

**B-133: Fodder plants of Yala National Park Complex in southern Sri Lanka**

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Present paper reports the results of an extensive survey, conducted during 1995, 96 and 97 at 5 Blocks of Yala National Park and Nimalawa, Kataragama, and Katagamuwa Wildlife Sanctuaries, on fodder plants consumed by elephant, spotted deer, wild buffalo and cattle. The objectives were to compile a list of fodder plants in different wildlife habitats, to evaluate their preferences by the wildlife, and to evaluate the dry season fodder value.

A total of 62 species of common fodder plants species were observed, of which 27 were most preferred, 20 were middle preferred, and 19 were low preferred.

In forest and "Pelessa" habitats *Cyrtococcum trigonum* (under shade), *Stenotaphrum dimidiatum* (under semi-shade) *Ischaemum rugosum*, and *Chloris barbata* (in open grasslands) are the most preferred grazing species. Their dry season fodder values are also very high. Generally, most of the species of the Pitiya grasslands are most preferred but do not show dry season value due to unavailability of dry matter. Of the 22 most preferred browsed species, the most important were *Securinega leucopyrus*, *Cordia* spp., *Dichrostachys cinerea*, *Carissa spinarum*, and *Bauhinia racemosa*. The important dry season browse plants in the area were *Grewia damine*, *Drypetes sepiaria*, *Canthium coromandelicum*, *Salvadora persica* and *Cassia auriculata*.

It is concluded that the natural vegetation of our national parks in the southern region is rich in quantity, quality, and diversity of wildlife fodder plants.