

A study of the effects of *Parthenium hysterophorus* on the species diversity of local habitats

Parthenium hysterophorus is a noxious exotic weed that believed to have been introduced into Sri Lanka through the goats imported for IPKF in the late eighties. Within a brief period it has invaded various other parts of Sri Lanka, including Jaffna Peninsula. Its invasive and noxious potentialities have been highlighted in many reports.

Its invasion may lead to the elimination of some local species affecting the species diversity of the local habitats. In order to evaluate this a quantitative survey was performed using the random sampling quadrat method.

Where *Parthenium* was present, the number of species other than *Parthenium*, ranged from 0-17. Where *Parthenium* was absent, the number of species other than *Parthenium* ranged from 6-36. From the t-test ($p=0.05$) indicates that there seems to be a correlation between the presence of *Parthenium* and species diversity.

It is evident from the results that *Parthenium* has definite ill effects on the floral diversity of the habitat where it is present. This may lead to serious damage to the ecology of such habitats, and also the natural balance of these habitats.