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ECOLOGY OF THE UDA WALAWE NATIONAL PARK
I. TEMPORAL CHANGES IN LAND USE PATTERNS

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The habitat types within the Uda Walawe National Park were identified and surveyed using a combination of Remote sensing techniques and ground studies[1]. (Dreager & Pettinger 1981). Aerial photographs were the major remote sensing tool utilized.

Thirteen, Land use/Habitat/Vegetation cover categories were identified. The aerial photographic interpretations indicated that a temporal shift away from natural high forest cover to man created grasslands and barren lands, appears to have occurred in the area between 1956 and 1982. The extent of the park under forest cover has decreased from 85% to 9% in this period, while the extent of open grasslands, barren lands and eroded lands has increased from 1% to 48%.

The trends of succession in the park, as suggested by the interpretation of the sequence of land use maps, are from cleared land to grasslands and then to scrub. Most of the degradation within the park may be directly attributed to human impact.

The work was funded by the NARESA Grant RGB/82/14.

Reference

1. Dreager, W.C. & Rettinger, L.R. (1981). Remote Sensing: a tool for park planning and management. Parks 6 (3) 1 - 6