

**BEHAVIOUR OF JUVENILE ASIAN ELEPHANTS IN *Panicum maximum* DOMINATED GRASSLANDS IN THE UDAWALAWA NATIONAL PARK.**

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Guinea grass (*Panicum maximum*) dominated grasslands, a major habitat type in the Udawalawa National Park, is frequently occupied by wild elephants. Behaviour of juvenile elephants (4-6 years old) inhabiting the habitat was studied from April 2004 to March 2005. Focal animal sampling was employed to quantify behaviour and total time of observation was 3100 minutes.

The activity budget of the juveniles comprised of ten behaviour patterns; feeding (44%), resting (24%), locomotion (19%), play (5%), comfort (5%), drinking, social, exploratory, agonistic and anxious. Maximum feeding (55%) and minimum resting (13%) were recorded during late afternoons (1500-1800 hrs) whilst maximum resting (37%) and minimum feeding (29%) were recorded during late mornings (0900-1200 hrs). Locomotion and other behaviour patterns did not significantly vary with time. Time spent on feeding was higher in wet months (47%) than in dry months (39%). Resting was relatively higher in dry period (27%) than in wet (21%). *P. maximum* was the major food type consumed throughout the year while they fed on native grasses and herbs to a lesser extent (21-29%). Significant correlations between ambient temperature and time spent on feeding ( $r = -0.716$ ) and resting ( $r = +0.751$ ) were evident.

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