analysis. A clear floristic and chorological pattern, with East-Western variations, emerged from the analysis. We disentangled the concept of *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* identifying among the communities referred to this name three new associations, *Junco sorrentinii-Isoëtetum histricis*, *Sileno laetae-Isoëtetum histricis*, *Isoëtetum siculae-histricis*, and different subassociations.

Key words: chorology, Habitat Directive, Habitat 3120 and 3170, *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*, Mediterranean temporary ponds, semi-supervised fuzzy classification, syntassonomy.

Introduction

The association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* was described in North-Western Tunisia, close Meloula, on yellow partially decalcified marl (Braun-Blanquet, 1936). It was referred to *Isoëtion*, an alliance of the class *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* including pioneer annual and dwarf perennial ephemeral isoetid communities on periodically flooded bare soils with a circum-Mediterranean distribution under Thermomediterranean and Mesomediterranean bioclimates (Biondi *et al.*, 2014).

The high conservation interest of *Isoëtion communities* has been long recognized since they were defined as “a floristical jewel” (Braun-Blanquet, 1936). They are considered as indicators of habitats of conservation concern in the Habitat Directive, namely 3120 - Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals, generally on sandy soils of the West Mediterranean, with *Isoetes* spp. and 3170* – Mediterranean temporary ponds (Bagella *et al.*, 2007; Biondi & Blasi, 2009; Gigante *et al.*, 2016; Serrano *et al.*, 2017; Bagella & Podani, 2017; Bagella *et al.*, 2018). Based on the available information, these habitats were assessed as VU in the European Red List of Habitats basing based on criteria C/D1 for EU28 and EU28+, which is an optimistic assessment because limited by the lack of data on long historical trend in quantity and quality (Gigante *et al.*, 2018). A detailed knowledge and classification of *Isoëtion* communities at all the taxonomic levels and of their distribution is relevant to ensure the conservation of all of them.

The aim of this research was to verify how much, during the almost one hundred years from the typification of the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*, this name was applied and whether the communities referred to it have drifted the original idea becoming too wide in term of floristic composition in contrast with the modern definition of association (Biondi, 2011).

Material and methods

Data collection

A literature survey was conducted to find papers containing phytosociological relevé referred to the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*. First, journal articles were searched in Google Scholar using the key words *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* and *Isoëtes histrix*. Then, the bibliographies of the articles thus found were used to search for additional sources.

The relevé data were assembled into a composite matrix such that plant nomenclature was standardized according to the Catalogue of life online database (Roskov *et al.*, 2018) except for the genus *Isoëtes* for which we followed Bagella *et al.* (2015).

Bioclimatic indices and ecological characteristics of species

In order to evaluate the climatic conditions of the sites in which the relevé were carried out the following bioclimatic indices, using worldclim data (version 1.4) (Hijmans *et al.*, 2005), have been calculated: the

Positive temperature (Tp), the Annual Ombrothermic Index (Io), the Continentality Index (Ic) and the Bi-monthly Summer Ombrothermic Index (Ios₂) (for details see Rivas-Martínez, Sáenz & Penas, 2011).

In order to evaluate ecological variation and corological aspects, the relative Ellenberger indicators (Pignatti et al., 2005) and the areal distribution (Euro+Med 2006) were associated to each species (Appendix I).

Statistical analysis

Cluster analysis

The relevé were classified in two steps (De Cáceres et al., 2015): (i) “plot-based classification” as a semi-supervised fuzzy classification (De Cáceres et al., 2010a), of the vegetation plots, to identify associations and subassociations; (ii) type-based classification, as a hierarchical classification (percentage difference, alias Bray-Curtis, and the UPGMA link) of the clusters (obtained by step I) x species frequency matrix.

The semi-supervised fuzzy classification is based on a multivariate reference space (kept fixed during the classification) made up of validly published associations and subassociations. During the iterations the relevés according to the degree of similarity may be assigned to the fixed clusters or (if dissimilar from the fixed clusters) form new clusters (mobile clusters) occupying new sectors of the multivariate space (new associations and/or subassociations) (De Cáceres et al., 2010a). The setting of the semi-supervised fuzzy classification is shown in Tab. 1. The abundance vegetation data (Braun-Blanquet scale) were converted to the van der Maarel scale (Maarel van der, 1979) and hellinger transformed (Legendre & Gallagher, 2001).

