

DIVERSITY OF GRASS SPECIES FROM KANHA TIGER RESERVE M.P.

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ABSTRACT

The grassland ecosystem is critical for the survival of herbivores and plays an important role in conservation and management of wildlife. In India, natural grasslands are not common and most of the present grasslands in the national parks are of anthropogenic origin. These grasslands were exposed to anthropocentric activities in the past like burning and grazing, and are now facing several changes like replacement of palatable species by unpalatable ones. As an attempt to understand the fodder potential of grasslands of this region, a comprehensive checklist of palatable and unpalatable grass species, based on field experience was compiled. Local field staffs of the Kanha core zone were interviewed for information on palatable and unpalatable grass species and their utility potentials. Various herbaria were consulted for confirmation of habitats and grass phenology. A total of 58 grass species was documented as palatable and unpalatable. The grasses were classified into 4 habitats and the palatability grade based on their use value is assessed. This documentation will be helpful to the staff of Forest department and for better management of grasslands with special reference to wildlife habitat

KEYWORDS: Kanha Tiger Reserve, Diversity of Grasses, Palatable & Unpalatable