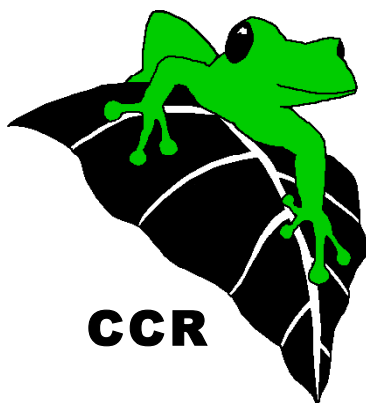


# **Summary description of area bordering Block I Yala National Park**

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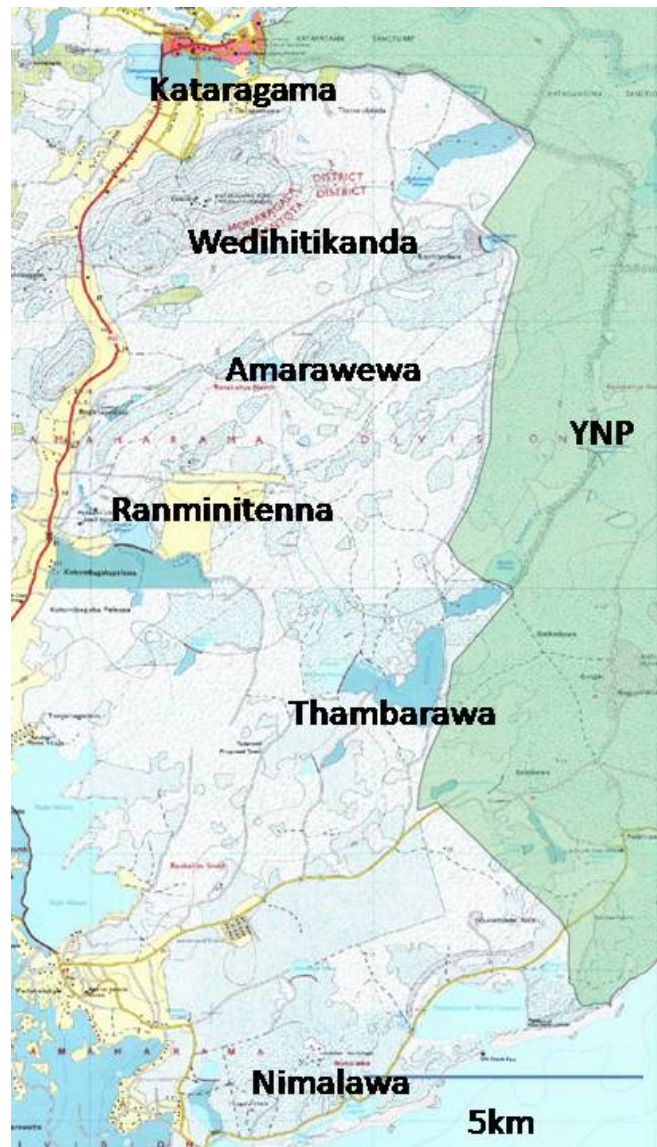
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## Location