According to Wiser & De Cáceres, (2013), we obtained a crisp and final classification of the relevés on the basis of their fuzzy membership values. Relevés having fuzzy membership value: ≥ 0.5 were cleared attributed to a cluster; < 0.5 were not cleared assigned to a cluster and considered ‘transitional’; ≥ 0.5 in the Noise class (NC) indicate ‘outliers’.

Indicator Species Analysis

In order to identify diagnostic species linked to one association or subassociation and species with wide ecological or chorological features, the modified Indicator Species Analysis (ISA) was applied (De Cáceres et al., 2010b). ISA was based on *phi* coefficient (Chytrý et al., 2002). Among the species considered characteristics of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* class according to Bagella & Caria (2012) (see Appendix I) those with *phi* > 0.4 ($p < 0.05$) were considered as indicator species.

Indirect analysis of the gradient

The identification of the floristic variation gradients was based on a Principal Coordinate Analysis (PCoA) of the percentage differences dissimilarity matrix of the clusters (obtained by step I) x species frequency data.

Correlations between PCoA axis, mean bioclimatic indices, mean Ellenberg values and mean geographic distribution of clusters were calculated and tested. For mean Ellenberg and geographic distribution the modified permutation test (Zelený & Schaffers, 2012) was used.

All analyses were performed in R language (R Core Team, 2012), using the ‘vegclust’ (De Cáceres et al., 2010a) and the ‘vegan’ (Oksanen et al., 2016) packages.

Results

The name *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* was used to indicate plant communities located in different areas of the Mediterranean basin (Fig. 1): Tunisia (Braun-Blanquet, 1936), Portugal and SW Spain (Rudner, 2004); Crete (Gradstein & Smittenberg, 1977) and Apulia (Ernandes et al., 2017).

According to the bioclimatic classification of Rivas-Martínez et al. (2011) the sites belong to the Mediterranean macrobioclimate, lower Mesomediterranean to upper thermomediterranean thermotypes and lower dry to lower subhumid ombrotypes. The bioclimatic indices and diagnoses are summarized in Tab. 2.

The data-set included 110 relevé (Tab. 3) and 170 spe-

Tab. 1 - Setting of the semi-supervised fuzzy classification (De Cáceres et al., 2010a) for 'Plot-based classification'.

Parameter	Description
<i>method</i>	Noise Clustering (NC) model of Dave & Krishnapuram (1997).
<i>fuzzy coefficient</i>	1.15
<i>fixed clusters</i>	The fixed clusters do not change their positions in the multivariate space during the iterations. They are numerically represented by the centroids (average floristic combinations in the <i>hellinger</i> space) of the validly published associations and subassociations
<i>Mobile clusters</i>	Number of new (mobile) cluster. These are the relevés groups that will be formed in the multivariate sectors not occupied by fixed clusters. The procedure was performed with 1 to 30 new mobile clusters. The optimal number of mobile clusters is selected according to the minimum value of the Normalized Partition Entropy index (PEN)
<i>Dnoise</i>	0.8



Fig. 1 - Location of the sites in which plant communities were referred to the association *Junco capitati*-*Isoëtetum histricis*. 1 - Tunisia (Braun-Blanquet, 1936); 2 - SW Spain (Rudner, 2004); 3 - Portugal (Rudner, 2004); 4 - Crete (Gradstein & Smittenberg, 1977)1978; 5 - Italy (Apulia) (Ernandes *et al.*, 2017).

cies of which 30 considered characteristic of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* class (Appendix I).

The 'plot-based classification' allowed to classify 67 phytosociological relevés (fuzzy membership value ≥ 0.5) in 12 clusters. The remaining were 'transitional'.

The 'type-based classification' produced a dendrogram presenting two main groups (Fig 2A): the first included the clusters (1-7) from Tunisia, SW Spain and Portugal and Crete, the second the clusters (8-9,11-13) from Apulia (S-Italy). Indirect Gradient Analysis identified two main trends that account for 45% of total variation (PCoA1 axis = 30% and PCoA2 axis = 15%).

