

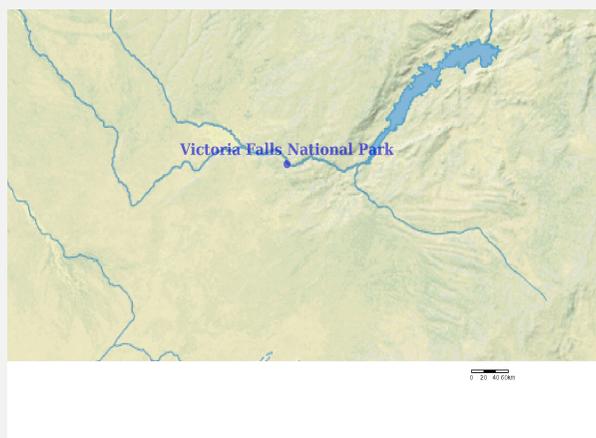


Ramsar Information Sheet

Update version, previously published on 1 January 1970

Zimbabwe

Victoria Falls National Park



Designation date: 3 May 2013

Ramsar ID: 2108

Coordinates: 17°58'54"S 25°51'38"E

Official area (ha): 1 750,00

Number of zones: 1

Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a ' full ' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

1 - Summary

Summary (This field is limited to 2500 characters)

The Victoria falls Ramsar site houses a rainforest which receives sprays from the Victoria falls and has rare plant species such as the mahogany which are not seen anywhere else in the region. The big five animals that are found include elephant, buffalos, and the endangered black rhino are also found within the site. The Victoria Falls national Park is also a world heritage site under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the National Park is currently protected by the National Parks and Wildlife Authority.

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Name Mrs D. M. Chasi, Director General

Institution/agency Environmental Management Agency

Postal address (This field is limited to 254 characters)

Makombe complex Block 1
Corner Harare street/Chitepo avenue
Harare Zimbabwe

E-mail ema@ema.co.zw

Phone +26304705671

Fax +26304793123

2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year 1975

To year 2006

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish) Victoria Falls National Park

Unofficial name (optional) Mosi-Oa-Tunya (The smoke that thunders)

2.1.4 - Changes to the boundaries and area of the Site since its designation or earlier update

(Update) A. Changes to Site boundary Yes No

(Update) B. Changes to Site area No change to area

2.1.5 - Changes to the ecological character of the Site

(Update) 6b i. Has the ecological character of the Ramsar Site (including applicable Criteria) changed since the previous RIS? Not evaluated

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Boundaries description (optional) (This field is limited to 2500 characters)

Victoria Falls and Zambezi national parks are located in the north-western part of the country in Matabeleland North province and borders with Livingstone town in Zambia to the north. The national park runs 6km above the Victoria falls to Batoka gorge 12km above the gorge. The park is bounded by a river to the North, by the Hwange Communal Area to the south (separated by a game fence), and by the road and railway to the west. The boundary follows an existing national park area. The Zambezi National Park is the catchment area of the Victoria Falls National Park.

2.2.2 - General location

a) In which large administrative region does the site lie? Matabeleland North Province

b) What is the nearest town or population centre? Victoria Falls

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries? Yes No

b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party? Yes No

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

Official area, in hectares (ha): 1750

Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries 1750.8

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
Other scheme (provide name below)	Afro-tropical
Other scheme (provide name below)	Miombo Woodland/Savanna

3 - Why is the Site important?

3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

Criterion 1: Representative, rare or unique natural or near-natural wetland types

Hydrological services provided (This field is limited to 3000 characters)

"Victoria" contains a representative, rare example of a natural or near-natural wetland type. It is one of the most spectacular attractions of Africa and one of the most unusual waterfalls in the world. It is created by the Zambezi River that suddenly plunges into a narrow, 100-meters deep chasm. At the same time, Victoria is the only waterfall in the world that is over one kilometer wide and over one hundred meters deep. Its roar can be heard from 40 kilometers away, while the spray and mist from the falling water rises up to 400 meters and is visible from the distance of 50 kilometers.

Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification (This field is limited to 3000 characters)

Victoria Falls is one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world and should thus be internally protected. The Zambezi river, which is more than two kilometres wide at this point, plunges noisily down a series of basalt gorges raising an iridescent mist that can be seen from more than 20 km away. The Site supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region. Including *Diospyros mespiliformis*, *Mimusops zeyheri*, *Ficus capensis*, *Ficus ingens*, *Syzygium guineense*, *S. cordatum*, *S. guineense barotense*, *Trichilia emetic* and *Strychnos potatorum*
The wildlife species include sizable populations of elephant and buffalo, as well as giraffe, zebra, and a variety of antelope, in particular kudu, impala, bushbuck and common duiker that are contributing to maintain the biological diversity of the Site.

