Rubbing of the Formosan Sika Deer (Cervus nippon taiouanus) and Its Effect on Trees in Kenting National Park

Shun-Chi Chen and Ying Wang*
Department of Biology, National Taiwan Normal University
Taipei, Taiwan

ABSTRACT

Fifty Formosan Sika deer (Cervus nippon taiouanus) were released to the field at She-ting area after years' restoration in Kenting National Park. Rubbing trees by deer were sometimes observed. To learn its impact on trees a study was carried out from Dec. 1996 to Jun. 1998. The result showed that 475 trees from 55 species were rubbed. Among them 45 trees were rubbed on both years. The main rubbed species were Acacia confusa, Ficus septica, Banbusa beecheyana, Macaranga tanarius, Aglaia formosana, Clausena excavata and Leucaena glauca. Rubbed trees seem to have some characters in common such as straight trunk, small circumference, and less branching. Thirty trees from 14 species died from either complete ring striping or subsequent disease infection from scraping wounds. The number of death took a toll of 0.2% of the total investigated tree population. The number of rubbed trees in each location was positively related to the potential food sources in that location. The crown cover at rubbing sites was between 40 and 80%. Rubbing was found between Oct. and Apr. with peak activity from Nov. to Jan. that was related to deer rutting season.

Keywords: Formosan Sika deer, Rubbing behavior, Breeding behavior

* Corresponding author: Ying Wang; Fax: 886-2-29312904; E-mail: t43002@cc.ntnu.edu.tw