Out of six bioclimatic indices, four were significantly correlated with PCoA axis. Among the Ellenberg value only Light (L) was significantly correlated with PCoA axis, while geographic composition plot value were generally well correlated (Tab. 4, Fig. 2B).

The PCoA1 axis (Fig. 2B) separated the clusters 8-13, left side (group 2 of the dendrogram) and 1-7, right side (group 1 of the dendrogram). The correlated factors are Ios_2 and Ic , decreasing along the axis and the chorology, Central-East (CE) to Central-West (CW) Mediterranean basin. The clusters 1-7 are characterized by species of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* class present in Tn-Tunisia, Ma-Morocco, Ag-Algeria, Co-Corsica, Hs-Spain and Lu-Portugal (CW Mediterranean basin). The clusters 8-13 are characterized by species of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* class present in Tu-Turkey, Gr-Greece, Ae-East (CE Mediterranean basin).

The PCoA2 axis (Fig. 2B) separated the clusters 2-3 from all the others belonging to the group 2. The correlated factors is the light (L Ellenberg indicator).

Out of 30 species of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* class and 8 geographic differentials present in the relevés, 31 are of diagnostic value ($\phi_i \geq 0.4$; $p < 0.05$) (Tab. 5).

Syntaxonomic proposal

Basing on the results of cluster analysis and according to the different chorological and bioclimatic patterns, new syntaxa, with original floristic combinations in respect to *Junco capitati*-*Isoëtetum histricis* Braun-Blanquet 1936, were recognized. The syntaxonomic

Tab. 2 - Bioclimatic characteristics of the sites in which plant communities referred to the association *Junco capitati*-*Isoëtetum histricis* were described.

Site	Bioclimatic indices						Bioclimatic Diagnosis		
	Pp	T	Io	Ios_2	Ic	Tp	Thermotype horizon	Ombrotype	Continentality
1	890	17.5	4.2	0.23	159	2103	Upper Thermomediterranean	Lower Subhumid	Weak Euoceanic
2	536	16.3	2.7	0.07	118	1963	Lower Mesomediterranean	Lower Dry	Semihyperoceanic
3	786	17.3	3.7	0.09	114	2081	Lower Mesomediterranean	Lower Subhumid	Semihyperoceanic
4	612	18.9	2.7	0.06	144	2272	Upper Thermomediterranean	Lower Dry	Strong Euoceanic
5	584	15.9	3	0.9	158	1916	Lower Mesomediterranean	Upper Dry	Weak Euoceanic

1 - Tunisia (Braun-Blanquet, 1936); 2 - SW Spain (Rudner, 2004); 3 - Portugal (Rudner, 2004); 4 - Crete (Gradstein & Smittenberg, 1977) 1978; 5 - Italy (Apulia) (Ernandes *et al.*, 2017). Bioclimatic indices (for details see Rivas-Martínez *et al.*, 2011): Pp, Positive precipitation; T, mean annual temperature; Io, Annual ombrothermic index; Ios_2 , Bimonthly summer ombrothermic index; Ic, Continentality index; Tp, Positive temperature.

