

HERPETOFAUNAL ABUNDANCE AND DIVERSITY IN HORAGOLLA NATIONAL PARK, SRI LANKA.

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ABSTRACT

Horagolla National Park is a low country evergreen forest in Gampaha district. The species abundance and diversity of herpetofauna in Horagolla National Park (HNP) were studied during the study. Four habitat types were selected as Sandy Soil Forest Habitat (SSFH), Muddy Soil Forest Habitat (MSFH), Stream Adjacent Forest Habitat (SAFH) and Grassland (G) in the national park. Data were collected using four, hundred meter line transects with the help of a global positioning system device (GPS) and possible microhabitats were searched by using quadrat sampling method from August 2012 to July 2013 and from January 2015 to December 2015, for the period of two years, once a month both during day & night. Sixteen species of reptiles belonging to nine families and seven species of amphibians belonging to five families were recorded during the study. Shannon's diversity index (H) & Relative Abundance (RA) were used to calculate the richness & abundance of recorded species. The Dicroglossidae, Rachophoridae, Agamidae & Natricidae were the dominant families of herpetofauna in terms of richness, and species such as *Otocryptis wiegmanni* (RA=0.268) was followed by *Aspiduraguentheri* (RA=0.246). *Cylindrophis maculatus*, *Boiga trigonata* and *Pseudophilautus cuspis* were rare and patchy in their distribution, not only inhabiting undisturbed forest, but also the human conquered area. This study revealed that Horagolla National Park is a preferred habitat for reptiles & amphibians.

KEY WORDS: Abundance, Diversity, Herpetofauna, Sri Lanka