

Nutritional Ecology of African Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer nanus*)

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Abstract:

Nutritional ecology including feed utilization, selection and quality (If grasses utilized for food by African Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) in Kainji Lake National Park were examined. Feed plants and parts grazed by *Syncerus caffer* were identified using standardized procedures. A total of 192 h of direct observations were made on several groups of *Syncerus caffer*, while grazing between 7:00- 12:00 h and 16:00-18:00 h. The results revealed that 20 grass species were utilized as feed by *Syncerus caffer* population in the Park in both wet and dry seasons. Wet season forage utilization included *Andropogon gayanus*, *Andropogon pseudapricus*, *Hyparrhenia rufa*, *Hyparrhenia involucreta*, *Hyparrhenia dissoluta* and *Andropogon smithiana* with 9.50, 8.59, 7.75, 6.43, 5.24 and 4.86% utilization, respectively. Young leaves, mature leaves and flowers had the following utilization 71.12, 26.60 and 2.28%, respectively. There was no significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the species of grasses utilized as feed by *Syncerus caffer* population in the Park in both wet and dry seasons. However, a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was recorded in the parts of grasses grazed by *Syncerus caffer*. Measures to improve the feed resources of *Syncerus caffer* populations in the Park are also discussed.

Keywords:

Feed, buffalo, national park, season, nutrients, grazing, rangelands