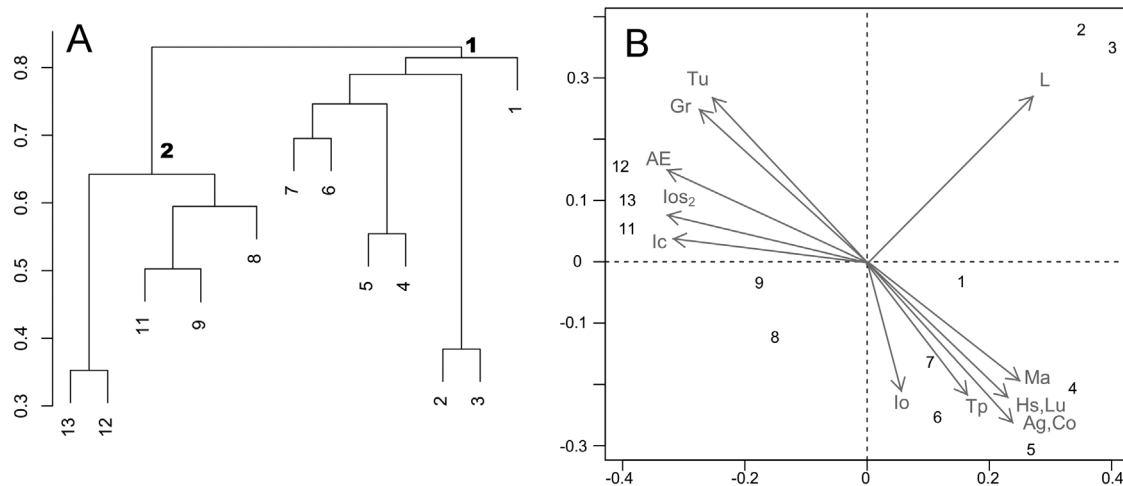


Fig. 2 - Classification and Indirect Gradient Analysis of the relevés referred to the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*. A) Dendrogram (“type based classification”) of the cluster obtained by the fuzzy semi-supervised classification (‘plot based classification’). B) PCoA plot of the (percentage differences dissimilarity matrix) square root frequency clusters data obtained by fuzzy semi-supervised classification. Arrows represent the vectors fitted for the variables correlated to the PCoA1 and PCoA2 axes (see Tab. 3). Bioclimatic indices (Rivas-Martínez *et al.*, 2011): Ic-Continental index, Io-Ombrothermic index, Ios₂-Bimontly summer ombrothermic index, Tp-Positive temperature index. Ellenberg indicator values (Pignatti *et al.* 2005): L-light. Geographic distribution (from Euro+Med, 2006): AE- East Aegean Islands, Ag- Algeria, Co- Corsica, Gr- Greece (without Crete and AE), Hs- Spain, Lu- Portugal, Ma- Morocco, with Spanish Territories, Tu- Turkey (without AE). Numbers represent the 12 associations and subassociations identified by the “plot based classification”: 1-*Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis juncetosum capitati*, 2 and 3-*Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis radioletosum linoidis*, 6-*Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis isolepidetosum pseudosetaceae*, 4-*Junco sorrentinii-Isoëtetum histricis*, 5-*Silene laetae-Isoëtetum histricis*, 7-*Isolepido cernuae-Isoëtetum histricis*, 11 and 13-*Isoëtetum siculae-histricis isoëtosum siculae*, 12-*Isoëtetum siculae-histricis pleurochetosum squarrosae*, 8-*Isoëtetum siculae-histricis cheiloteletosum chloropi*, 9-*Isoëtetum siculae-histricis solenopsietosum laurentiae*.

Tab. 3 - Sources of the data-set attributed to the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*.

Locality	Relevés
Tunisia	1 pag. 9 in Braun-Blanquet (1936)
Portugal	22-44 Tab. 8 in Rudner (2004)
Spain	14-51 Tab. 10 in Rudner (2004)
Italy	1, 4-7, 43-53, 91-100, 115-117, 122, 142-145, 148-150, 152-153, 172, 174-177, Table 4 in Ernan-des <i>et al.</i> , (2017)
Crete	4-9 Tab. 8 in Gradstein & Smittenberg (1977)

classification with the relative diagnostic species as identified by ISA are summarized in the synoptic table (Tab. 4) and described below.

JUNCO SORRENTINII-ISOËTETUM HISTRICIS Ba-gella, Biondi & Pesaresi ass. nova *hoc loco*

Holotypus: Relevé N° 49 of Table 10 in Rudner (2004).

Group number 4 (Tab. 5 and Fig. 2).

Diagnostic species: *Juncus sorrentinii*, *Exaculum pusillum*, *Lotus subbiflorus*, *Silene laeta*.

