

# Temperate riverside forests without alder trees in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula: ecology, phytosociological profile and interest for preservation policies

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**Abstract:** Rodríguez Guitián, M.A. *Temperate riverside forests without alder trees in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula: ecology, phytosociological profile and interest for preservation policies. Lazaroa 31: 9-37 (2010).*

This paper describes three new riverside associations with no alder trees growing mainly along the middle and high altitude watercourses of the river basins located at the western end of the Cantabrian coast. *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris* includes riverside mesoforests dominated by a combination of tree-like species (*Fraxinus excelsior*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Quercus robur*, *Corylus avellana*, *Salix atrocinerea*) which colonize the middle altitude watercourses of the rivers flowing into the Cantabrian Sea and the northern half of the Artabrian Gulf. *Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae* comprises hazel and grey willow microforests associated with small tributaries and the high areas of the river basins within the thermo- and mesotemperate thermotypes of the territory. Finally, *Violo palustris-Betuletum pubescentis* is a tree association related to rivers flowing through the high mesotemperate and supratemperate areas of the northern ranges of Galicia and the Sierra de la Bobia in Asturias, continuing into the NW end of the Miño River basin. The above-mentioned forest types are all included in the 91E0\* habitats of Appendix I of the Directive 92/43/EEC and are the habitat of a number of plant species of special interest for regional, Spanish and EU preservation policies.

**Key words:** riverside vegetation, 91E0\* habitat, Directive 92/43/EEC, NW of Spain.

**Resumen:** Rodríguez Guitián, M.A. *Los bosques templados de ribera sin alisos del noroeste de la Península Ibérica: ecología, perfil fitosociológico e interés de desarrollo de políticas de conservación. Lazaroa 31: 9-37 (2010).*

Se describen tres nuevas asociaciones de bosques riparios carentes de aliso distribuidas principalmente por los tramos fluviales medios y altos de las cuencas hidrográficas del extremo occidental de la Cornisa Cantábrica. *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris* incluye mesobosques riparios dominados por una mezcla de especies arbóreas (*Fraxinus excelsior*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Quercus robur*, *Corylus avellana*, *Salix atrocinerea*) que se distribuyen por los tramos medios de los ríos que vierten al Cantábrico y mitad septentrional del Golfo Ártabro. *Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae* agrupa microbosques de avellano y sauce común asociados a pequeños tributarios y partes altas de las cuencas fluviales dentro de los termotipos termo y mesotemplado del territorio. Por último, *Violo palustris-Betuletum pubescentis* es la asociación arbolada vinculada a los ríos que discurren por las áreas mesotempladas superiores y supratempladas de las sierras Septentrionales de Galicia y la asturiana Sierra de la Bobia, prolongándose por el extremo NW de la cuenca del Río Miño. Los tipos de bosques comentados se incluyen en el tipo de hábitat 91E0\* del Anexo I de la DC 92/43/CEE y constituyen el hábitat de diversas especies vegetales de interés para la conservación tanto a nivel autonómico, como español o de la UE.

**Palabras clave:** vegetación riparia, hábitat 91E0\*, DC 92/43/CEE, NW España.

## INTRODUCTION

A substantial part of the forests growing along the river watercourses of the Atlantic area of the extreme northwest of the Iberian Peninsula are

dominated by alder trees (*Alnus glutinosa* Gaertn.). Four phytosociological forest associations dominated by this species have so far been described as growing in this ecological environment (AMIGO & al., 1987; ROMERO BUJÁN, 1993; DÍAZ GONZÁ-

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LEZ & FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, 1994; HONRADO & *al.*, 2002), which is characterized by river flooding in autumn and winter, but with soils remaining fairly well aerated in summer.

However, there are other tree communities present in this biogeographical environment which tend to naturally colonize the river banks and where the above mentioned tree species are usually absent. These include some types of willow forests, a couple of types of birch tree forests and a type of mixed forest often dominated by ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) (IZCO & *al.*, 1986; DÍAZ GONZÁLEZ & FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, 1994; Honrado & *al.*, 2003; Amigo, 2006). These tree formations grow mostly in the Cantabrian Cordillera range (Orocantabric Subprovince *sensu* RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ, 2007) although some are even found in the central and eastern part of the Cantabrian coast (Cantabrian-Atlantic Subprovince) beside river watercourses which are particularly well suited to

their development, but not at all suited to alder trees (DÍAZ GONZÁLEZ & FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, 1994; LOIDI & *al.*, 1997; AMIGO, 2006) (Table 1).

With regards riverside alder tree forests, the data previously available (Table 1) revealed that the territories at the western end of the Cantabrian coast and of the northern half of the Artabrian Gulf show a particularly high biodiversity rate as compared with other Iberian environments in the northwest. Not only do they include the widespread alder tree forests belonging to the *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Alnetum glutinosae* association, but also some Galician-Portuguese (*Senecioni bayonensis-Alnetum glutinosae* subass. *fraxinetosum excelsioris*) and Ovetense (*Hyperico androsaemi-Alnetum glutinosae* subass. *osmundetosum regalidis*) enclaves of alder tree forests towards the western and eastern ends respectively (AMIGO & *al.*, 1987; DÍAZ GONZÁLEZ & FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, 1994). However, there is

Table 1

Biogeographical distribution of the riparian forests described in the NW Iberian Peninsula.

Acronyms of the biogeographical units. Sectors: G-A: Galician-Asturian; G-P: Galician-Portuguese;

Gint: Interior Galician; B-V: Bercian-Valdeorresean; N-A: Narceensian-Ancareasian; G-D: Galician-Duriensian.

Subsectors: Co: Western Cantabrian; O: Ovetensian; F: Fisterranean; RB: Rías Baixas;

Ch: Chairego; OL: Ourenseian-Lucensian; N: Naviano; UD: Ulloa-Deza; P: Penedense; X: Xuresian;

V: Valdeorresean; B: Bercian; Al: Altonarceensian; Om: Omañés; An: Ancareasian; C: Courelia;

Q: Queixense; S: Sanabrensian. The asterisks (\*) represents the forests type studied.

Subprovince Sector Subsector	Cantabro-Atlantic										Orocantabric							
	G-A		G-P		Gint				B-V		N-A				G-D			
	Co	O	F	RB	Ch	OL	N	UD	P	X	V	B	Al	Om	An	C	Q	S
Alder tree forests																		
<i>Hyperico androsaemi-Alnetum glutinosae</i>	○	●																
<i>Valeriano pyrenaicae-Alnetum glutinosae</i>	●				○	●							●	●	●	●		
<i>Senecioni bayonensis-Alnetum glutinosae</i>	○		●	●	●	●		●					●					
<i>Galio broteriana-Alnetum glutinosae</i>									?	●							?	●
Willow tree forests																		
<i>Salicetum angustifolio-salviifoliae</i>													○					
<i>Salicetum angustifolio-albae</i>		○										○	○					
<i>Salicetum salviifoliae</i>				○														
Birch tree forests																		
<i>Luzulo henriquesii-Betuletum celtibericae</i>																		
<i>subass. salicetosum atrocineriae</i>														?	?	●	○	? ○
<i>Carici reuteriana-Alnetum glutinosae</i>										●	●							
<i>*Violo palustris-Betuletum pubescentis</i>	●				○													
Ash tree forests																		
<i>Festuco giganteae-Fraxinetum excelsioris</i>														●	●	●	○	
<i>*Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris</i>	●																	
Hazel tree-willow tree forests																		
<i>*Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae</i>	●																	
Number of associations	6	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2?	2	1	3	3?	3?	3	3	2?	2

no information on the possible existence of other typologies of riverside forests where the alder tree might be absent.

Over the last ten years, our field research in this geographical area has revealed the occurrence of other riverside tree communities where *Alnus glutinosa* is absent. Some of these communities have been briefly described in a previous paper (RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN, 2005). This current paper aims not only to determine the phytosociological profile of this riverside tree vegetation growing at the western end of Cantabria, but also to assess its role as a suitable habitat for the preservation of vascular plant populations currently under legal protection.

### STUDY AREA AND METHODS

This paper concentrates on the area comprising basically the western Cantabrian Subsector (Galician-Asturian Sector, Cantabrian-Atlantic Subprovince, Atlantic European Province, Eurosiberian Region) according to the biogeographical units described for the Iberian NW by RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN & RAMIL-REGO (2008). This biogeographical

unit coincides largely with the so-called “Northern Galician-Asturian Subsector” of RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ (1987) or the Northern Galician and Northern Asturian districts combined in the mapping published by VÁZQUEZ & DÍAZ (2005).

Generally speaking, the territory under study is formed by metamorphic and igneous-siliceous rocky outcrops occasionally covered by detrital, non-consolidated sediments which produce soils which are poor in nutrients and frequently quite stony (ÁLVAREZ & DÍAZ-FIERROS, 1995; MACÍAS & CALVO DE ANTA, 1999). The general orographical profile is a succession of variably oriented ranges with more or less encased valleys and small sedimentary depressions in between (Valdoviño-Narón, San Sadurniño, As Pontes, O Valadouro, valleys of Mondoñedo and Lourenzá, etc.). Nevertheless, this biogeographical unit makes contact to the south with topographically flat or slightly undulating territories (namely, the regions of Teixeira-Curtis in the province of A Coruña and Terra Chá in the province of Lugo). At the easternmost point of the territory, the southern limit coincides with topographically rugged mountainous areas within the river basins of the Navia and the Narcea (Figure 1).

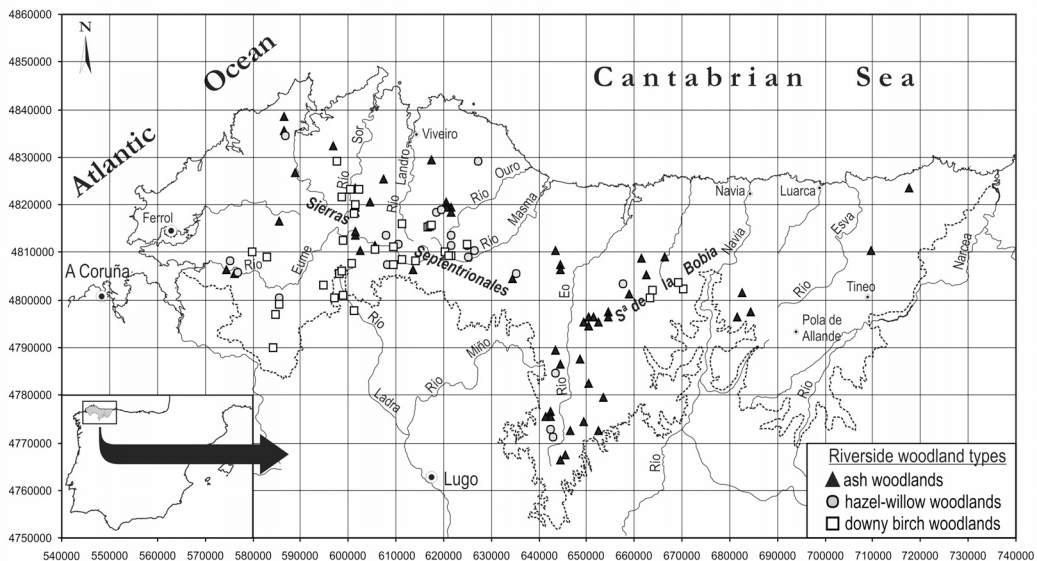


Figure 1. – Location of the study area and relevés corresponding to each riparian forest type described in this paper.

With regards bioclimatology, the thermotemperate belt extends from sea level to an altitude of about 150 m. Above this altitude we find the mesotemperate belt, whose highest level reaches an altitude of 650-800 m (the lower record corresponds to windward and the higher to leeward exposures). At still higher altitudes we find the supratemperate belt (RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN, 2005; RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN & RAMIL-REGO, 2007).