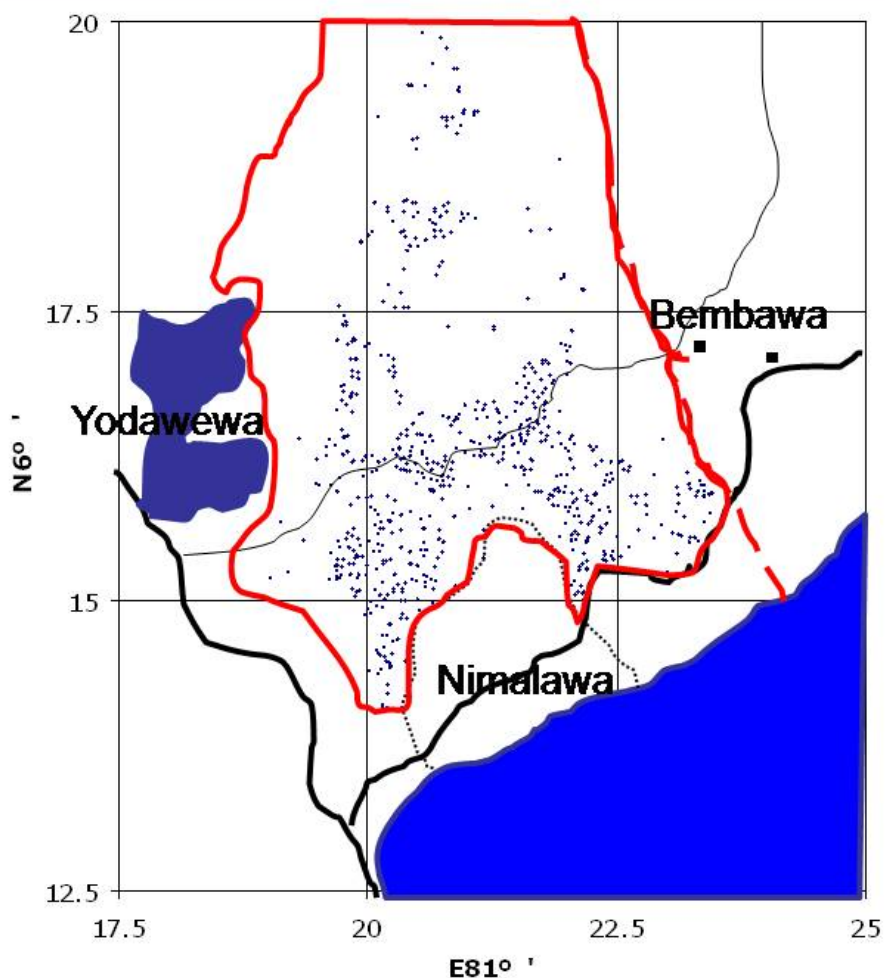
- The area extends from the Kirinda-Nimalawa in the South across Divulpatana-Thambarawa, Amarawewa-Galara to the Wedihitikanda and Katagamuwa-Katragama in the North.
- The Yala National Park borders the area on the East and the Katagamuwa and Kataragama Sanctuaries border it on the North.
- It is a strip running North-South and is approximately 150 km<sup>2</sup> in extent.



**Figure 1.** Map of area 1:50,000 topo sheet.

## Landuse

- The area is administered under the Forest Department
- It is a mixed habitat of secondary forest, scrub forest and various stages of regeneration of same.
- The area also has approximately 50 small tanks (fresh water reservoirs) which are rain fed.
- There are approximately 1,500 chenas that are cultivated annually in the area.
- Many thousands of cattle are grazed throughout the area.
- The area is bordered on the West by the villages of Uddakandara, settlements along Japan Rd. Ranminitenna, and settlements along the Tissa-Kataragama Road.
- Most of the chena cultivators and cattle herders are from these surrounding villages.



**Figure 2.** Map of part of the area concerned where chenas were mapped. The red line demarcates the mapped area which is approximately 75 km<sup>2</sup> in extent. Each blue dot represents an individual chena field. The number of individual chenas mapped were 812.