Short description: The analysis pointed out that some of the relevé from Campo de Gibraltar (SW Spain) referred to *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* (Rudner, 2004) have their own originilaty related to the presence of CW Mediterranean species such *Jun-cus sorrentini*, *Exaculum pusillum*, *Lotus subbiflorus*,

Tab. 4 - Indirect Gradient Analysis results. Significant correlation between PCoA axis scores and the bioclimatic indices of the sites, mean Ellenberg plot values and mean Geographic composition plot values.

	PCoA1	PCoA2	r ²	Pr(>r)
<i>Bioclimatic indices</i>				
Ic	-0.99	0.15	0.69	0.004 **
Ios ₂	-0.98	0.18	0.9	0.001 ***
Io	0.37	-0.93	0.57	0.02 *
Tp	0.6	-0.8	0.59	0.011 *
<i>Ellenberg values</i>				
L	0.7	0.72	0.74	0.04 *
<i>Geographic distribution of species</i>				
AE	-0.91	0.42	0.86	0.014 *
Gr	-0.74	0.68	0.81	0.036 *
Tu	-0.73	0.68	0.83	0.025 *
Ag	0.66	-0.75	0.8	0.049 *
Co	0.66	-0.75	0.81	0.042 *
Hs	0.71	-0.7	0.77	0.058 .
Lu	0.71	-0.7	0.77	0.06 .
Ma	0.75	-0.66	0.83	0.03 *

Significance (10000 permutations): 0 *** 0.001 ** 0.01 * 0.05 . 0.1

and *Silene laeta*. The presence of *J. sorrentinii*, species threatened because very rare and reduced to few populations (de Bélair, 2010), makes these communities of conservation concern. On the basis of these observations the new association *Junco sorrentinii-Isoëtetum histricis* was established.

Ordered phytosociological table: Tab. 6.

Tab. 6 - *Junco sorrentinii-Isoëtum histricis* ass. nova hoc loco (holotypus relevé n. 49 of Table 10 in Rudner, 2004). Group number 4 of Fig. 2 and Tab. 5 in the paper.

Original Relevés number of Tab. 10 in Rudner (2004)	44	45	46	48	49*	50
<i>Junco sorrentinii-Isoëtum histricis</i>						
Lotus subbiflorus	1	1	+	+	+	+
Silene laeta	+	.	1	+	+	.
Juncus sorrentinii	+	.	.	+	+	+
Exaculum pusillum	.	+	.	.	.	+
<i>Isoëto-Nanojunceta</i>						
Isoetes histrix	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cicendia filiformis	1	+	1	1	1	.
Juncus capitatus	+	.	+	.	+	.
Solenopsis laurentia	.	.	.	+	+	+
Serapias lingua	.	+	.	.	.	.
Chaetopogon fasciculatus	.	.	+	.	.	.
Radiola linoides	.	.	.	3	.	.
Lotus parviflorus	.	.	.	.	+	.
Hypericum humifusum	.	.	.	.	1	.
Other species						
Cynodon dactylon	+	1	1	1	1	1
Pinguicula lusitanica	+	1	+	+	+	+
Erica scoparia	+	.	+	+	+	1
Briza minor	+	+	.	.	+	+
Danthonia decumbens	.	+	+	1	+	.
Eleocharis multicaulis	+	1	1	.	.	.
Vulpia bromoides	1	.	.	1	1	.
Hypochaeris radicata	.	.	.	1	+	+
Linum bienne	+	.	.	+	.	.
Anthoxanthum ovatum	+	.	.	.	+	.
Potentilla erecta	.	.	.	.	+	+
Centaurium maritimum	.	1	.	.	.	.
Lythrum junceum	.	1	.	.	.	.
Genista triachanthos	.	+	.	.	.	.
Juncus bulbosus	.	+	.	.	.	.
Kickxia cirrhosa	.	+	.	.	.	.
Pulicaria odora	.	.	+	.	.	.
Erica ciliaris	.	.	.	+	.	.
Tolpis barbata	.	.	.	+	.	.
Leontodon tuberosus	.	.	.	+	.	.
Anagallis arvensis	.	.	.	+	.	.
Chamaemelum fuscatum	.	.	.	.	+	.
Leontodon saxatilis subsp. rothi	.	.	.	.	.	+

SILENO LAETAE-ISOËTETUM HISTRICIS Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi ass. nova hoc loco

Holotypus: Relevé N° 18 of Table 10 in Rudner (2004).