In each of the sites we made floristic relevés using the sigmatist phytosociological methods of Zurich-Montpellier (BRAUN-BLANQUET, 1979). The environmental data recorded included not only hydrological values but also topographical (altitude, slope, exposure) and soil (lithology, soil developmental state) values. The impact of human action was also recorded. With the aid of the thermometric gradients provided by RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN (2004) we calculated the Compensated Thermicity Index (CTI) value for each site in order to determine the particular thermotype following the methods proposed by RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ (2007). The information collected in the field was later checked against the available bibliographical references and is here shown in synthetic tables to enable discussion of the results. For taxonomical purposes we basically followed the suggestions of Flora Iberica (CASTROVIEJO & *al.*, 1986-2009) and European Flora (TUTIN

& *al.*, 1960-1980) for vascular plants and BRUGUÉS & *al.* (2007), CASAS & *al.* (2006) and SMITH (1990) for bryophytes. Because the distribution of *Hedera* species is still not well-known in the NW Iberian Peninsula, we maintain the original determinations established by the authors of the references used in the discussion paragraph. Nevertheless following SAHUQUILLO & *al.* (2001) *H. hibernica* could be the only taxon of this genus present in the study area. Finally, our syntaxonomical discussion relies heavily on the arrangement of phytosociological units and groups of characteristic species published by RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ & *al.* (2001, 2002).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From a physiognomical perspective, the riverside vegetation reveals the occurrence of three clearly distinguishable communities with regards their respective dominant tree-like species (ash, hazel-willow and birch tree forests). This paper concentrates not only on the floristic and structural features of these communities but also on their ecological and phytosociological profiles. The CTI index values reckoned for each of the sites under study (Figure 2) indicate that these three tree-like formations are thermotypically widely spread. Nevertheless there

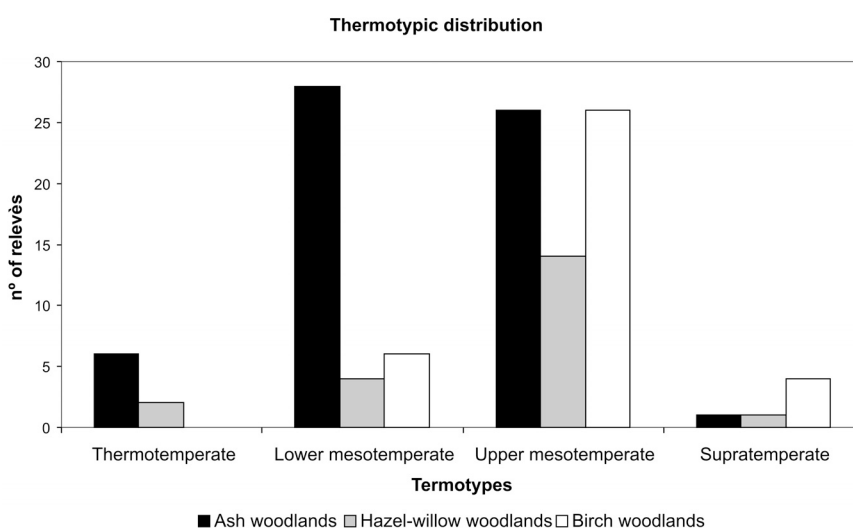


Figura 2. – Thermotypic distribution of riparian forest described in the text.

is also a certain bioclimatic segregation, as ash tree forests and hazel-willow tree forests tend to grow at mesotemperate and thermotemperate levels, whereas birch tree forests grow preferably in mesotemperate and supratemperate thermotypes.

#### RIVERSIDE ASH TREE FORESTS

Most of the rivers flowing into the Cantabrian Sea cover a relatively broad altitudinal range with short watercourses. Consequently, given the high rainfall rates recorded, heavily concentrated in the winter season, river flow rates are extremely variable and river banks tend to be unstable and liable to erosion, or even mostly cut out of the rock in many fluvial stretches. These conditions are not very suitable for the development of the root system of alder trees and prevail along the high and middle water courses, although they can be present locally in the lower courses. Under these adverse circumstances for alder trees, riverside galleries tend to be formed by a wide spectrum of tree-like species, such as ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore maples (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), wych elm trees (*Ulmus glabra*) and oak trees (*Quercus robur*, *Quercus petraea*, *Quercus x rosacea*), with occasional occurrences of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) or yew (*Taxus baccata*). Since the ash tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is the most frequently dominant species in these riverside forests, we have given them the name of "riverside ash tree forests". It is however true that these forests can exhibit a somewhat variable physiognomy and an average size which ranges from 12 to 24 m (Tables 2, 3 and 4).

In the scrub stratum (1.5-4 m) of these forests, hazel trees (*Corylus avellana*), grey willows (*Salix atrocinerea*), glossy buckthorns (*Frangula alnus*) and Plymouth pear (*Pyrus cordata*) tend to occur frequently. In the undergrowth there is an abundance of the nemoral grasses frequently found in riverside alder tree forests (*Athyrium filix-femina*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Carex remota*, *Carex elata* subsp. *reuteriana*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Hypericum androsaemum*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Scrophularia auriculata*, *Symphytum tuberosum*) and a variety of climatophilous forests

(*Aquilegia vulgaris*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris affinis*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, *Hedera hibernica*, *Holcus mollis*, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Luzula sylvatica* subsp. *henriquesii*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Polypodium vulgare*, *Sanicula europaea*, *Saxifraga spathularis*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Viola riviniana*). In this respect, the large number of characteristic species of the *Fagetalia sylvaticae* order thriving in these forests (*Carex sylvatica*, *Euphorbia dulcis*, *Helleborus viridis* subsp. *occidentalis*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Melica uniflora*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Milium efussum*, *Primula acaulis*, *Ranunculus tuberosus*, *Scrophularia alpestris*) is particularly worth noting. The average number of species is very high (38 taxa), well above the number recorded in the typical facies of the riverside alder tree forests of the *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Alnetum glutinosae* association studied by AMIGO & al. (1987) and MAYOR & FERNÁNDEZ (2007).

From a physiological and ecological point of view, these ash tree forests are related to the riparian forests described for the nearby Orocantabrian territories included in the *Festuco giganteae-Fraxinetum excelsioris* association, the only one of this particular profile so far described (DÍAZ GONZÁLEZ & FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO 1994, RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN & al. 2001). However, the presence of mesothermophilous taxa, such as *Quercus robur*, *Carex pendula*, *Ruscus aculeatus*, *Rubia peregrina* or *Arbutus unedo* in the Cantabrian-Atlantic ash tree forests we have studied, allows a clear-cut distinction as compared to the previous (Tables 2, 3, 4 and 7). Given their peculiar floristic profile and the clearly disjointed distribution of these forests as compared to the Orocantabrian riverside ash tree forests, we propose that they should be included in the new *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris associatio nova hoc loco* association, whose *holotypus* can be seen in relevé 9 of Table 2.

The floristic data recorded for this community and their correlation with a number of ecological factors suggest the presence of syntaxonomical units within it, with a rank lower than that of an association. On the one hand, the presence/absence of some thermophilous species allows us to distinguish two subassociations within these ash



Table 2  
*Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris* ass. nova  
 typical facies (1-15); *Alnus glutinosa* facies (16-20)  
 (*Hyperico androsaemi-Alnion glutinosae*, *Alnion incanae*, *Populetales albae*, *Salici-Populetea*)

	560	745	780	480	400	430	415	590	210	535	450	340	110	485	95	570	425	450	270	635
Altitude (m)	560	745	780	480	400	430	415	590	210	535	450	340	110	485	95	570	425	450	270	635
Exposition	N	NNE	NW	N	NNW	NNW	WNW	E	NE	N	NNE	S	W	WSW	NE	—	N	WNW	WNW	W
Slope (°)	4	16	15	4	2	2	4	20	2	2	12	20	4	2	2	<2	4	4	6	5
Tree height (m)	16	8	25	18	18	18	10	12	12	12	16	20	14	20	15	15	12	18	16	14
Tree cover (>1.5m, %)	100	100	100	95	95	100	90	95	90	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	90	100	100	100
Understory cover (<1.5m, %)	70	90	90	70	70	60	80	30	80	85	40	80	70	85	95	100	80	90	90	90
Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	250	200	200	120	200	100	200	100	100	200	100	120	180	300	200	200	200	400	200	100
Number of taxa	47	29	41	35	30	35	47	31	35	52	35	27	34	44	56	45	51	56	45	40
N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Characteristics of association and upper units																				
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	4	5	3	2	3	3	2	4	4	1	3	·	2	3	4	1	1	1	3	4
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	1	2	2	+	2	·	2	1	1	3	+	2	1	1	1	1	+	2	1	1
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	1	3	1	1	2	+	1	3	1	+	·	2	1	·	1	1	1	2	1	2
<i>Saxifraga spathularis</i>	1	1	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	+	1	·	+	+	1	1	1	2	+	1
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	+	+	1	·	1	+	1	1	+	+	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	+
<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	1	·	1	·	·	+	1	+	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	+	1	2	3	2
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	3	·	5	4	2	+	3	2	3	1	·	3	·	3	2	1	3	1	2	2
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	+	·	1	1	·	+	1	+	·	1	1	1	1	1	2	+	+	·	1	+
<i>Salix atrocinerea</i>	2	·	1	2	3	·	2	3	1	·	·	2	2	2	4	3	4	3	3	1
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	2	1	1	2	·	·	1	·	1	1	2	5	3	1	·	3	1	2	1	1
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	1	·	1	·	·	+	1	·	1	+	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	·
<i>Luzula henriquesii</i>	1	2	1	·	1	1	·	1	2	3	1	·	1	+	·	1	+	3	·	2
<i>Euphorbia dulcis</i>	·	1	1	+	+	·	1	+	+	+	1	·	+	·	2	1	·	2	3	1
<i>Valeriana pyrenaica</i>	1	1	1	2	2	·	·	1	1	1	+	·	·	3	·	1	1	+	·	1
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	1	·	1	2	1	3	·	2	2	1	1	·	·	3	1	+	·	·	·	2
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	1	1	1	·	·	+	1	·	·	1	1	·	·	+	+	·	+	1	·	1
<i>Primula acaulis</i>	·	1	·	·	+	·	·	·	r	·	1	+	·	·	1	1	1	1	1	+
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	+	·	+	+	+	+	2	+	·	·	·	1	·	·	1	+	2	·	·	·
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	+	·	·	·	·	r	+	·	+	+	·	+	+	+	+	·	+	+	·	·
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	+	+	r	+	·	+	·	·	+	+	·	+	·	·	·	·	+	·	1	+
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	·	+	1	·	+	1	·	·	+	·	·	+	+	+	+	+	1	·	+	+
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	+	1	·	1	·	+	·	+	+	1	·	·	+	+	2	·	+	·	·	1
<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>	1	2	1	1	·	·	·	1	+	+	·	2	·	+	+	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	1	·	·	·	3	4	·	+	1	3	·	·	·	+	·	2	·	·	·	2
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	+	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	1	1	+	1	1	·	·	·	·	1	·
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	·	·	·	+	1	·	·	·	2	1	1	·	1	·	1	+	·	·	·	1
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	3	·	·	2	1	1	·	·	1	1	2	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Festuca gigantea</i>	·	·	+	·	+	·	+	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+
<i>Carex remota</i>	+	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	+	1	1	·	·	·	·
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	+	·	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	2	·	·	·	3	·
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	·	·	·	·	1	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·
Differentials of Festuco-Fraxinetum																				
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	·	2	1	+	1	r	+	1	·	+	+	·	1	1	1	1	·	1	1	+
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	1	1	·	·	1	1	·	+	1	+	1	·	·	1	·	+	·	1	+	2
<i>Quercus robur</i>	1	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	1	·	+	·	3	+	·	3	2	3	r	·
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	2	·	·	1	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	+	1	1	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cardamine raphanifolia</i>	1	·	·	·	·	2	·	+	+	1	1	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Senecio nemorensis</i>	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	2	1	·
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	2	·	·	·	2	·	·	·	1	3	2	·
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	+	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	+	1	·	1	·	·	·
<i>Viola palustris</i>	·	2	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	2	1	·
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	+	·	·	+	·	r	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	+	·	·	·

