
Delbo Baleweld

Situated on a small plateau on the lower slopes of a mountain ridge Delbo Baleweld forest is rather small and very open. It contains fair amount of eucalypts and the ground vegetation is very dense and often reaches a height of 2 m. Although there is no problem with herbivory nearly no tree regeneration is observable.



Name: **Delbo Baleweld**

Status: church

Site Code: SD02

Floristic Region: SD

Region: 5 (Walaita Dawuro)

Altitude: 2370 m

Latitude: 06° 54' N

Longitude: 37° 48' E

Woodland/forest:

Status: relict

Size: < 1 ha

Dominant species:

canopy: *Euphorbia candelabrum*, *Croton macrostachyus*

shrub/ground: *Acyranthus aspera*,
Cyathula uncinulata, *Vernonia amygdalina*

No of woody species: 43

No of species with less than 5 individuals: 5

Threats: canopy dieback

Photograph: The woodland is located on a small piece of flat ground along on a mountain ridge.

Established on a small small plateau along the lower parts of a mountain ridge, Delbo Baleweld overlooks the Rift Valley.

The woodland is small and mostly restricted to the North of the church. It contains a few large trees, including *Juniperus procera*, but there are a number of eucalypts, some of them being massive, amongst the native trees. The tree canopy, often dominated by big-stemmed *Euphorbia candelabrum*, is generally very open and a number of trees exhibit signs of crown dieback. The shrub layer is extremely dense and reaches a height of over 2 m in places. Around the woodland there are a few patches of young eucalypts as well as a fruit orchard.

In the surrounding area farming is practiced even on the steepest slopes. However, a number of farmers keep some natural scrub on the steepest upper parts of the slopes above their homestead to prevent soil erosion and/or land slides (see photograph overleaf). Besides these patches of scrub no forest remains on this side of the mountain.

History

There are few churches in the area and Delbo Baleweld appears to have been established at least hundred years ago. It caters for a small local farming community.

Conservation status

The site has the last few remaining large *Juniperus procera* on the mountain side. Considering its small size it is relatively species rich and it could prove to be a good seed source for some bird-dispersed species and allow their spread into eucalypt plantation commonly found in the region.



There is a good mixture of large trees, shrub ground flora and open spaces in this woodland, although natural regeneration is rare.



The stand is characterised by a tall and dense shrub layer with a very open canopy.



Regeneration of *Dracaena afromontana* occurs via layer of falling or cut stems.

Threats

Lack of natural regeneration and death of canopy trees are the key problems confronting the survival of this forest.

Management

The canopy of the stand is very open thus promoting a very dense and high ground vegetation, as a result no natural tree regeneration is possible. Some silvicultural interventions to deal with the shrub layer would be advantageous as well as the planting of trees in gaps. The steep grassy slopes to the North could be used to expand the size of this small stand.