Group number 5 (Tab. 5 and Fig. 2)

Diagnostic species: *Silene laeta*, *Eleocharis multicaulis*, *Juncus hybridus*.

Short description: Some of the relevé from Campo de Gibraltar (SW Spain) referred to *Junco capitati-Isoëtum histricis*, although in a transitional form towards the association *Pulicario-Agrostietum* (Rudner, 2004), have their own originilaty related to the presence of CW Mediterranean species, such as *Silene laeta*. On the basis of these observations the new association *Sileno laetae-Isoëtum histricis* was established.

Ordered phytosociological table: Tab. 7.

JUNCO CAPITATI-ISOËTETUM HISTRICIS Br.-Bl. 1936

JUNCETOSUM CAPITATI Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi subass. nova hoc loco

Holotypus: Relevé in Braun-Blanquet (1936) p. 9

Group number 1 (Tab. 5 and Fig. 2)

ISOLEPIDETOSUM PSEUDOSÉTACEAE Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi subass. nova hoc loco

Holotypus: Relevé N° 39 of Table 10 in Rudner (2004).

Group number 6 (Tab. 5 and Fig. 2)

RADIOLETOSUM LINOIDIS Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi subass. nova hoc loco

Holotypus: Relevé 26 of Table 8 in Rudner (2004).

Group numbers 2-3 (Tab. 5 and Fig. 2)

Diagnostic species: *Illecebrum verticillatum*, *Cicendia filiformis*, *Solenopsis laurentia* (subass. *juncetosum capitati*); *Radiola linoides*, *Acis autumnalis*,

Tab. 7 - *Sileno laetae-Isoëtetum histricis* ass. nova hoc loco (holotypus relevé n.18 of Table 10 in Rudner, 2004). Group number 5 of Fig. 2 and Tab. 5 in the paper.

Original Relevés number of Tab. 10 in Rudner 2004	18*	19	21	23	28
<i>Sileno laetae-Isoëtetum histricis</i>					
Eleocharis multicaulis	3	.	3	1	1
Silene laeta	+	1	.	.	+
Juncus hybridus	+	1	+	.	.
<i>Isoëto-Nanojunceta</i>					
Isoetes histrix	1	1	1	1	1
Radiola linoides	1	1	.	.	+
Mentha pulegium	.	+	1	.	+
Isolepis cernua	+	1	.	.	.
Juncus capitatus	+	.	+	.	.
Lotus parviflorus	.	+	.	.	.
Juncus bufonius	.	+	.	.	.
Juncus tenageia	.	+	.	.	.
Agrostis salmantica	.	1	.	.	.
Cicendia filiformis	.	.	1	.	.
Serapias lingua	.	.	.	.	+
Other species					
Briza minor	1	1	1	+	1
Anthoxanthum ovatum	+	1	1	+	1
Potentilla erecta	1	+	1	.	+
Leontodon tuberosus	+	.	+	1	+
Hypochaeris radicata	+	.	+	1	r
Lythrum junceum	+	1	.	1	1
Anagallis arvensis	.	1	r	+	+
Erica scoparia	+	1	+	.	.
Anagallis crassifolia	1	+	1	.	.
Ornithopus pinnatus	.	+	+	.	+
Oenanthe pimpinelloides	+	.	.	r	.
Ranunculus macrophyllus	+	.	.	.	1
Plantago coronopus	.	.	1	.	+
Euphorbia exigua	.	.	.	1	+
Lotus pedunculatus	+	.	.	.	.
Leontodon saxatilis subsp. rothi	.	+	.	.	.
Carex distans	.	1	.	.	.
Sherardia arvensis	.	+	.	.	.
Pinguicula lusitanica	.	.	r	.	.
Cynodon dactylon	.	.	.	+	.
Ranunculus paludosus	.	.	.	1	.
Trifolium glomeratum	.	.	.	+	.
Baldellia ranunculoides	.	.	.	+	.
Ranunculus bulbosus subsp. aleae	.	.	.	r	.
Leucjum autumnale	.	.	.	.	+
Omphalodes linifolia	.	.	.	.	+
Carex flacca subsp. erythrostachys	.	.	.	.	1
Genista triachanthos	.	.	.	.	+
Juncus bulbosus	.	.	.	.	1
Holcus lanatus	.	.	.	.	+
Plantago lanceolata	.	.	.	.	+
Agrostis castellana	.	.	.	.	1
Cladanthus mixtus	.	.	.	.	+
Jacobaea erratica	.	.	.	.	+
Juncus articulatus	.	.	.	.	+
Gaudinia fragilis	.	.	.	.	1