N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<i>Cardamine impatiens</i>	+	.	+	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	+	.
<i>Pyrus cordata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.
<i>Arum italicum</i>	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	1	.
<i>Dryopteris aemula</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.
<i>Avenella flexuosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Narcissus asturiensis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.
Differentials of typical subassociation																				
<i>Carex pendula</i>	.	+	+	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	+	1	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	+
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	1	.	.	.	1	.
<i>Tamus communis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Asplenium onopteris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.
Differentials of <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> facies																				
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	1	1	1
Companions																				
<i>Rubus sp.</i>	.	2	+	+	+	1	+	1	+	1	1	+	1	+	1	1	1	1	+	2
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	r	1	2	.	1	1	+
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	1	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	1	+	.	.	+	+	.	.	+	.	.
<i>Scrophularia alpestris</i>	1	.	r	+	.	r	.	.	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	r	.	.	.	+
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	1	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	1	1	3	.	.
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	.	.	+	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	+	+	1	.	1	.
<i>Chaerophyllum hirsutum</i>	3	1	1	1	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	.	.	.	2	.
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	+	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	2	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	1	+	.	+
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	.	.	+	+	.	+	.	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	1	.	r	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	+
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	r	+	.	+	+	.
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	1	.	.	+	+	r	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	1	1	+	.
<i>Silene dioica</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	.	+	.	1
<i>Carex reuteriana</i>	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	+	.
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	.	.	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	.	+	.
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	.	.	.	.	1	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	2	.	.	1	.	.
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	r	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Omphalodes nitida</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	1	1	.
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	+
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	+
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	1
<i>Quercus x rosacea</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	+
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	.
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	1	.
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	.
<i>Brachypodium rupestre</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.
<i>Carex laevigata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.
<i>Erica arborea</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	2	.	+	.	.
<i>Arrhenatherum bulbosum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	1	.	.	.
<i>Ranunculus tuberosus</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	+	+	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Companions: *Pulmonaria longifolia* and *Salix caprea* + in 1; *Lastrea limbosperma* and *Polygonatum verticillatum* + in 2; *Epilobium* sp., *Polygonatum odoratum*, *Polygonatum verticillatum* and *Prunus avium* + in 3; *Asplenium trichomanes* and *Cystopteris fragilis*

+ in 4; *Milium effusum* and *Myosotis* sp. + and *Lastrea limbosperma* 1 in 5; *Asplenium trichomanes* and *Valeriana montana* + in 6; *Conopodium majus* r, *Crocus serotinus*, *Daboecia cantabrica*, *Juncus effusus*, *Lithodora prostrata* and *Solidago virgaurea* + in 7; *Valeriana montana* +, *Allium ursinum* 1 in 8; *Picris hieracioides* r in 9; *Melittis melissophyllum* r, *Euphorbia hyberna*, *Milium effusum*, *Prunus avium*, *Meconopsis cambric* and *Pimpinella major* +, *Quercus petraea* 1, *Fagus sylvatica* 2 in 10; *Centaurea nigra*, *Cystopteris fragilis* and *Digitalis purpurea* + in 11; *Helleborus foetidus*, *Helleborus occidentalis* and *Rosa gr. canina* +, *Fagus sylvatica* 1 in 14; *Anthoxanthum amarum*, *Cardamine flexuosa*, *Cruciata glabra*, *Galium aparine*, *Iris pseudacorus*, *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, *Potentilla sterilis*, *Stachys sylvatica* and *Veronica chamaedrys* + in 15; *Anthoxanthum odoratum* r, *Pteridium aquilinum* +, *Euphorbia hyberna* and *Prunus spinosa* 1 in 16; *Asphodelus* sp. r, *Angelica major*, *Crepis lampanoides*, *Daboecia cantabrica*, *Picris hieracioides* and *Stachys officinalis* +, *Succisa pratensis* 1 in 17; *Crocus serotinus*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Galium palustre*, *Potentilla sterilis*, *Prunella vulgaris* and *Veronica chamaedrys* +; *Adenostyles hybrida* and *Stachys officinalis* 1 in 18; *Asphodelus* sp. r, *Pteridium aquilinum* + and *Veronica montana* 1 in 19; *Helleborus foetidus* and *H. occidentalis* + in 20.

Locations (sq. 1x1km UTM coord. are indicated): 1: Fraga de Turía, Taramundi, Asturias, 654/4797; 2: Estornín, Monte da Mermella, Baleira, Lugo, 644/4766; 3: Rego da Cabana, downstream from Padornelo, Baleira, Lugo, 646/4772; 4: Rego do Bao do Medio, between Fontangordo and Vilaemil, A Pontenova, Lugo, 649/4795; 5: Río das Covas, in front to Teixeira de Pacios, A Fonsagrada, Lugo, 650/4782; 6: Fraga de Murias, Meira, Lugo, 643/4789; 7: Rego de Santar, between Muroás and Lombao, Muras, Lugo, 604/4820; 8: Rego de Romeor, Mte. As Paleiras, Baleira, Lugo, 642/4776; 9: Fraga de Reigadas, A Pontenova, Lugo, 650/4796, *holotypus assoc.*; 10: Río do Couso, Monte da Marronda, Baleira, Lugo, 642/4775; 11: Fraga de Reigadas, A Pontenova, Lugo, 650/4794; 12: Rego de Toxoso, between Igrexa and A Beira da Fraga, Ourel, Lugo, 601/4823; 13: Río de Bravos, between A Lagoa and Tiñade, Ourel, Lugo, 607/4825; 14: Río de Muiña, Monte da Marronda, Baleira, Lugo, 641/4775; 15: Rego de Reboredo, downstream from Debesos, Ortigueira, A Coruña, 596/4832; 16: Fraga de Santestebo, A Fonsagrada, Lugo, 653/4779; 17: Porcia river, upstream from Aguillón, Castropol, Asturias, 666/4809; 18: Río Eume, between Casateita and Goibetas, Muras, Lugo, 601/4813; 19: Río Grande de Xubia, between O Couto and O Teixeira, As Somozas, A Coruña, 585/4816; 20: Fraga de Ferreirola, Rego dos Muiños de Brañas, A Fonsagrada, Lugo, 649/4774.

tree forests. The floristic composition of the most typical (*fraxinetosum excelsioris*) comprises taxa which are vulnerable to cold temperatures, such as *Arbutus unedo*, *Asplenium onopteris*, *Carex pendula*, *Laurus nobilis*, *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, *Rubia peregrina*, *Ruscus aculeatus* or *Tamus communis*. Meanwhile, in areas far from the coast, especially within the upper mesotemperate and supratemperate thermotypes, not only is the group of thermophilous species absent, but there is also an increase in the frequency of *Saxifraga lepismigena* and some megaforbic species, such as *Adenostyles hybrida*, *Allium victorialis*, *Angelica major*. For this second ecological profile, we propose the subassociation *adenostyletosum hybridae subass. nova hoc loco* (*holotypus* relevé 10, Table 4).

On the other hand, when the general hyperoceanic character of the climate in the area under study is accompanied in specific places by a deep encasement of the watercourses, with abundant rapids and waterfalls inducing high atmospheric humidity in the environment, these forests tend to show exuberant populations of hygrosociophilous pteridophytes, such as *Woodwardia radicans*, *Culcita macrocarpa*, *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* or *Stegnogramma pozoi* (Table 3). These situations, relatively frequent in the thermotemperate and lower mesotemperate distributional levels of these

ash tree forests, represent what we have called the hyperhygrophilous variant of the typical subassociation already mentioned.

Finally, these forests also include a facies with *Alnus glutinosa*, which marks a transitional phase from this kind of forests towards the *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Alnetum glutinosae* alder tree forests, a community which usually makes contact with the riverside ash tree forests. Despite the existence of the black alder in these facies of the ash woodlands, they differ from the latter by the presence of many plants that are absent or are very rare in them, such as *Ajuga reptans*, *Cardamine impatiens*, *Castanea sativa*, *Erica arborea*, *Heraclium sphondylium*, *Holcus mollis*, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Polypodium vulgare*, *Primula acaulis*, *Quercus robur*, *Ranunculus tuberosus*, *Ruscus aculeatus*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Valeriana montana* and *Woodwardia radicans*, but are very common in the ash tree woodlands as a whole (Table 7). In addition, a number of species very frequent in the black alder woodlands, such as *Carex reuteriana*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Equisetum arvense*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, *Geum urbanum*, *Lythrum salicaria*, *Osmunda regalis*, *Poa nemoralis* and *Solanum dulcamara*, are scarce or absent in the ash woodlands.



Table 3  
*Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris* typical subass., hyperhygrophilous variant  
 typical facies (1-18); *Alnus glutinosa* facies (19-22).  
 (*Hyperico androsaemi-Alnenion glutinosae*, *Alnion incanae*, *Populetales albae*, *Salici-Populetea*)

	75	410	340	350	470	480	400	430	150	470	120	310	435	405	315	165	390	250	180	215	225	90
Altitude (m)	75	410	340	350	470	480	400	430	150	470	120	310	435	405	315	165	390	250	180	215	225	90
Exposition	NNW	NE	WNW	N	NE	ENE	SSE	NNE	SE	E	ESE	--	--	NW	--	--	E	E	NE	NW	--	ENE
Slope (°)	12	26	5	6	18	36	6	12	2	48	30	<2	<2	12	<2	<2	18	20	5	5	<2	18
Tree height (m)	14	18	16	16	16	8	8	16	18	12	10	18	16	19	20	15	8	25	12	20	12	19
Tree cover (>1,5m)(%)	90	90	85	90	100	80	90	90	100	100	80	100	95	100	80	90	85	100	100	90	80	100
Understory cover (<1,5m)(%)	40	70	80	85	90	85	60	90	90	90	100	50	70	90	70	50	60	80	20	75	40	45
Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	300	120	120	300	120	100	200	100	120	100	120	200	180	120	350	120	200	300	100	150	120	200
Number of taxa	43	29	38	48	40	38	47	28	29	30	27	38	52	38	50	42	39	39	40	42	42	30
N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Characteristics of association and upper units																						
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	3	1	1	4	4	4	5	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	2	+	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	+	2	3	2	1	1	1	3	1	3
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	1	1	2	1	1	+	+	1	2	1	+	+	+	2	2	+	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Saxifraga spathularis</i>	1	1	+	2	1	3	1	1	·	1	+	+	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	+
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	1	·	+	1	1	1	+	+	·	·	1	+	1	1	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	+	1	+	1	2	1	+	·	·	·	+	+	+	2	1	+	+	+	1	+	+	+
<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	2	+	·	2	+	2	1	2	·	1	2	+	+	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	·	1
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	1	+	1	2	1	1	+	·	1	+	1	1	+	1	1	+	1	·	1	1	·	2
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	·	+	+	·	+	1	+	+	1	+	1	1	+	+	·	+	+
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	3	1	2	3	2	+	2	2	·	2	·	3	1	1	+	·	2	5	3	·	3	·
<i>Luzula henriquesii</i>	·	4	2	2	+	1	4	·	·	·	+	2	3	1	r	+	1	·	1	+	+	+
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	·	1	4	·	2	3	·	·	·	2	1	2	4	3	1	1	1	2	+	·	2	3
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	+	+	+	+	1	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	2	+	+	1	1	+	+	1
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	1	3	1	1	·	·	·	·	2	·	2	1	+	·	·	1	1	3	1	2	1	1
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	+	1	+	·	+	·	·	1	1	+	+	·	1	1	1	1	+	·	·	+	1	2
<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>	·	·	1	1	+	·	+	1	1	1	·	1	+	·	+	1	·	1	·	1	+	+
<i>Salix atrocinerea</i>	1	1	·	2	+	·	1	2	2	·	1	·	·	3	+	r	2	1	1	·	·	·
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	+	+	+	1	·	+	+	·	+	·	·	+	+	1	·	+	+	·	·	·	r	+
<i>Euphorbia dulcis</i>	1	·	·	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	1	·	+	+	1	+	·	+
<i>Carex remota</i>	+	·	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	1	·	+	+	·	+	·	+	+	·
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	1	3	2	3	·	·	·	1	3	·	·	·	·	2	+	·	·	2	2	3	2	·
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	+	·	·	+	2	·	·	·	·	+	·	r	1	+	+	·	1	+	1	+	·	·
<i>Valeriana pyrenaica</i>	·	·	+	1	·	·	1	+	+	·	·	1	1	·	1	·	r	3	·	·	+	·
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	·	+	3	2	·	·	2	1	1	·	1	·	4	·	1	·	·	·	1	·	·	·
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	·	+	1	·	1	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	1	+	+	·	·	1	·	·	+	·
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	1	·	r	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	r	·	·	+	·	+	1	1	r	·	1
<i>Scrophularia alpestris</i>	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	1	·	r	·	·	·	·	·	+
<i>Festuca gigantea</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	1	·	·	1	·	·	1
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Symphytum tuberosum</i>	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
Differentials of <i>Festuco-Fraxinetum</i>																						
<i>Quercus robur</i>	·	1	·	·	·	·	1	2	2	+	·	·	+	2	2	3	2	·	2	2	1	·
<i>Primula acaulis</i>	+	·	·	+	1	+	+	·	·	1	+	·	+	+	+	·	+	·	·	+	·	·
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	r	·	+	·	+	·	r	·	·	+	+	·	+	·	+	+	·	+	·	+	·	+
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	·	+	·	+	1	+	·	1	1	·	·	·	+	·	·	+	·	·	·	+	+	·
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	+	·	·	·	+	1	+	·	+	·	·	·	+	·	1	·	·	·	+	1	·	·
<i>Cardamine raphanifolia</i>	·	1	+	1	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	r	1	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	1	1
<i>Heraclium sphondylium</i>	1	·	·	·	1	1	+	·	+	·	·	+	·	1	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	1
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	1	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	r	1	+	2	+	1	·	·	·
<i>Viola palustris</i>	+	·	·	+	·	1	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	1	·	+
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	·	·	·	·	+	·	r	·	2	·	·	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·
<i>Cardamine impatiens</i>	·	·	+	·	1	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	+