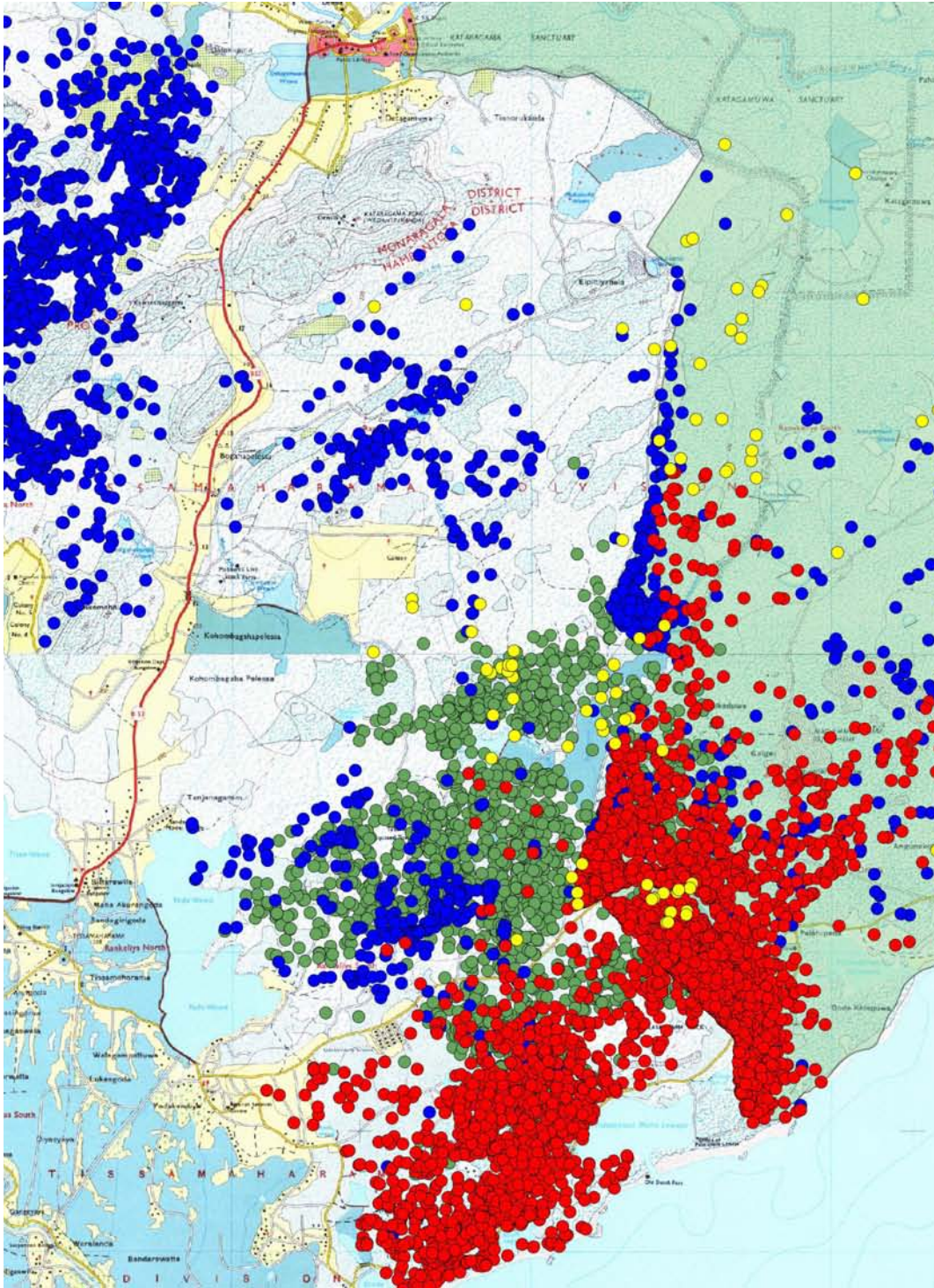
## **Ecology**

- As the area is contiguous with the Yala National Park, Katagamuwa and Kataragama Sanctuaries it forms an important buffer area to these protected areas that reduce the negative impacts of humans on the protected area as well as the negative impacts of wildlife on the developed areas on its western border.
- The area represents a unique habitat under an intermediate disturbance regime in about half of the area due to the chena cultivation that takes place in the wet season.
- Consequently, it provides excellent habitat for fauna and complements the protected areas which consist of more mature habitat.
- The species of mammals in the area include: elephants, spotted deer, sambur, mouse deer, Leopard, jungle cat, fishing cat, rusty spotted cat, small Indian civet, common palm civet, porcupine, pangolin, sloth bear, toque macaque, grey langur and many species of bats, shrews and other rodents.
- Species of birds include: Pea cock, jungle fowl, button quail, Jerdon's chloropsis, sitting cisticola, black headed cuckoo shrike, coucal, coel, pied crested cuckoo, plaintive cuckoo, emerald dove, spotted dove, green imperial pigeon, orange breasted green pigeon, white bellied drongo, blue tailed bee-eater, green bee-eater, chestnut headed bee-eater, black eagle, shikra, grey headed fishing eagle, white bellied sea eagle, serpent eagle, changeable hawk eagle, black winged kite, brahminy kite, white browed fantail, finch-lark, bushlark, pipit, black rumped flame back, white backed woodpecker, brown flycatcher, azure flycatcher, paradise flycatcher, frogmouth, scops owl, Malabar pied hornbill, red wattled lapwing, yellow wattled lapwing, blue faced malkoha, sirkeer malkoha, little minivet, Brahminy mynah, rosy starling, munias, Common coot, purple coot, oriental darter, cattle egret, little egret, median egret, large egret, black headed ibis, painted stork, open bill, jacana, common kingfisher, pied kingfisher, stork billed kingfisher, pelican, cormorants, white necked stork, many species of migrant water birds etc.

## **Relevance to elephants and human-elephant conflict**

- The area supports both herds and single adult males, some of whom spend part of the year in the area and part of the year in the adjoining protected areas.
- The area is important as a buffer against human-elephant conflict as it prevents elephants from the protected areas immediately accessing developed areas.
- It is particularly important as a dry season foraging area for elephants as the fallow and abandoned chenas create a habitat mosaic with an enormous amount of elephant fodder, in comparison with the mature habitat inside the protected areas, which have very little elephant fodder in the dry season.





**Figure 3.** Map of area superimposed with GPS tracking data of radio collared elephants. The different colors represent GPS data from different elephants.