and *Lotus parviflorus* (subass. *radioletosum linoidis*); *Isolepis pseudosetacea* (subass. *isolepidetosum pseudosetaceae*).

Short description: The relevé from North-Western Tunisia, close Meloula, where the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* was described (Braun-Blanquet, 1936) is here used to describe the new sub-

association *juncetosum capitati*.

The analysis pointed out that some of the relevé from Serra de Monchique (Portugal) referred to *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* (Rudner, 2004) have their own originilaty. The same for the relevé from Campo de Gibraltar (SW Spain) referred to *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* with elements of *Helianthemetalia* and

juncetea such as *Illecebrum verticillatum* and *Radiola linoïdes* (diagnostic of the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*) were absent. The two species *Isoëtes subinermis* and *Lotus angustissimus* were instead always present in Ernandes *et al.* (2017). *Isoëtes subinermis* Cesca & Peruzzi 2001 (name also confirmed in Peruzzi *et al.* (2003) and Bagella *et al.* (2015)) is considered synonym of *Isoëtes sicula* Tod. (Bartolucci *et al.*, 2018). On the basis of these observations the new association *Isoëtetum siculae-histricis* was established and the three subassociations described for *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* (Ernandes *et al.*, 2017) were referred to this new association.

Ordered phytosociological table: Tab. 9.

ISOLEPIDO CERNUAE-ISOËTETUM HISTRICIS Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi ass. nova hoc loco

Holotypus: Relevé N° 5 of Table 8 in Gradstein & Smittenberg (1977)

Group number 7 (Tab. 5 and Fig. 2)

Diagnostic species: *Isolepis cernua* and *Serapias lingua*.

Short description: The analysis pointed out that some of the relevé from Crete referred to *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* (Gradstein & Smittenberg, 1977) have their own originilaty mainly related to the absence of W-Mediterranean species such *Cicendia filiformis* (Bazos & Yannitzaros, 2004) and *Illecebrum verticillatum* (Dimopoulos *et al.*, 2016), diagnostic of for *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*. On the basis of these observations the new association *Isolepido cernuae-Isoëtetum histricis* was established.

Ordered phytosociological table: Tab. 10.

Discussions and conclusions

The vegetation with *Isoëtes histrix* and *Juncus capitatus* from different localities of the Mediterranean basin until now referred to the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* Braun-Blanquet 1936 presents a clear floristic and chorological pattern, with East-Western variations. At local level the ecological factors are also relevant.

CW-Mediterranean species such as *Exaculum pusillum*, the rare and threatned *Juncus sorrentinii*, *Isolepis pseudosetacea*, *Lotus subbiflorus*, *Silene laeta*, *Illecebrum verticillatum*, *Agrostis salmantica*, *Juncus pygmaeus*, *Chaetopogon fasciculatus* frequent in the Iberian peninsula and North Africa decreasing moving to E-Italy and Creete.

Chorological analysis on the species of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* class, validated the results of cluster analysis performed on the entire matrix. This confirmation is particularly relevant because the cluster

Tab. 10 - *Isolepido cernuae-Isoëtetum histricis* ass. nova hoc loco (*holopypus* Relevé N° 5 of Table 8 in (Gradstein & Smittenberg, 1977). Group number 7 in Fig. 2 and Tab. 5 in the paper.