N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	1	.	.	.	.		
<i>Arum italicum</i>	.	+	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	
<i>Narcissus asturiensis</i>	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Dryopteris aemula</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	
<i>Avenella flexuosa</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Pyrus cordata</i>	.	.	.	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Senecio nemorensis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Differentials of typical subassociation																								
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	+	.	.	.	.	+	r	.	.	r	+	+	.	+	.	+	.	+	+	+	.	.	.	
<i>Carex pendula</i>	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	1	1	+	2	+	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	1	+	+	
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	3	1	.	2	3	.	1	.	
<i>Tamus communis</i>	.	+	.	+	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	+	.	.	+	.	1	.	.	.	.	
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	1	.	.	.	
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	
<i>Asplenium onopteris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Differentials of hyperhygrophilous var.																								
<i>Woodwardia radicans</i>	.	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	5	+	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	
<i>Hymenophyllum tunbrigense</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	+	2	1	1	.	1	.	
<i>Culcita macrocarpa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	1	
<i>Stegnogramma pozoi</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	
Differentials of <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> facies																								
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	2	2
Companions:																								
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	+	+	1	1	.	1	.	1	1	2	+	r	+	1	.	1	1	1	+	2	+	1	.	
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	+	.	+	.	1	.	r	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	
<i>Omphalodes nitida</i>	1	.	.	.	+	+	r	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Ranunculus tuberosus</i>	+	.	.	+	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	r	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	r	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	r	r	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	.	.	.	1	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	.	.	1	1	1	.	.	.	
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	.	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	1	.	1	.	r	
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	.	.	.	+	.	+	+	r	.	.	.	.	r	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	+	.	.	+	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	r	+	.	
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	+	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	.	.	.	.	+	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	r	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Polygonatum verticillatum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	
<i>Crepis lamsanoides</i>	.	.	.	.	.	r	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Adenostyles hybrida</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	.	1	.	.	.	.	
<i>Allium victorialis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	r	+	.	r	.	.	.	
<i>Silene dioica</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	.	2	.	.	.	
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i>	.	.	.	.	1	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	

Companions: *Asphodelus* sp. and *Potentilla sterilis* r, *Carex sylvatica*, *Conopodium majus*, *Euphorbia hyberna* and *Veronica montana* + in 1; *Geum urbanum* and *Melica uniflora* +, *Myosotis* sp. 1 in 3; *Erica arborea* and *Picris hieracioides* r, *Arrhenatherum bulbosum*, *Carex laevigata*, *Crocus serotinus*, *Milium effusum*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Stachys officinalis* and *Ulex europaeus* + in 4; *Fragaria vesca* and *Physospermum cornubiense* + in 5; *Asphodelus* sp., *Lysimachia nemorum* and *Par-*

*nassia palustris* + in 6; *Caltha palustris*, *Cardamine hirsute*, *Carex echinata*, *Parnassia palustris*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Sorbus aucuparia* +, *Nartheceum ossifragum* 1 in 7; *Taxus baccata* 1 in 8; *Saxifraga hirsuta* +, *Angelica major* 1, *Chaerophyllum hirsutum* and *Prunus laurocerasus* 2, *Fagus sylvatica* 3 in 9; *Chaerophyllum hirsutum* + in 10; *Asplenium trichomanes* and *Clematis vitalba* + in 12; *Hypericum* sp. r., *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* 1 in 13; *Melittis melissophyllum* + in 14; *Caltha palustris* r., *Hypericum* sp. and *Lysimachia nemorum* + in 15; *Lamium maculatum* and *Erica arborea* r in 16; *Prunella vulgaris* + in 17; *Picris hieracioides* + in 18; *Pteridium aquilinum* and *Wahlenbergia hederacea* r., *Carex pilulifera* and *Carex sylvatica* +, *Prunella vulgaris* 1; in 19; *Ranunculus repens* r., *Prunus avium* 2 in 21.

Relevé sites (sq. 1x1km UTM coord. are indicated): 1: Fragas do Eume Natural Park, Rego de Cal de Viñas, Monfero, A Coruña, 574/4806; 2: Fraga de Murias, Meira, Lugo, 643/4789; 3: Sanxés, Mte. O Cabanal, A Pontenova, Lugo, 652/4795; 4: Río Lagarteira, between Restrepo and Palacio, Vegadeo, Asturias, 661/4808; 5: Río da Fraga das Lérias, O Valadouro, Lugo, 621/4819; 6: Río da Fraga das Lérias, O Valadouro, Lugo, 620/4819; 7: Río da Fraga das Lérias, O Valadouro, Lugo, 620/4820; 8: Fraga de Vilapena, Trabada, Lugo, 644/4807; 9: Esqueiro river, between Foyedo and La Mafalla, Valdés, Asturias, 717/4823; 10: Fraga de Reigadas, A Pontenova, Lugo, 650/4794; 11: Río Mera, Fraga dos Casás, Cerdido, A Coruña, 588/4826; 12: Regueiro de Bounote, Fraga de Reigadas, A Pontenova, Lugo, 650/4794; 13: Fraga das Lérias, O Valadouro, Lugo, 620/4819; 14: Fraga de Vilapercide, Trabada, Lugo, 643/4810; 15: Río da Fraga das Lérias, O Valadouro, Lugo, 621/4818; 16: Fraga de Tanxauga, Viveiro, Lugo, 617/4829; 17: Rego Pequeno, Cariño, A Coruña, 586/4835; 18: Freixido, Río da Fraga das Lérias, O Valadouro, Lugo, 621/4818; 19: Río Quiza, upstream from O Seixo, Cariño, A Coruña, 586/4838; 20: Fraga de Tanxauga, Viveiro, Lugo, 617/4829; 21: Fraga de Reigadas, A Pontenova, Lugo, 651/4796; 22: Fragas do Eume Natural Park, Rego do Rodeiro, Monfero, A Coruña, 576/4806.

From a syntaxonomical point of view, the presence of species such as *Festuca gigantea*, *Hypericum androsaemum*, *Senecio nemorensis*, *Culcita macrocarpa* or *Woodwardia radicans* in these forests allow us to include them in the suballiance *Hyperico androsaemi-Alnenion glutinosae*, belonging to the *Alnion incanae* alliance, *Populetalia albae* order and *Salici-Populetea nigrae* class (Table 7, RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ & al., 2002).

#### RIVERSIDE HAZEL-WILLOW TREE FORESTS

Up river near the headwaters, the river flow rates vary to such an extent throughout the year that most of the characteristic tree-like species of the ash tree forests no longer find suitable growing conditions on the riverbanks. These circumstances produce microforests of usually 6-10 m high, mainly dominated by hazel trees (*Corylus avellana*) and black willow trees (*Salix atrocinerea*, Figure 2). As a result of their particular hydrological location, these hazel-willow tree forests tend to spread through the mesotemperate belt. However, they can also be found in thermotemperate areas where there are small streams.

As part of the canopy of these plant formations, some scattered trees may also be found which are less demanding of the soil moisture frequent in ash tree forests. This is the case, for example, of oak trees (*Quercus robur*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and downy birch (*Betula pubescens*).

However, the flora of the groundlevel of these forests is considerably poorer compared to that of these formations. The impact is particularly notable on the species belonging to the *Fagetalia sylvaticae* order and the *Salici-Populetea* class (Table 5). By contrast, the occurrence and abundance of species such as *Agrostis capillaris*, *Avenella flexuosa*, *Dryopteris aemula*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Erica arborea*, *Lastrea limbosperma* or *Sorbus aucuparia* are noticeably higher in these microforests. These acidophilous species are frequently recorded in the climatophilous oak woods with which they usually make lateral contact, but they rarely occur or are absent in the riverside ash tree forests.

From a phytosociological point of view, the floristic differences between the hazel-willow tree forests and the riverside ash tree forests, together with their very different ecological profile, lead us to propose the inclusion of the former in a new plant association, namely the *Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae associatio nova hoc loco*, whose *holotypus* we have stated in relevé 10 of Table 5.

In addition to the typical subassociation, whose distribution is mainly upper mesotemperate and supratemperate, there is another thermophilous subassociation (*ruscetosum aculeati subass. nova hoc loco, holotypus* relevé 17, Table 5) characterized by species such as *Arbutus unedo*, *Carex pendula*, *Laurus nobilis*, *Rus-*

Tabla 4  
*Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris* subass. *adenostyletosum hybridae* nova  
 typical facies (1-16); *Alnus glutinosa* facies (17-18)

(*Hyperico androsaemi-Alnion glutinosae*, *Alnion incanae*, *Populetales albae*, *Salici-Populetea*)

