Habitat selection and population dynamics of selected herbivores on Sondela Nature Reserve, Limpopo

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

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ABSTRACT

The first part of this thesis investigates the habitat selection of the following herbivores on Sondela Nature Reserve, Limpopo: zebra; impala; giraffe; kudu; blue wildebeest; blesbok; gemsbok and eland.

The main findings indicated that the majority of the species studied congregated in the large grassland community *Chloris virgata - Cynodon Dactylon* during the summer season. As this area is already low on surface cover and sensitive to erosion, it is recommended that management use appetite stimulating licks in under utilised areas during summer to attract these species.

The second part of this thesis explores the population dynamics of the following herbivores on Sondela: zebra; impala; kudu; giraffe and blue wildebeest.

The most important findings showed that the populations of all the species has been through a rapid growth phase, with all the herds showing a large percentage of young animals. This leaves the population vulnerable to diseases affecting young animals.

Furthermore, the sex ratios of zebra, kudu and giraffe indicate that there are too few female animals for optimum production.