B-103 : DISCOVERY AND STUDY OF NEW EVER-GREEN FOREST COMMUNITIES IN THE DRY ZONE VEGETATION OF SRI LANKA

S A A Sathurusinghe, S Balasubramanium; Sri Lanka Forestry Institute, Nuwara Eliya, *Dept. of Botany, University of Peradeniya.*

Wilpattu being a relatively undisturbed area, was selected and studied to fill the scarcity of quantitative information on the dry zone vegetation of Sri Lanka.

Two evergreen forest communities were sampled and identified as new additions to the dry zone vegetation.

The community identified as Low Stature Forest occupied about 60% of the area, with tree density of 1500-2000 ind/ha and basal area of 18-26 sqm/ha. 32-46% of the density and 30-40% of the basal area were represented by a single species *Mischodon zeylanicus*. The canopy (8-10 m) was dominated by *M.zeylanicus* while *Drypetes sepiaria, Alphonsea lutea, Diospyros ovalifolia, Eugenia bractiata* and *Ixora arborea* were common. The understorey (3-5 m) was dominated by *Glycosmis pentaphylla* and *Memecylon umbellatum*. The poorly developed ground layer (1 m) was represented by grasses, *Citrococcum* and *Stenotaphrum* species. Euphorbiaceae represented the dominant family with *M.zeylanicus* and *D.sepiaria* contributing the most to it.

The second vegetational type identified as Keena community showed a density of 1200 ind/ha and basal area of 32-62 sqm/ha. 52% of the density and 56% of the basal area were represented by a single species, *Calophyllum calaba*. 70% of the canopy trees (15- 20 m) were also represented by *C.calaba*. The remaining 30% was constituted by *Diospyros malabarica, Manilkara hexandra, Mimusops elengi* and *Syzygium cumeni*.

The understorey (8-10 m) was dominated by *Garcinia spicata, D.sepiaria* and *Pleurostylia opposita*, while the poorly developed shrub layer (2.5 m) was dominated by *M.umbellatum* and *Ochna sp.* Well developed undergrowth of *Stenotaphrum complanatum* and characteristic ground cover of *Selaginella sp.* was recorded. Clusiaceae represented the dominant family in this forest type with the highest contributions from *C.calaba* and *G.spicata*.