	570	630	635	775	325	435	530	460	515	440	455	430	475	470	530	830	570	450	
Exposition	NNE	N	WSW	SSW	SE	NW	W	W	SW	NNE	ESE	ESE	NE	S	NNE	ENE	S	WNW	
Altitude (m)	570	630	635	775	325	435	530	460	515	440	455	430	475	470	530	830	570	450	
Slope (°)	10	18	4	4	10	4	24	5	<2	2	2	5	4	10	16	18	2	10	
Tree height (m)	16	9	12	10	18	14	16	15	20	22	12	20	20	7-10	8-10	10	12	14	
Tree cover (>1,5m)(%)	100	95	95	100	90	85	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	90	100	100	85	90	
Understory cover (<1,5m)(%)	75	65	60	70	50	80	70	60	100	95	80	50	100	80	85	70	80	75	
Area (m2)	100	200	100	100	300	180	100	200	200	500	300	120	400	120	120	100	120	200	
Number of taxa	24	36	24	36	34	35	33	27	48	45	48	32	51	28	29	28	41	39	
N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Characteristic taxa of association and upper units																			
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	2	5	2	2	1	3	4	4	1	3	4	1	+	3	4	4	2	4	
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	1	+	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	.	+	
<i>Saxifraga spathularis</i>	1	1	1	1	1	+	+	.	1	1	1	.	1	2	3	1	1	1	
<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	+	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	.	2	+	1	2	.	1	1	1	2	
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	2	1	1	2	1	.	2	.	2	2	1	1	2	1	+	.	1	1	
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	.	1	1	1	1	1	2	.	.	1	1	1	1	1	+	2	+	+	
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	.	1	1	.	1	1	+	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	.	+	1	2	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	.	.	.	.	3	
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	1	1	.	1	1	1	1	.	1	.	1	+	1	1	1	1	.	2	
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	2	.	2	2	2	.	.	.	2	2	2	4	2	1	1	.	3	2	
<i>Luzula henriquesii</i>	2	2	.	1	1	.	+	1	2	3	1	2	3	2	+	.	.	1	
<i>Salix atrocinerea</i>	.	1	4	3	1	1	1	.	3	1	1	.	2	1	.	1	.	1	
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	.	1	+	+	+	1	.	.	+	.	2	.	1	2	2	1	.	1	
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	1	1	.	.	1	+	1	.	+	.	1	.	+	1	1	1	.	+	
<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	1	1	.	1	+	1	.	1	.	1	+	
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	.	+	1	+	1	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	+	+	.	.	+	+	
<i>Euphorbia dulcis</i>	.	.	.	1	.	1	.	+	2	1	+	+	2	.	.	1	.	.	
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	.	.	1	.	1	1	1	.	3	.	.	.	1	2	.	2	.	1	
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	.	.	.	1	.	.	+	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	+	
<i>Valeriana pyrenaica</i>	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	3	1	.	.	3	.	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	.	.	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	.	1	+	.	.	.	.	+	+	
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	.	.	2	.	3	.	2	2	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	
<i>Festuca gigantea</i>	+	+	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	1	r	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	.	.	3	2	.	.	.	1	.	.	
<i>Carex remota</i>	1	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Scrophularia alpestris</i>	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	+	.	.	
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	+	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	
Differentials of <i>Festuco-Fraxinetum</i>																			
<i>Quercus robur</i>	.	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	.	1	3	.	1	.	.	1	
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	.	+	.	+	1	1	+	+	1	.	1	1	.	.	+	+	.	+	
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	1	+	+	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Cardamine raphanifolia</i>	2	1	.	.	1	.	1	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	+	.	.	1	1	+	.	
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	+	

N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	3	1	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Senecio nemorensis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	
<i>Viola palustris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	2	+	.	.	.	.	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	.	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Cardamine impatiens</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Avenella flexuosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	.	.	.	
<i>Dryopteris aemula</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	
<i>Narcissus asturiensis</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Pyrus cordata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	
Differentials of <i>adenostyletosum hybridae</i>																			
<i>Adenostyles hybrida</i>	.	+	.	.	+	+	.	.	1	+	.	.	1	.	1	1	+	+	
<i>Saxifraga lepismigena</i>	.	.	+	+	+	+	+	+	.	.	+	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	
<i>Allium victorialis</i>	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	
<i>Angelica major</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Veratrum album</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Differentials of <i>Alnus glutinosa facies</i>																			
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1
Companions:																			
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	1	.	.	1	1	+	.	+	2	+	+	1	1	1	1	+	+	1	
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	.	.	.	+	1	+	.	+	+	+	.	1	1	+	+	.	.	+	
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	.	1	.	+	.	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	r	1	
<i>Crepis lampsanoides</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	+	1	.	1	.	r	.	.	+	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	.	.	1	1	.	1	.	.	.	+	.	.	1	.	.	1	1	.	
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	.	+	.	+	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	+	.	
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	2	.	.	1	.	1	.	+	+	
<i>Erica arborea</i>	.	+	.	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	1	+	r	.	+	
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	
<i>Silene dioica</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	r	.	.	.	1	.	.	+	
<i>Primula acaulis</i>	.	.	.	.	+	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Chaerophyllum hirsutum</i>	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	1	.	
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	+	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	+	.	
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	.	.	
<i>Ranunculus tuberosus</i>	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	+	
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Anthoxanthum amarum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	3	1	.	.	.	
<i>Arrhenatherum bulbosum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	r	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Carex reuteriana</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	2	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	
<i>Omphalodes nitida</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	

Companions: *Milium effusum* + and *Salix caprea* 1 in 2; *Asplenium trichomanes* r, *Solidago virgaurea* +, *Valeriana montana* 1 and *Fagus sylvatica* 2 in 3; *Aquilegia vulgaris*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Scilla verna* and *Valeriana montana* +, *Euphorbia hyberna* and *Sorbus aucuparia* 1, *Sorbus aria* 2 in 4; *Asphodelus* sp., *Carex laevigata* and *Carex pilulifera* + in 6; *Ceratocarpus claviculata* and *Fragaria vesca* r, *Asphodelus* sp., *Pulmonaria longifolia* + and *Prunus avium* 1 in 7; *Polygonatum verticillatum* +, *Saxifraga hirsuta* 2 and *Fagus sylvatica* 3 in 8; *Agrostis capillaris*, *Carex laevigata*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Myosotis* sp. and *Valeriana dioica* +, *Lastrea limbosperma* and *Stachys officinalis* 1, *Brachypodium rupestre* 2; in 9; *Centaurea nigra*, *Crocus serotinus*, *Lamium maculatum*, *Lathyrus linifolius* and *Rosa* gr. *canina* + *Agrostis capillaris*, *Myrica gale* and *Prunella vulgaris* 1 in 10; *Solidago virgaurea* r, *Picris hie-*



*racioides* and *Silene vulgaris* +, *Quercus x rosacea* 1 in 11; *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and *Digitalis purpurea* + in 13; *Crocus serotinus*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Rosa gr. canina*, *Veronica chamaedrys* and *Tritonia x crocosmiflora* +, *Euphorbia hyberna* and *Stachys officinalis* 1, *Brachypodium rupestre* 2 in 14; *Juncus effusus* + and *Myrica gale* 1 in 15; *Prunus avium* +, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polygonatum verticillatum* and *Sorbus aucuparia* 1 in 16; *Aquilegia vulgaris* and *Myosotis* sp. +; *Quercus x rosacea* 1 in 17; *Cystopteris fragilis* + in 18.

Relevé sites (sq. 1x1km UTM coord. are indicated): 1: Fraga de Turía, Taramundi, Asturias, 654/4796; 2: Rego de Ouroso, between Brataramundi and Cotarelo, Taramundi, Asturias, 658/4801; 3: Río Lloredo, between Muriellos and Penouta, Allande, Asturias, 684/4797; 4: Arroyo de Carondio, Braña de Is, Allande, Asturias, 681/4796; 5: Rego do Survival do Couso, Ribeira de Piquín, Lugo, 644/4786; 6: Rego dos Carballás, downstream from Carballosa, Muras, Lugo, 601/4818; 7: A Rebordela, Ribeira de Piquín, Lugo, 648/4787; 8: Arroyo de Trieves, Faedo de Ayones, Valdés, Asturias, 709/4810; 9: Río Eume, between Painceira and Invernes, Muras, Lugo, 605/4811; 10: Río Eume, in front of Porto dos Paus, Muras, Lugo, 601/4814, *holotypus subass. adenostyletosum*; 11: Río Cabornel, Barandón, Villayón, Asturias, 682/4801; 12: Fraga de Carreirachá, Trabada, Lugo, 644/4806; 13: Río Eume, near to industrial state of Muras, Muras, Lugo, 602/4810; 14: Rego da Fraga Gorda, Ameixeiras, Muras, Lugo, 601/4819; 15: Rego Seco, Fraga de Baos, Mondoñedo, Lugo, 634/4804; 16: Rego de Lagos, Pedrouzos, A Fonsagrada, Lugo, 652/4772; 17: Rego de Cubilledo, between Penas and Suagrande, Baleira, Lugo, 645/4767; 18: Regueiro da Mina, in front of Pumarega, Vegadeo, Asturias, 662/4805.

*cus aculeatus* or *Tamus communis*, which tend to grow in the thermotemperate and lower mesotemperate belts. There are two variants within both subassociations: the typical one and a hyperhygrophilous one, this latter being characterized by the occurrence of thermophilous and hygrophilous ferns, such as *Woodwardia radicans*, *Culcita macrocarpa* or *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense*. This last floristic combination takes place in either heavily encased enclaves or near small waterfalls.

As occurs in the case of riverside ash tree forests, the presence of taxa such as *Hypericum androsaemum*, *Senecio nemorensis*, *Festuca gigantea* or *Woodwardia radicans* in these riverside hazel-willow tree forests supports their inclusion in the *Hyperico androsaemi-Alnenion glutinosae* suballiance (*Alnion glutinosae* alliance, *Populetales albae* order, *Salici-Populetea nigrae* class).

#### RIVERSIDE BIRCH TREE FORESTS

In the highest sites of the northern Galician ranges and in the Sierra de la Bobia in Asturias, usually at altitudes of 400 or 500 m to 900 m, in connection with the upper mesotemperate and lower supratemperate thermotypes, the vegetation associated with the banks of streams becomes dominated by downy birches (*Betula pubescens*), sometimes accompanied by black willow trees (*Salix atrocinerea*), oak trees (*Quercus robur*), glossy buckthorns (*Frangula alnus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and moun-

tain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*). These are lineal forests usually 12-18 m high, whose undergrowth normally includes not only *Erica arborea* but also some acidophilous species frequently recorded in the nearby climatophilous forests (*Avenella flexuosa*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris affinis*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Euphorbia dulcis*, *Hedera hibernica*, *Holcus mollis*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Luzula henriquesii*, *Omphalodes nitida*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Polypodium vulgare*, *Saxifraga spathularis*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Vaccinium myrtillus* or *Viola riviniana*). Plants usually found in the nearby more or less hygrophilous or hygrotophilous scrublands and grasslands are also abundant. These are, e. g., *Agrostis capillaris*, *Arrhenatherum bulbosum*, *Carex laevigata*, *C. binervis*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Crocus serotinus*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Juncus effusus*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Peucedanum lancifolium*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Ranunculus repens* or *Rumex acetosa*.

These edaphohygrophilous riverside birch forests must not be confused with the widespread secondary climatophilous thermo-mesotemperate birch forests belonging to the association *Holco mollis-Betuletum celtibericae* (*Betulion fontqueri-celtibericae*, *Betulo-Populetales tremulae*, *Quercus-Fagetea*) described by AMIGO & ROMERO (1998) and typified more recently by RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ & al. (2002). These seral birch forests substitute several climatophilous oak forests of the suballiance *Quercenion robori-pyrenaicae* present in the NW Iberian Peninsula.

Table 5

*Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae* ass. nova typical (1-11); hyperhygrophilous variant (12-13);  
*ruscetosum aculeati*, typical var. (14-17); *ruscetosum aculeati*, hyperhygrophilous var. (18-21)  
 (*Hyperico androsaemi-Alnion glutinosae*, *Alnion incanae*, *Populetaia albae*, *Salici-Populetea*)

