

**B-84 : EVALUATION OF NUTRITIVE VALUE OF FODDERS
CONSUMED BY WILD ELEPHANTS IN THE
VICTORIA-RANDENIGALA-RANTAMBE SANTUARY**

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A study was conducted at Victoria-Randenigala-Rantambe (VRR) sanctuaries to identify and evaluate the nutritive value of fodder species for wild elephants. The study was done for 5 months and observations were made on feeding behaviour and samples were collected. Collected samples were air dried before they were brought to the laboratory for chemical analysis. Proximate composition and cellwall constituents were analysed using standard methods. The elephants always preferred Guinea grass, when it is tender and available in abundance. Illuk is less preferred when tender and completely rejected when mature. They seldom browse when quality grass was in abundance. Out of browse they preferred Maila, Gedumba, Nuga, Bo, Attikka, Katakala and Welan. Selection of browse was always based on the succulency. Therefore, they always preferred barks of Maila. When comparing the nutritive values they had a medium range of crude proteins and fibre. The refusals were always higher in fibre and acid insoluble ash. This may be due to the physiology of digestion as hind gut fermentors than fore gut fermentors.