

B-31: Wetland vegetation in Horton Plains National Park

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Streams in the Horton Plains National Park, located in the highest plateau of Sri Lanka at an altitude of 2,100 m, are unique wetland sites listed in the Directory of Asian Wetlands.

Information was gathered in 1992 on floristic composition in these ecosystems. Sampling of streams was carried out using 118 plots (50 cm x 50 cm) arranged along 22 transects. In marshy areas 140 plots of the same size arranged in 20 transects were sampled. In the streams 20 species belonging to 16 genera and 13 families w

ere recorded and in marshy areas 67 species of 52 genera and 30 families. The most frequent species recorded in the study sites were *Laurembergia coccinea* (Haloragaceae), *Coelachne* spp. (Gramineae), *Eriocaulon* spp. (Eriocaulaceae), *Juncus prismatocarpus* (Juncaceae) and *Isolepis fluitans* (Cyperaceae). *Arundinaria densifolia* (Gramineae), an endemic bamboo restricted to Horton Plains, was among the 7 most frequent species in marshy areas. *Aponogeton jacobsonii*, *Eriocaulon* spp. and *Coelachne* spp. were found submerged below the 2 m level. Endangered species recorded in this study include a peat moss *Sphagnum zeylanicum* and *Alchemella indica* (Rosaceae). Some species showed a restricted distribution while others were widely distributed. Associations of certain species were also observed.

Results suggest that the wetlands in Horton Plains possess a high diversity of plants unique to montane ecosystems.

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