	765	695	670	660	640	600	595	550	535	530	400	460	620	665	355	330	85	95	270	460	230
Exposition	NW	ENE	SSE	SW	NNW	NNE	NE	E	ENE	ESE	ENE	NE	NNE	S	WNW	WSW	SSE	EEN	NNW	N	ENE
Slope (°)	10	24	6	8	8	26	8	2	4	4	22	10	24	6	24	6	12	18	8	15	12
Tree height (m)	8-10	6	8	8-12	8	10	10	5	8	10	10	10	6	10	10	8	10	14	10	8	8
Tree cover (>1,5m)(%)	100	100	80	90	60	85	90	90	90	85	100	100	90	85	100	90	90	80	100	100	100
Understory cover (<1,5m)(%)	85	80	90	85	60	95	90	85	60	70	60	70	75	65	60	85	80	90	80	90	50
Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	300	100	100	240	100	200	200	100	300	100	300	150	200	200	100	120	120	240	200	150	60
Numer of taxa	40	36	32	35	27	46	31	27	38	43	33	32	29	38	26	31	36	42	40	32	30
N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Characteristics of association and upper units																					
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	1	1	1	+	1	2	1	+	1	1	2	1	1	1	+	1	3	3	2	1	1
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	+	2	2	2	+	1	2	2	1	2	1
<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	1	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	·	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	+	1
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	+	3	3	1	·	2	2	+	2	1	2	1	1	1	r	+	2	1	3	1	1
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	1	1	1	2	·	1	2	·	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
<i>Saxifraga spathularis</i>	2	2	·	·	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	·	1	2	1	+
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	·	1	1	1	+	1	1	·	·	1	+	2	1	1
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	·	·	·	1	·	2	1	+	1	1	1	1	·	3	2	2	1	1	1	+	1
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	1	1	+	+	·	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	·	·	2	1	1	1	2	·
<i>Salix atrocinerea</i>	4	1	1	·	·	1	2	+	1	1	·	·	·	1	·	·	3	1	3	2	1
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	+	+	1	·	+	+	+	+	·	1	1	·	+	·	·	+	+	1	1	·	·
<i>Euphorbia dulcis</i>	1	1	1	·	1	1	1	·	2	·	1	+	1	·	·	·	·	·	2	+	+
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	·	+	·	·	+	+	·	·	+	1	·	+	·	·	·	·	+	+	1	·	+
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	1	·	·	2	2	1	2	·	1	1	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	1	·	·	1
<i>Carex remota</i>	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	+	·	·	+	+	·	·	·	+	·	1	+	+	·
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	1	·	+	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	·	·	+	1	·	·	·
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	3	1	1	+	·	·	·
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Festuca gigantea</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	+	·	·	·
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·
Differentials of <i>Festuco-Fraxinetum</i>																					
<i>Quercus robur</i>	1	·	1	2	+	·	+	1	1	1	·	·	1	2	·	·	·	+	1	1	1
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	·	1	1	1	·	1	·	·	+	+	+	·	·	1	·	·	+	+	·	·	+
<i>Viola palustris</i>	1	+	2	·	1	1	3	·	2	2	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	1	+	·	·
<i>Dryopteris aemula</i>	1	1	·	·	·	·	3	1	+	+	·	1	1	·	·	·	·	·	+	2	·
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	2	+	·
<i>Narcissus asturiensis</i>	1	+	+	+	·	+	·	·	·	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	1	·	+	+	·	1	·	·	1	·
<i>Pyrus cordata</i>	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	1	·	+	·	·
<i>Avenella flexuosa</i>	·	·	·	·	+	·	+	·	1	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	+	+	·	·
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	1	1	·	·	1	·	·	·	·
<i>Senecio nemorensis</i>	+	·	·	1	·	+	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	3	·	·	·	·	·	+
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	2	·	1	·	·	·
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	+
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	·	·	·	1	1	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
Differentials of <i>ruscetosum aculeati</i>																					
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	1	+	·	·
<i>Carex pendula</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	+
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	·	·	·
<i>Tamus communis</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·

N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Differentials of the hyperhygrophilous variant																					
<i>Woodwardia radicans</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	.	2
<i>Hymenophyllum tunbrigense</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.
<i>Culcita macrocarpa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.
Companions																					
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	1	+	1	2	1	1	+	2	1	+	+	+	+	1	1	1	+	1	+	1	1
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	+	+	+	+	2	+	1	1	+	.	.	1	1	1	.	+	.	.	1	+	.
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	.	1	+	1	.	1	1	+	1	.	+	+	+	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	+
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	1	+	.	r	1	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	.	1	r	.	.	.	.	r	.
<i>Luzula henriquesii</i>	2	.	.	.	1	2	1	.	1	2	2	.	.	3	.	+	.	.	+	.	.
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	.	.	1	+	+	.	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	+	1	.
<i>Omphalodes nitida</i>	.	.	+	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	r	.	+	+	.	r	+
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	r	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	r	+	.	.	+	r	r	+	.	.	.
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	1	+	.	+	.	.	+
<i>Carex laevigata</i>	.	+	+	r	.	+	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	.
<i>Adenostyles hybrida</i>	1	+	1	1	+	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Primula acaulis</i>	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	1	.	+	.	.	+
<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>	+	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	+	.
<i>Erica arborea</i>	.	.	r	1	.	1	.	.	r	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.
<i>Allium victorialis</i>	2	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	1	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	.	.	.	.	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	.	.	2	+	.
<i>Polygonatum verticillatum</i>	.	+	.	.	+	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	+	1	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	.	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	+	+	+	+	.	.
<i>Lastrea limbosperma</i>	.	1	.	.	2	.	.	.	+	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.
<i>Asphodelus</i> sp.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	.	.
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Valeriana pyrenaica</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	2	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Ranunculus tuberosus</i>	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Cardamine raphanifolia</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	+	1	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Crepis lamsanoides</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Chaerophyllum hirsutum</i>	+	+	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Scrophularia alpestris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Brachypodium rupestre</i>	.	+	+	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	+	.	.	+	.	1	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	.	.	r	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	+	.	.	.
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.
<i>Silene dioica</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Arrhenatherum bulbosum</i>	1	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Companions: *Hookeria lucens* and *Polytrichastrum formosum* +, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Scapania undulata* and *Sphagnum fimbriatum* 1 in 1; *Cirsium palustre* and *Wahlenbergia hederacea* + in 2; *Cirsium palustre*, *Juncus heterophyllus*, *Oenanthe crocata* and *Pteridium aquilinum* + in 3; *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Angelica major*, *Myosotis* sp. and *Pteridium aquilinum* + in 4; *Carex echinata* and *Juncus effusus* +, *Pulmonaria longifolia* 1 in 7; *Carex sylvatica* and *Stachys officinalis* +, *Dryopteris filix-mas* 1 in 8; *Daboecia cantábrica*, *Erica mackaiana*, *Lapsana communis*, *Potentilla erecta* + in 9; *Carex elata* subsp. *reuteriana*, *Crocus nudiflorus*, *Dactylis glomerata* +, *Stachys officinalis* 1 in 10; *Fraxinus excelsior* and *Veronica chamaedrys* r, *Cardamine hirsuta*, *Hypericum pulchrum* and *Ranunculus repens* +, *Veronica montana* 1 in 11; *Anthoxanthum odoratum* + in 12; *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Potentilla sterilis*, *Prunella vulgaris* and *Sanicula europaea* +, *Euphorbia hyberna* 1 in 14; *Lamium maculatum* and *Mercurialis perennis* 1 in 15; *Milium effusum* and *Solidago virgaurea* +, *Narcissus triandrus* 1 in 17; *Euphorbia hyberna* +, *Valeriana montana* and *Ulex europaeus* 1 in 18; *Carex sylvatica*, *Juncus effusus* and *Solidago virgaurea* +, *Erica mackaiana* and *Taxus baccata* 1, *Anthoxanthum odoratum* 2 in 19; *Potentilla erecta* + in 20; *Euphorbia amygdaloides* and *Sanicula europaea* +, *Dryopteris filix-mas* and *Heracleum sphondylium* 1 in 21.

Relevé sites (sq. 1x1km UTM coord. are indicated): 1: Monte da Marronda, Rego do Couso, Baleira, Lugo, 642/4772; 2: Rego dos Charcos, O Valadouro, Lugo, 618/4818; 3: Vilapedre, Fraga do Curro, Vilalba, Lugo, 608/4807; 4: Irixoa, Rego do Xuncal, Muras, Lugo, 608/4813; 5: Rego de Riobó, Fraga de Riobó, Muras, Lugo, 610/4811, holotypus assoc.; 6: Rego Grande, between San Fiz and Meiroi, Ribeira de Piquín, Lugo, 643/4784; 7: Fragavella, Rego do Cal, Abadín, Lugo, 624/4811; 8: Estelo, Rego do Cabo, Mondoñedo, Lugo, 626/4810; 9: Rego das Canelas, O Valadouro, Lugo, 619/4818; 10: Rego dos Agros, upstream from its confluence with Rego do Pedrido, Abadín, Lugo, 625/4809; 11: Fraga de Baos, Rego de Couto Redondo, Mondoñedo, Lugo, 635/4805; 12: Guilfonso, Fraga Muradoira, Alfoz, Lugo, 621/4813; 13: Fraga das Lérias, S part, Mondoñedo, Lugo, 621/4811; 14: San Paio, Monte O Freixido, Rego dos Cabozos, Baleira, Lugo, 642/4771; 15: As Dureixas, Mte. do Cadaval, Monfero, A Coruña, 585/4800; 16: Arroyo de Franjoz, Taramundi, Asturias, 657/4803; 17: Fragas do Eume Natural Park, Rego do Pozo, A Capela, A Coruña, 575/4808, *holotypus ruscetosum aculeati*; 18: Fragas do Eume Natural Park, Rego da Vaca, close to its confluence with Río Eume, Monfero, A Coruña, 576/4806; 19: Rego de Coto Grande, upstream from As Coruxeiras, Burela, Lugo, 627/4829; 20: Guilfonso, Fraga Muradoira, Alfoz, Lugo, 621/4813; 21: Serra de Moles, Rego de Vilariño, Ortigueira, A Coruña, 586/4834.

So far, two riverside tree-like communities dominated by downy birches had previously been described for the extreme NW of the Iberian Peninsula:

- *Luzulo henriquesii-Betuletum celtibericae subas. salicetosum atrocineriae*, occurring at the supratemperate levels of the Galician-Leonese ranges of Courel and Ancares (Western Orocantabrian sector in the RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN & RAMIL-REGO biogeographical classification), and distinguishable from the typical subassociation by the presence of plants such as *Salix atrocineria*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Chaerophyllum hirsutum*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Adenostyles hybrida* and *Athyrium filix-femina* (IZCO & al., 1986).
- *Carici reuteriana-Betuletum celtibericae*, distributed throughout the mountains near the Galician-Portuguese limit (Galician-Portuguese and Rías Baixas sectors in the RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN & RAMIL-REGO biogeographical classification) and in contrast to the previous birch tree forests, characterized by the presence, among other plants, of *Allium scorzoniferifolium*, *Anemone trifolia* subsp. *albida*, *Aquilegia vulgaris* subsp. *dichroa*, *Calamagrostis arundinacea*, *Carex elata* subsp. *reuteriana*, *Epilobium obscurum*, *Galium broterianum* or *Paradisaea lusitanica* (HONRADO & al., 2003).

As compared to these two communities, the riverside birch tree forests present the differentially exclusive presence of taxa such as *Ajuga reptans*, *Angelica major*, *Avenella flexuosa*, *Dryopteris ae-*

*mula* or *Senecio nemorensis* (Tables 6 and 7). In addition, not only do these birch tree forests lack the species differentiating the Xuresian from the Orocantabrian birch tree forests, but also others which are characteristic taxa of these latter (*Chaerophyllum hirsutum*, *Daphne laureola*, *Poa nemoralis*, *Polygonatum verticillatum* and *Valeriana montana*). Consequently, it seems clear that this kind of riverside birch tree forests is a new phytosociological association for which we propose the name *Violo palustris-Betuletum pubescentis associatio nova hoc loco* (*holotypus* rel. 3 Table 6).

The presence of species such as *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Frangula alnus*, *Osmunda regalis* and *Ranunculus ficaria* in the riverside birch tree forests of this new association supports their inclusion in the *Populetales albae* order, *Salici-Populetea nigrae* class (cf. RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ & al., 2002). However, contrary to the proposal made by HONRADO & al. (2003) for the Xuresian riverside birch tree forests, which they include in the *Osmundo-Alnion* alliance due to their lack of the characteristic species of the *Alnion incanae* alliance, the birch tree forests should be included in that alliance due to the presence of species such as *Carex remota* or *Festuca gigantea*, and, within this alliance, in the *Hyperico androsamei-Alnenion* suballiance, as they include species characteristic of that syntaxonomical unit, such as *Hypericum androsae-mum* or *Senecio nemorensis* (RIVAS-MARTÍNEZ & al. 2002).

