

DISTRIBUTION OF INVASIVE PLANT *Ulex europaeus* IN HORTON PLAINS NATIONAL PARK

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One of the most sensitive problems facing the conservation and management of Horton Plains National Park is the spreading of *Ulex europaeus* (gorse), an invasive plant species. To effectively manage and control this species it is necessary to have a sound knowledge of its distribution within this park.

This study was carried out to find the extent and distribution of *Ulex europaeus* in the park and finally to prepare a map showing the extent and distribution. The percent coverage was assessed using 2m x 2m quadrats. In each quadrat percentage cover of reproductives and non-reproductives were measured.

According to the results of this study, about 6ha of the area is covered by *Ulex europaeus*. Total amount of the area which covers more than 80% of *Ulex europaeus* is 2.4ha. The area which consists of less than 80% of *Ulex europaeus* is 3.31ha. The extent of reproductives and non reproductives are also presented in the paper. Findings on the distribution pattern of the species show that the area around the main gate and Farr Inn guest house is the most densely and continuously distributed area with more than 80% coverage of *Ulex europaeus*. Except this there are a few isolated patches on either side of the road and trail with more than 80% coverage of *Ulex europaeus*. The distribution of the *Ulex europaeus* plants are mainly restricted along the stream from Black bridge to Gempit pool. The density of the species gradually decreased from up stream to down stream but it was higher in the areas where water is stagnated along the stream. It is interesting to note that there are no plants of *Ulex europaeus* found inside the natural forest except at the margins of the forest.