3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Scientific name	Common name	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	Other status	Justification
Diospyros mespiliformis 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Ficus cordata cordata 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Ficus ingens 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Mimusops zeyheri 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Strychnos potatorum 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Trichilia emetica 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		

3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	 Diceros bicornis	African black rhinoceros	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				CR 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	 Loxodonta africana	African Bush Elephant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	 Panthera leo	Lion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	 Panthera pardus	Leopard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	 Syncerus caffer	African buffalo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	LC		

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

The fragile yet resilient rainforest records 70 shrub species, 170 floral species and 75 fish species. The area is home to the endangered big five animals most importantly the black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*, EN) which need to be protected. The python snake and the pangolin are some endangered. The river is also an avian highway with more than 500 bird species and some rare bird species are found in the area.

3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

<no data available>

Name of ecological community	Community qualifies under Criterion 2?	Description	Justification
Fauna	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A number of large mammals are seen here, all of which occur in the Zambezi National Park. The rich avifauna (400 species in the Victoria Falls region as a whole) includes a wide range of waterbirds along the river above the falls, and birds</p>	
Vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Dominant types are riverine communities associated with the upper Zambezi River, the Victoria Falls rainforest and open grassland</p>	

4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

4.1 - Ecological character

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

The vegetative flora of the Victoria Falls region is determined by two main factors - climate and soil type. The Zambezi river flows over solid basaltic rock, and basalt soils tend to be shallow and stony. However to either side of the Zambezi river basin are overlying reddish Kalahari sands, and which is often intermixed with the shallow basaltic soils.

The Kalahari sands support Miombo/Kalahari woodland, typical of the region, and which is dominated by several species: Zambezi Teak (*Baikiaea plurijuga*), various species of *Brachystegia*, museshe (*Burkea Africana*), mubako (*Erythrophleum africanum*) and muzauli (*Guibourtia coleosperma*).

The basaltic soils tend to support either mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*) dominated woodland or mixed mopane scrub. A good example of mopane woodland, protected from the attentions of elephant since the park was fenced in the 1950s, is to be found in the area behind the Livingstone Statue, where mature mopane is present mixed with mwangula (*Pterocarpus antunesii*), and six species of mubwabwa (*Commiphora* spp) amongst others.

The Zambezi fringes, as with most river systems, support a corridor of riverine or riparian woodland. This narrow belt forms a woodland margin either side of the river, and its standard species composition across most of south central Africa suggests that its distribution is a historical remnant of a much wider woodland forest covering the area. The stretch of river upstream of the Falls, eg. along Zambezi Drive to Big Tree on the southern side, is a typical example of this woodland corridor.

4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

Inland wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
M: Permanent rivers/ streams/ creeks	Zambezi river	1		Rare
Tp: Permanent freshwater marshes/ pools	Rain forest with marshes	2		

Other non-wetland habitat

Other non-wetland habitats within the site	Area (ha) if known
marshes, grasslands	

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Other noteworthy plant species

Scientific name	Common name	Position in range / endemism / other
Baikiaea plurijuga	Zambezi Redwood	
Brachystegia boehmii		
Burkea africana		
Colophospermum mopane		
Erythrophleum africanum		
Guibourtia coleosperma		
Pterocarpus antunesii		

Invasive alien plant species

Scientific name	Common name	Impacts	Changes at RIS update
Eichhornia crassipes		Actually (minor impacts)	unknown
Lantana camara		Actually (minor impacts)	unknown

4.3.2 - Animal species

Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	% occurrence	Position in range /endemism/other
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>	African Clawless Otter				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>	Eagle				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	blue wildebeest				
CHORDATA/REPTILIA	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	Crocodile				
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Distichodus mossambicus</i>					
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Equus quagga</i>	Zebra				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	giraffe				
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Hydrocynus vittatus</i>					
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Mormyrus longirostris</i>					
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>					
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Platystacus cotylephorus</i>					
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Schilbe intermedius</i>					

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
A: Tropical humid climate	Aw: Tropical savanna (Winter dry season)

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres)

Lower part of river basin

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.
(This field is limited to 1000 characters)

4.4.3 - Soil

Mineral

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes No

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Usually permanent water present	unknown

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	Changes at RIS update
Water inputs from surface water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	unknown

Water destination

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Feeds groundwater	unknown
To downstream catchment	unknown