Table 6  
*Viola palustris*-*Betuletum pubescentis* ass. nova  
 (*Hyperico androsaemi*-*Alnion glutinosae*, *Alnion incanae*, *Populetalia albae*, *Salici-Populetea*)  
 typical var. and facies (1-29); typical var., *Salix atrocinerea* facies (30-37); *Alnus glutinosa* var., typical facies (38-39)  
*Alnus glutinosa* var., *Salix atrocinerea* facies (40)

Altitude (m)	295	205	575	620	600	500	500	580	640	365	595	540	595	410	620	455	435	940	355	420	435	790	610	660	440	440	525	450	680	980	550	580	610	340	420	285				
Exposition	4	2	4	4	6	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	6	6	8	4	2	4	2	4	4	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	<2	6	
Slope (°)	N	NNW	NNW	NE	E	N	N	SW	WNW	WNW	NE	NW	N	NW	NNW	W	NNW	S	E	ENE	SW	ANE	ESE	ESE	W	SSW	S	ESE	NE	ESE	NNE	N	ENE	NE	NW	S	NE			
Tree height (m)	23	18	16	12	14	16	14	16	14	18	12	12	14	12	14	14	14	18	18	18	18	10	16	14	18	10	8	14	12	6	16	10	108	-108	10	18	18	16		
Tree cover (>1.5m)(%)	90	90	100	95	90	90	100	95	100	95	100	85	100	100	100	90	100	85	100	90	90	100	85	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	85	90	90	100	100	100	
Understory cover (<1.5m)(%)	80	80	100	75	80	90	100	100	85	100	95	100	70	100	95	100	90	95	100	90	90	95	85	95	90	100	80	100	90	95	100	80	100	90	95	100	90	95	100	80
Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	200	300	300	400	200	300	300	300	300	150	300	200	200	300	300	200	200	300	120	200	200	200	200	200	200	300	400	120	300	100	200	200	300	300	300	300	200	200	300	200
Numer of taxa	31	33	48	34	41	33	16	29	31	34	48	32	26	37	26	39	31	39	38	39	22	33	30	46	35	27	38	46	37	44	30	46	36	29	35	34	42	40	34	39
N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

Characteristic taxa of association and upper units

<i>Betula pubescens</i>	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	1	2	·	2	2	1	1	4	4	3								
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	3	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	·	2				
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	1	1	2	·	·	1	2	3	1	1	1	·	·	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	·	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	·	1					
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	1	1	1	·	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	·	2	·	2	1	1	2	3	3	·	2	1	1	·	1	2	4	3	·	1	1	·	1	1	·	2	1	2	3	2					
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	·	3	3	·	3	2	3	2	2	2	·	2	3	·	3	3	3	1	·	1	2	2	·	1	2	2	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	·	1	1	·	1	·	3	1	1				
<i>Quercus robur</i>	+ 1	1	+	·	1	2	2	1	1	·	1	1	1	·	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	·	1	·	1	·	1	·	1	·	3	1	1					
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	1	1	+	1	1	+	2	3	1	1	·	·	1	1	·	1	1	·	1	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					
<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	2	1	2	·	·	1	1	2	·	1	1	·	1	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	2	·	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	·	3	1	2			
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	1	1	+	·	1	1	·	1	2	2	1	2	·	1	1	1	1	2	2	·	2	·	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
<i>Viola palustris</i>	1	1	+	1	2	2	·	+	2	2	·	·	+	·	2	1	·	+	2	·	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	1	1	+	+	·	1	1	1	1	1	·	1	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
<i>Saxifraga spathularis</i>	2	1	·	+	2	1	·	1	·	1	·	1	1	·	1	1	2	·	1	2	·	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
<i>Euphorbia dulcis</i>	2	+	1	·	+	·	1	1	+	·	2	1	1	+	2	1	·	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
<i>Carex reuteriana</i>	·	2	+	+	·	3	·	r	2	1	1	+	+	+	+	·	1	·	1	·	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	·	1	1	·	1	·	1	1	1	1	·	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	2	·	+	·	1	·	1	1	+	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	·	2	·	+	+	+	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	+	·	1	1	+	·	+	+	+	·	1	+	·	1	+	·	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	2	·	·	+	·	1	·	·	·	1	·	1	·	1	·	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	+	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	+	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·





N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	.	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Allium victorialis</i>	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Molinia coerulea</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Stachys officinalis</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Lastrea limbosperma</i>	.	.	.	+	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Crepis lamsanoides</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Cystisus scoparius</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Peucedanum lancifolium</i>	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Silene dioica</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Primula acaulis</i>	+	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Polytrichum commune</i>	.	1	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Daboecia cantabrica</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Saxifraga lepismigena</i>	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Ranunculus tuberosus</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Anthoxanthum amarum</i>	2	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Asphodelus</i> sp.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.		
<i>Avenula sulcata</i>	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Galium palustre</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	



Table 7

Synthetic table showing the floristic composition of the ash, hazel-willow and birch-dominated riparian forests described in the NW Iberian peninsula (only companions in at least 4 synthetic relevés were included)

Number of relevés	60	20	21	40	9	5	37
Mean number of taxa	38	40	34	34	32	18	30
Relevé number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Differential taxa							
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	V	IV	V	IV	IV	+	III
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i> s.l.	V	IV	IV	IV	IV	·	IV
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	II	II	III	V	III	+	I
<i>Crepis lampanoides</i>	II	IV	I	I	IV	+	III
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	II	II	II	III	II	·	I
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	III	I	III	II	II	·	III
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	I	II	II	III	II	·	I
<i>Primula acaulis</i>	III	II	II	I	II	+	I
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	II	I	II	I	II	·	I
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	V	IV	V	II	·	V	II
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	IV	III	IV	III	·	II	I
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	IV	III	V	V	II	·	+
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	III	IV	III	III	II	·	·
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	I	III	II	I	·	V	·
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	II	II	IV	III	·	V	+
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	III	II	III	II	·	II	·
<i>Ranunculus tuberosus</i>	II	I	I	I	·	III	·
<i>Carex remota</i>	II	I	II	I	·	·	IV
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	IV	V	I	I	+	·	III
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	II	I	I	I	·	·	II
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	II	II	II	I	·	·	II
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	II	II	I	I	·	·	III
<i>Solidago virgaurea</i>	I	I	I	I	·	·	I
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	III	I	I	II	+	·	·
<i>Hedera hibernica</i>	V	·	V	V	III	·	IV*
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	I	·	I	V	II	·	I
<i>Quercus robur</i>	III	·	IV	V	II	+	+
<i>Chaerophyllum hirsutum</i>	II	V	I	·	·	V	II
<i>Polygonatum verticillatum</i>	I	I	II	·	·	III	·
<i>Valeriana pyrenaica</i>	III	V	II	+	·	+	III
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	III	V	I	·	·	·	IV
<i>Festuca gigantea</i>	II	IV	I	·	·	·	IV
<i>Scrophularia alpestris</i>	II	III	I	·	·	·	I
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	II	I	I	+	+	·	III
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	I	I	I	·	·	·	I
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	IV	+	III	III	·	·	I
<i>Dryopteris aemula</i>	I	·	III	II	·	·	·
<i>Pyrus cordata</i>	I	+	II	II	+	·	·
<i>Valeriana montana</i>	I	I	+	·	·	III	·
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	III	III	·	·	·	·	I
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	I	II	·	·	·	·	I
<i>Poa nemoralis</i>	·	I	·	·	·	III	IV
<i>Cardamine impatiens</i>	II	I	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Milium effusum</i>	I	II	+	·	·	·	·
<i>Veronica montana</i>	I	I	+	·	·	·	+
<i>Helleborus occidentalis</i>	I	I	·	·	·	·	·
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	I	I	·	·	·	·	+
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	II	+	II	+	·	·	+
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	II	·	I	+	·	·	I

Relevé number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Carex pendula</i>	II	.	I	.	.	.	II
<i>Woodwardia radicans</i>	II	.	I	.	.	.	+
<i>Hymenophyllum tunbrigense</i>	I	.	I	+	.	.	.
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	I	.	.	I	.	.	V
<i>Tamus communis</i>	II	+	+	.	.	.	I
<i>Daphne laureola</i>	.	I	.	.	.	IV	.
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	I	.	+	+	.	.	.
<i>Asplenium onopteris</i>	I	+	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Culcita macrocarpa</i>	I	.	+	.	.	.	.
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	I	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Hedera helix</i>	.	IV	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	.	II	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Epilobium parviflorum</i>	.	II	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	.	I	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Astrantia major</i>	.	I	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Polystichum aculeatum</i>	.	I	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Agrostis x fouilladei</i>	.	.	.	.	III	.	.
<i>Aquilegia dichroa</i>	.	.	.	.	III	.	.
<i>Calamagrostis arundinacea</i>	.	.	.	.	III	.	.
<i>Allium scorzonerifolium</i>	.	.	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Anemone albida</i>	.	.	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Epilobium obscurum</i>	.	.	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Galium broterianum</i>	.	.	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Hieracium vulgatum</i>	.	.	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Paradisea lusitanica</i>	.	.	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Quercus pyrenaica</i>	.	+	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	+	+	.	.	II	.	+
Characteristics of <i>Hyperico-Alnenion</i>							
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	IV	II	IV	I	.	.	IV
<i>Senecio nemorensis</i>	II	.	II	III	.	.	III
Characteristics of <i>Populetales albae</i> and <i>Salici-Populetea nigrae</i>							
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	V	V	V	V	V	IV	V
<i>Salix atrocinerea</i>	IV	IV	IV	V	V	IV	V
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	II	IV	+	I	II	.	V
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	II	+	II	II	II	.	IV
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	I	I	.	+	+	.	.
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	I	.	.	.	.	.	III
<i>Arum italicum</i>	I	.	.	.	.	.	I
Characteristics of <i>Fagetalia</i>							
<i>Euphorbia dulcis</i>	IV	V	IV	III	V	V	III
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	V	V	+	I	.	.	V
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	III	III	+	I	.	.	+
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	I	+	I	I	.	.	I
<i>Prunus avium</i>	I	II	.	.	II	.	.
<i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i>	I	.	+	I	.	.	I
<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	I	+	+	.	.	.	.
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	+	+	.	.	.	.	I
<i>Allium ursinum</i>	+	+	.	.	.	+	.
Characteristics of <i>Quercus-Fagetea</i>							
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	II	III	III	V	V	V	I
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	V	III	V	V	IV	V	II
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	V	V	V	II	II	III	III
<i>Saxifraga spathularis</i>	V	III	V	IV	II	IV	II
<i>Luzula henriquesii</i>	IV	IV	III	II	IV	V	III
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	II	+	II	I	+	.	I
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	II	I	II	+	.	+	.
<i>Euphorbia hyberna</i>	I	+	I	.	+	+	.



Relevé number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Lathyrus linifolius</i>	I	+	+	·	IV	·	·
<i>Avenella flexuosa</i>	I	+	II	III	·	·	·
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	I	I	+	·	·	+	·
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	II	II	I	·	·	·	·
<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>	·	I	+	+	·	·	·
<i>Melittis melissophyllum</i>	I	+	·	·	+	·	·
<i>Physospermum cornubiense</i>	+	+	·	I	·	·	·
<i>Salix caprea</i>	I	II	·	·	·	+	·
<i>Stachys officinalis</i>	I	·	I	I	·	·	+
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	I	+	I	·	·	·	·
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	I	·	+	·	·	+	·
Companions							
<i>Omphalodes nitida</i>	II	II	III	II	V	IV	II
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	III	I	+	I	II	+	I
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	I	·	I	I	II	II	I
<i>Erica arborea</i>	I	·	II	IV	V	V	·
<i>Carex laevigata</i>	I	+	III	III	II	+	·
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	I	I	I	III	+	II	·
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	V	II	V	V	·	II	V
<i>Viola palustris</i>	II	+	III	IV	II	·	I
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	I	III	+	III	+	·	II
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	I	II	+	II	+	·	I
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	I	+	III	III	III	·	·
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	II	II	II	I	III	·	·
<i>Arrhenatherum bulbosum</i>	I	I	I	III	II	·	·
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	I	II	I	I	II	·	·
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	·	I	I	I	III	IV	·
<i>Carex reuteriana</i>	I	·	+	III	V	·	IV
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	II	·	+	III	III	·	III
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	I	·	I	I	II	·	III
<i>Adenostyles hybrida</i>	II	II	II	I	·	IV	·
<i>Silene dioica</i>	II	III	I	I	·	·	III
<i>Lastrea limbosperma</i>	I	+	II	I	·	·	I
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	I	II	·	III	II	·	+
<i>Saxifraga lepismigena</i>	I	III	·	I	II	·	I
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	II	+	IV	I	·	·	·
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	I	II	I	+	·	·	·
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	I	I	I	I	·	·	·
<i>Myosotis</i> sp.	I	+	+	+	·	·	·
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	+	+	+	+	·	·	·
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	·	+	I	I	II	·	·
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	·	II	·	+	II	+	·
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	I	·	II	III	II	·	·
<i>Brachypodium rupestre</i>	I	·	I	III	II	·	·

Other species: Characteristics of *Populetalia albae* and *Salici-Populetea nigrae*: *Stegnogramma pozoi* +, *Malus sylvestris* and *Symphytum tuberosum* I in 1; *Prunus padus* + in 2; *Malus sylvestris* + in 3; *Fraxinus angustifolia* + in 5. Characteristics of *Fagetalia sylvatica*: *Conopodium majus* and *Saxifraga hirsuta* I in 1; *Saxifraga hirsuta* and *Tilia platyphyllos* + in 2; *Ornithogalum pyrenaicum* + in 5. Characteristics of *Quercu-Fagetea*: *Ceratocarpus claviculata* and *Sorbus aria* +, *Helleborus foetidus*, *Quercus petraea* and *Quercus x rosacea* I in 1; *Hieracium murorum* and *Melampyrum pratense* +, *Helleborus foetidus* and *Viola* gr. *sylvestris* I, *Quercus petraea* IV in 2; *Ceratocarpus claviculata* + in 4; *Lilium martagon* + in 5.

