

## B-36: Disturbed grasslands in Horton Plains National Park

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A large area of the Horton Plains grasslands was cultivated with potato from 1961 to 1979. The present vegetation in these areas is different from the natural grassland. An increased sambhur grazing was also observed in these areas. This study examines the floristic composition in these areas, to find out how the modified vegetation affects the natural ecosystems in Horton Plains National Park. Five plots measuring 25 x 25 m were demarcated in the disturbed areas. Ten randomly placed subplots each measuring 1 m x 1 m were sampled within a plot (25 m x 25 m). Thirty two species were recorded within the 10 m<sup>2</sup> sampled. The results showed that the most frequent plants in the areas sampled were *Vulpia bromoides* (L.) Gray (Gramineae), *Pennisetum clandestinum* Hochst. ex Chiov. (Gramineae), *Veronica serpyllifolia* L. (Scrophulariaceae), *Pennisetum glabrum* Steud. (Gramineae), *Digitaria griffithii* (Hook.f) Henr. (Gramineae), *Bulbostylis densa* (Wall.) Hand-Mazz. (Cyperaceae), *Clinopodium umbrosum* (Bieb.) Kuntze (Labiatae), *Eragrostis schweinfurthii* Chiov. (Gramineae) and *Osbeckia parvifolia* Arn. (Melastomataceae). Tussocks of *Andropogon lividus* Thw. (Gramineae) and *Carex nubigena* D. Don (Cyperaceae) were found scattered in these areas.

The abundance of good pasture grasses such as *Pennisetum* spp. and the low stature of grasses may have helped increased grazing in these areas. Exotic grasses in these sites may affect the natural vegetation by invading gaps created by fires if left uncontrolled.

This research is a part of a study conducted by March for Conservation supported by the WWF-US.