Original Relevés number of Table 8 in Gradstein & Smittenberg 1977	4	5*	6	7	8	9
<i>Isolepido cernuae-Isoëtetum histricis</i>						
<i>Isolepis cernua</i>	+	+	.	1	1	2
<i>Radiola linoïdes</i>	+	1	1	.	.	.
<i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i>						
<i>Isoetes histrix</i>	2	1	1	2	1	1
<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	+	1	+	+	+	1
<i>Juncus capitatus</i>	1	1	1	+	.	.
<i>Centaurium maritimum</i>	+	1	+	+	.	.
<i>Serapias lingua</i>	.	.	+	.	+	.
Other species						
<i>Linum bienne</i>	+	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	1	1	1	1	1	+
<i>Carex flacca</i> subsp. <i>erythrostachys</i>	+	1	.	.	1	1
<i>Briza minor</i>	+	1	.	.	1	1
<i>Vulpia ciliata</i>	1	.	1	+	.	+
<i>Ornithogalum narbonense</i>	+	+	+	.	.	+
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	1	.	+	.	1	1
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	+	+	.	.	1	1
<i>Euphorbia exigua</i>	1	+	1	1	.	.
<i>Briza maxima</i>	1	+	.	+	.	.
<i>Hyparrhenia hirta</i>	+	.	.	+	3	.
<i>Oenanthe pimpinelloides</i>	.	+	.	.	1	1
<i>Anacamptis laxiflora</i>	.	.	+	+	+	+
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	.	.	1	+	+	.
<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	.	.	.	+	2	3
<i>Scirpoides holoschoenus</i> subsp. <i>holoschoenus</i>	+	+	.	.	.	.
<i>Parentucellia viscosa</i>	+	+	.	.	.	.
<i>Dorycnium rectum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1
<i>Panicum repens</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1

analysis could be distorted because the low number of species of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* class (18%) in comparison to the high (82%) and variable presence of species of other vegetation classes, particularly *Helianthemetea guttati* Rivas Goday et Rivas-Mart. 1963.

We disentangled the concept of *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* identifying among the communities referred to this name three new associations: *Junco sorrentinii-Isoëtetum histricis*, *Silene laetae-Isoëtetum histricis*, *Isoëtetum siculae-histricis*. Moreover inside the association *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis* we recognized three subassociations: *juncetosum capitati*, *isolepidetosum pseudosetaceae*, and *radioletosum linoïdis*. Finally the three subassociations of *Junco capitati-Isoëtetum histricis*, *pleurochetetosum squarrosae*, *cheilotetosum chloropi*, and *solenopsietosum laurentiae*, described by Ernandes *et al.* (2017), were moved to the new association *Isoëtetum siculae-histricis*.

Our findings allowed to describe new associations and subassociations mainly founded on chorology and synchorology evidences.

Syntaxonomic scheme

ISOËTO-NANOJUNCETEA Br.-Bl. & Tüxen ex Westhoff, Dijk & Passchier 1946

ISOËTETALIA DURIEUI Br.-Bl. 1936

Isoëtion durieui Br.-Bl. 1936

Junco sorrentinii-*Isoëtetum histricis* Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi ass. nova *hoc loco*

Sileno laetae-*Isoëtetum histricis* Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi ass. nova *hoc loco*

Junco capitati-*Isoëtetum histricis* Br.-Bl. 1936

juncetosum capitati Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi subass. nova *hoc loco*

isolepidetosum pseudosetaceae Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi subass. nova *hoc loco*

radioletosum linoidis Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi subass. nova *hoc loco*

Isoëtetum siculae-histricis Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi ass. nova *hoc loco*

isoëtosum siculae Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi subass. nova *hoc loco*

pleurochetetosum squarrosae (Ernandes, Gigante, Beccarisi, Marchiori, Venanzoni & Zuccarello 2017) Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi comb. nov. *hoc loco*

cheiloteletosum chloropi (Ernandes, Gigante, Beccarisi, Marchiori, Venanzoni & Zuccarello 2017) Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi comb. nov. *hoc loco*

solenopsietosum laurentiae (Ernandes, Gigante, Beccarisi, Marchiori, Venanzoni & Zuccarello 2017) Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi comb. nov. *hoc loco*

Isolepido cernuae-*Isoëtetum histricis* Bagella, Biondi & Pesaresi ass. nova *hoc loco*

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