Precedence of relevés: 1: *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris*, synthetic table from tables 2, 3 and 4 of this paper; 2: *Festuco giganteae-Fraxinetum excelsioris*, synthetic table from DÍAZ GONZÁLEZ & FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO (1994), Table 5, 13 rels. and RODRÍGUEZ GUITIÁN & al. (2001), Table 6, 7 rels.; 3: *Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae*, synthetic table from table 5 of this paper; 4: *Viola palustris-Betuletum pubescentis*, synthetic table from table 6 of this paper; 5: *Carici reuteriana-Betuletum celtibericae*, synthetic table from HONRADO & al. (2002), Table 1, 9 rels.; 6: *Luzulo henriquesii-Betuletum celtibericae* subass. *salicetosum atrocineriae*, synthetic table from IzCO & al. (1986), Table 3, rels. 8 to 12; 7: *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Alnetum glutinosae*, synthetic table from AMIGO & al. (1987), Table 3, 37 rels.

## SYNTAXONOMICAL SCHEME

The syntaxonomical scheme of the plant communities mentioned in this paper is shown below.

*SALICI-POPULETEA NIGRAE* (Rivas-Martínez & Cantó ex Rivas-Martínez, Bascónes, T.E. Díaz, FernándezGonzález & Loidi 1991) Rivas-Martínez & Cantó 2002

*Populetalia albae* Br.-Bl. ex Tchou 1948

*Alnion incanae* Pawłowski in Pawłowski, Sokołowski & Wallisch 1928

*Hyperico androsaemi-Alnenion glutinosae* Amigo, Guitián & F. Prieto 1987

*Festuco giganteae-Fraxinetum excelsioris* F. Prieto & Bueno in T.E. Díaz & F. Prieto 1994

*Hyperico androsaemi-Alnetum glutinosae* (Br.-Bl. 1967) Rivas-Martínez in Loidi 1983

*osmundetosum regalidis* Amigo, Guitián & F. Prieto 1987

*Valeriano pyrenaicae-Alnetum glutinosae* Amigo, J. Guitián & F. Prieto 1987

*Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris ass. nova*

*fraxinetosum excelsioris*

typical variant

typical facies

*Alnus glutinosa facies*

hyperhygrophilous variant

typical facies

*Alnus glutinosa facies*

subass. *adenostyletosum hybridae nova*

typical facies

*Alnus glutinosa facies*

*Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae ass. nova*

*coryletosum avellanae*

typical variant

hyperhygrophilous variant

*ruscetosum aculeati nova*

typical variant

hyperhygrophilous variant

*Violo palustris-Betuletum pubescentis ass. nova*

typical variant

typical facies

*Salix atrocinerea facies*

*Alnus glutinosa* variant

typical facies

*Salix atrocinerea facies*

*Osmundo-Alnion glutinosae* (Br.-Bl., P. Silva & Rozeira 1956) Dierschke & Rivas-Martínez in Rivas-Martínez 1975

*Galio broteriani-Alnetum glutinosae* Rivas-Martínez, Fuente & Sánchez-Mata 1986

*Scrophulario scorodoniae-Alnetum glutinosae* Br.-Bl., P. Silva & Rozeira 1956

*Senecioni bayonensis-Alnetum glutinosae* Amigo, J. Guitián & F. Prieto 1987 (= *Narcisso cyclaminei-Alnetum glutinosae* Honrado, P. Alves, R. Pereira & F.B. Caldas in Honrado, P. Alves, H.N. Alves & F.B. Caldas 2004)

*Carici reuteriana-Betuletum celtibericae* Honrado, P. Alves, Aguiar, Ortiz & F.B. Caldas ex Honrado 2004

*Salicetalia purpureae* Moor 1958

*Salicion salviifoliae* Rivas-Martínez, T.E. Díaz, F. Prieto, Loidi & Penas 1984

*Salicetum salviifoliae* Oberdorfer & Tüxen in Tüxen & Oberdorfer 1958

*Salicetum lambertiano-salviifoliae* Rivas-Martínez 1965 corr. Rivas-Martínez, Fernández-González & Sánchez-Mata 1986

*QUERCO-FAGETEA* Br.-Bl. & Vlieger in Vlieger 1937

*Betulo pendulae-Populetalia tremulae* Rivas-Martínez & Costa 2002

*Betulion fontqueri-celtibericae* Rivas-Martínez & Costa 2002

*Luzulo henriquesii-Betuletum celtibericae* Rivas-Martínez 1965

*salicetosum atrocinerea* Izco, Amigo & J. Guitián 1986

#### INTEREST OF THE FORESTS UNDER STUDY FOR A PRESERVATION POLICY

A correct assessment of the interest of a given kind of habitat for a preservation policy is a complex issue which requires profound knowledge not only of the different biotic factors involved but also of their geographical distribution (LOIDI, 2008). When there is little of this information available, researchers often resort to assessments based on the vulnerability level or endemism rate of animals and plants living in that ecological environment. Although this kind of assessment is very common, the results obtained from a consideration of the plant elements tend to underestimate the interest of a given ecological environment for a preservation policy, as certain plants, especially geophytes, may have phenological cycles which make it very difficult to clearly identify the plants outside the flowering or fruiting periods.

Conscious of this difficulty, we offer a tentative assessment of the conservation interest of these riverside forests as part of a preservation policy of natural heritage. For this purpose we not only take into account floristic criteria (lists of species under legal protection) but also the typology of habitats (according to Appendix I of the Directive 92/43/EEC). We also assume that the forest samples in our relevés faithfully represent their floristic composition throughout their recognised distribution area.

#### FLORISTIC CRITERIA

In this section we have used the occurrence rate, in each of the described forest associations, of plant species currently under legal protection, both at the EU level (Appendix of the Directive 92/43/EEC) and at the level of the Spanish autonomous regions, i.e., Galicia and Principado de Asturias, two regions which have their own catalogues of endangered species: CGEA (ANONYMOUS, 2007) and CREAPA (ANONYMOUS, 1997) (TABLE 8). The results reveal that the riverside forests under study include up to 8 vascular plant species under protection and 1 moss genus, with a notable proportion of pteridophytes (4 species).

Although it was not recorded in our relevés, *Hymenophyllum wilsonii*, whose only population known so far in the Iberian Peninsula grows precisely in a riverside forest similar to the hazel-willow tree forests described here, must be added to this list (SOÑORA & *al.*, 1992, QUINTANILLA & *al.*, 2002). The low occurrence rate of some species, such as *Culcita macrocarpa* or *Taxus baccata*, in the communities under study is due to their very meagre natural populations in the territory in question. However, in other cases, such as that of *Narcissus asturiensis*, the low occurrence rate must be put down to the difficulty of detection when field sampling: conspicuously prevernal, this species can easily be overlooked during its vegetative period. With regard to the bryophytes of the *Sphagnum* genus, as occurs with the rest of the non-vascular flora, they are frequently dismissed in the research depicting the phytocoenoses dominated by superior plants, which prevents them from being correctly assessed as far as preservation policy is concerned.

The data recorded suggest that the three kinds of riverside forests described are typical of ecological environments suitable for the development of plant species populations under protection. In this respect, the hazel-willow tree forests include the largest number of protected plants, specifically three species from Appendix II, two from Appendix V of Directive 92/43/EEC, two ranked as vulnerable (VU) in the CGEA, and one ranked as being of special interest (SI) and included in the CREAPA (Table 8).

#### TYPOLGY ACCORDING TO ANNEX I OF THE DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC

In addition to the criteria based on the presence of endangered species under legal protection, since the passing and publication in 1992 of Directive 92/43/EEC, the list of habitats shown in Annex I is being used as a criterion for determining the interest of types of vegetation characteristic of specific ecological environments for a preservation policy.

According to the guidelines of the EUR-27 version of the "Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats" (EC 2007), all the forests descri-

Table 8

Conservation value of the riparian forests studied based on presence of protected species of vascular plants and bryophytes. Protection orders: DC 92/43/CEE: annexes of the Directive 92/43/EEC; CREAPA: Catálogo Regional de Especies Amenazadas del Principado de Asturias; CGEA: Catálogo Galego de Especies Ameazadas. IE: species of special interest; EP: species in risk of extinction; VU: vulnerable species. Forest types: V-F: *Valeriano pyrenaicae-Fraxinetum excelsioris*, H-C (*Hyperico androsaemi-Coryletum avellanae*), V-B: *Violo palustris-Betuletum pubescentis*. Frequency (% of presence in relevés): ○: low (<10 %); ●: medium (10-25 %); ■: high (>25%).

Taxa	Protection order			Forest type		
	92/43/CEE	CREAPA	CGEA	V-F	H-C	V-B
<i>Culcita macrocarpa</i>	II	IE	EP	○	○	---
<i>Dryopteris aemula</i>	---	---	VU	○	●	■
<i>Hymenophyllum tunbrigense</i>	---	---	VU	●	●	○
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	---	IE	---	■	■	●
<i>Narcissus asturiensis</i>	II	---	VU	○	■	●
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	V	---	---	■	■	○
<i>Sphagnum</i> spp.	V	---	---	---	○	○
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	---	IE	---	○	○	---
<i>Woodwardia radicans</i>	II	IE	VU	■	●	---

bed here should be included in the priority habitat “91E0\* *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* riverside forests (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)” not only because they are riverside forests growing in the temperate zone dominated by alder tree or ash tree (as happens with the riverside ash tree forests), but also because their floristic composition includes many species considered characteristic of this kind of habitat (*Alnus glutinosa*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Betula pubescens*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Carex pendula*, *Carex remota*, *C. sylvatica*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Salix fragilis*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Urtica dioica*), a criterion which supports their inclusion in the case of the hazel-willow tree forests and the birch tree forests. In addition, as we have already explained, the ash tree, hazel-willow and birch tree forests are ascribed, from a syntaxonomical point of view, to the *Alnion incanae* alliance, the reference unit alluded to in the declaration of the above-mentioned type of habitat.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our paper has documented the existence of different types of riverside forests in which alder

trees are absent or have a very small presence within the westernmost Cantabrian territories. In the headwaters of the rivers and in the steep-banked stretches of the middle and low altitude river watercourses, these riverside forests (ash, hazel-willow and birch forests) take the place of the alder tree forests of the *Valeriano-pyrenaicae-Alnetum glutinosae* association for hydrological and bioclimatic reasons. The plant communities occur in ecological environments considered as habitats in great need of protection within the EU, and are particularly suitable for the survival of a large number of plant species under protection. Consequently, accurate knowledge of the distribution of these forests is very useful for an efficient mapping and management of areas of interest for a preservation policy to protect the natural heritage of the territory we have studied.

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