



PO Box 3276
Victoria Gardens
Richmond, Vic 3121

Phone : (03) 9428 4709

info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au
www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

ABN : 90784718191

Studies refuting Parks Victoria's Brumby Impact Ideology

Positive impacts of moderate grazing levels

“avian richness and diversity were **higher in areas subject to moderate levels of grazing** than areas in which horses had been excluded (Zalba and Cozzani 2004).

“In particular it is interesting that the **richness and diversity of species are slightly greater in areas of moderate grazing than in the enclosures**, as predicted by the theory of intermediate disturbance” (Connell, 1978). These results are interesting in the light of the discussion concerning whether or not exotic herbivores should be eradicated from protected natural areas (McCoy, 1994; Houston & Schreiner, 1995).

“While many studies simply compare 'grazed' to 'ungrazed' conditions, grazing is not an all or nothing proposition and the **intensity of grazing is likely to be of utmost importance**”. Also “In the context of grazing, this suggests that **plant diversity may be greater at a light or moderate level of grazing** than with either grazing exclusion or heavy grazing”.

(<http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/11/11/113003>)

“Research has also found that for some plant species grazing can stimulate net primary productivity, with the maximum stimulation at intermediate grazing intensities (McNaughton 1983, 1985). If this holds true for the plant community in any given site, the wildlife communities that depend on these plants may also show similar patterns and be found in greatest diversity or abundance at intermediate grazing intensity.”

Other grazing benefits are available, such as increased species diversity in Sub-alpine and montane areas (Fahnestock & Detling 1999, Austrheim & Eriksson 2001, Fahnestock and Detling 2002, Ostermann-Kelm et al. 2009 and Stroh et al. 2012.) and the reduction of fire severity, Forest, sub-alpine, montane, (Silvers 1993 and Davies et al. 2015)

Antelope in arid grassy dunes that spent much time under shade trees were found to trample soil locally but **also enrich it with their faecal pellets**. (Dean and Milton 1991 in (Beever et al. 2008):

Avian (bird) **richness and diversity were higher in areas subject to moderate grazing** than areas in which horses had been excluded (Zalba and Cozzani 2004).

<http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/11/11/113003>

- “Many studies just compare 'grazed' to 'ungrazed' conditions, grazing is not an all or nothing proposition – grazing intensity utmost importance”.
- “plant diversity may be greater at a light or moderate level of grazing than with either grazing exclusion or heavy grazing”.

Some **plant species stimulated by grazing** - maximum benefit at moderate grazing intensities (McNaughton 1983, 1985). Plus wildlife communities that depend on those plants also show greatest diversity with moderate grazing.”

Grazing **increased species diversity** (Fahnestock & Detling 1999, Austrheim & Eriksson 2001, Fahnestock & Detling 2002, Ostermann-Kelm et al. 2009 & Stroh et al. 2012.) and **Lowers fuel levels thus fire severity**, (Silvers 1993 and Davies et al. 2015)

Grazing animals can have **beneficial impacts on native plants and animals** (Schultz 2011) - **protect endangered plants** (Gilfedder & Kirkpatrick 1994).

(It is) **impractical to try to restore ecosystems to some ‘rightful’** historical state ... it is time for conservationists to focus much more on the functions of species, and much less on where they originated (Davis 2011: 154).



The Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan August 2016 (p61) refers to “rolling schedules of fuel treatments identifying locations of burns and other fire risk mitigation works such as **slashing** and fire break maintenance” **Do we really want to replace Wild Horse grazing with mechanical, costly alternatives?**

Or have Parks Victoria committed to ongoing costs for to slash grass by machine or manually (photo on left 2014 Parks Victoria sign referring to their ‘slashing’ program and explaining the need to ‘slash’ grass to protect vulnerable Fauna species.

Grazing animals can have beneficial impacts on native plants and animals (Schultz *et al.* 2011) and protect endangered plants (Gilfedder & Kirkpatrick 1994). It would be a shame to remove all horses and find that this causes the decline or extinction of some native plant or animal.

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc. April 2018