

Table 7. Numbers observed within each of the plant communities

## Chapter 8. Ungulate Habitat Survey

The study of the habitat selection of the various game species on Bynespoort Game Park generally reflected the results of the veld condition analyses (Chapter5).

One of the most difficult problems facing wildlife management is the widespread occurrence of serious imbalances in the herbivore/habitat relationships. Such imbalances can also cause an imbalance in the utilisation of the habitats. Therefore a study of the habitat selection is imperative to the development of a wildlife management strategy.

The method used in this analysis is described in Chapter 3. The result of the study is shown in the table below. The results are in large stock unit per sample per hectare, where a sample is a complete survey of a specific game species along a fixed route, taken twice: once in the morning, and once in the afternoon (Chapter 3). The results are given in Table 7.

Chapter 6 which shows overgrazing. This habitat is frequently used by impala and the short grass by blue wildebeest. The rocky habitat is also frequented by kudu.

Table 7: Numbers observed within each of the plant communities:

Plant Community	Average number of game in L.S.U. per sample per hectare
1	0.01
2	0.13
3	0.03
4	0.02
5	0.03
6	0.07
7	0.23
8	0.01
9	0.05

From the results it can be seen that plant community 7 (The *Combretum apiculatum* - *Dombeya rotundifolia* north slope bushveld) is the most preferred. This is also supported by the veld condition index, (31,3%, Chapter 5) which shows overgrazing. This habitat is particularly used by impala and the short grass by blue wildebeest. The rocky habitat is also frequented by kudu.

Plant community 2 (the *Wahlenbergia undulata* - *Hyparrhenia hirta* old field grassland) also showed a relatively high utilisation. This was primarily as a result of the herds of blesbuck, blue wildebeest and zebra. The low number of Decreaser grass species in the community (Chapter 5) can indicate the overgrazing status of the grassland. Being the only true grassland in the Game Park, ungulate species that prefer grassland will all occur here.

Over the rest of the habitats there is a relatively even distribution of ungulates, and this is reflected in the relatively good condition of the veld.

It was, however, also observed that little game occur in the *Eucalyptus* plantations, as these monotonous stands of alien vegetation do not provide suitable habitats and resources for the ungulates.