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

<no data available>

4.4.6 - Water pH

<no data available>

4.4.7 - Water salinity

<no data available>

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

<no data available>

4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the site itself: i) broadly similar ii) significantly different

Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Provisioning Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Fresh water	Water for irrigated agriculture	Low

Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Maintenance of hydrological regimes	Groundwater recharge and discharge	High

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Recreation and tourism	Nature observation and nature-based tourism	High

Supporting Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Biodiversity	Supports a variety of all life forms including plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part	High

Outside the site: 286000

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site? Yes No Unknown

4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

ii) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland

Description if applicable (This field is limited to 2500 characters)

Stone artifacts from 3 million years ago have been found near the falls and include stone tools, which indicate prolonged occupation of the area in the Middle Stone Age 50,000 years ago. Weapons, adornments and digging tools indicate the presence of Late Stone Age hunter-gatherers between 10,000 and 2,000 years ago who were displaced by farmers who used iron tools, kept livestock and lived in villages. Mosi-oa-Tunya means ' the Smoke that thunders ' in the Kololo tongue. The Victoria Falls was named by the explorer David Livingstone in 1855.

The indigenous Tonga tribal community separated from other ethnic groups developed an independent identity to their craftsmanship skills and styles. These include wood carving, basket work and pottery marking. The manufacture of wooden beds and pillows, wooden pestles and mortars for grinding grain, baskets for carrying and winnowing grain and pots for many uses, are an integral part of their cultural traditions.

iv) relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland

4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
National/Federal government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Local authority, municipality, (sub)district, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Provide further information on the land tenure / ownership regime (optional): (This field is limited to 1000 characters)

Conservation/Protected Area
State Forest, Safari and Former Large scale commercial farming areas

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site: (This field is limited to 1000 characters)

Ministry of Environment Water and Climate
Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

Provide the name and title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland:

Mr Edmore Ngosi, Area manager

Postal address: (This field is limited to 254 characters)

P. Bag 5925, Victoria Falls
Zimbabwe

E-mail address: edmorengosi@yahoo.com

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site ' s ecological character

Human settlements (non agricultural)

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Tourism and recreation areas		Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Biological resource use

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Hunting and collecting terrestrial animals	Medium impact		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Human intrusions and disturbance

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Recreational and tourism activities	Medium impact		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Natural system modifications

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Dams and water management/use		Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change

Invasive and other problematic species and genes

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Invasive non-native/ alien species	Medium impact		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Pollution

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Air-borne pollutants	Medium impact		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Please describe any other threats (optional): (This field is limited to 2500 characters)

Lantana Camara invasion near the falls and water hyacinth. Tourists: commercial sightseeing helicopters buzz negatively affecting the birdlife in the area. Noise disturbances on the animals mainly on the elephant population. Man's general encroachment by putting more boats on the river and building more lodges along the banks. Poaching.

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

Global legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
World Heritage site	Mosi-oa-Tunya/VictoriaFalls	http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/509	whole

Regional (international) legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Other international designation	WWFGlobal200Ecoregion		whole

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Protected area	VictoriaFallsNationalPark		whole

Non-statutory designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Important Bird Area	BatokaGorge		whole

5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Habitat

Measures	Status
Catchment management initiatives/controls	Implemented

Species

Measures	Status
Threatened/rare species management programmes	Implemented
Control of invasive alien plants	Implemented

Human Activities

Measures	Status
Regulation/management of wastes	Implemented
Harvest controls/poaching enforcement	Implemented
Communication, education, and participation and awareness activities	Implemented
Research	Implemented

Other: (This field is limited to 2500 characters)

The National park is covered by the National Museums and Monuments Act, Environmental Management Act, Tourism Act and Forest Act.

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? Yes

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes No

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes No

Please indicate if a Ramsar centre, other educational or visitor facility, or an educational or visitor programme is associated with the site: (This field is limited to 1000 characters)

Information booklets are housed at the local tourist office. The Parks and Wildlife Authority has a website that provides more

information on the biodiversity within the wetland area.

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? No need identified

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Water regime monitoring	Implemented
Animal community	Implemented

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

Strict Protected Zones are in place. Three active NGOs operate in the area: Environment Africa, Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit and the Wild Horizons Trust. The organizations are dedicated to protecting the area's unique indigenous fauna and flora, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, local communities and other stakeholders. Projects include rehabilitation of injured or orphaned wildlife, anti-poaching and wildlife veterinary assistance assisting with community-based projects, and a children's conservation education program. The Parks and Wildlife Authority is the major government department that oversees environmental management in the area.

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

(This field is limited to 2500 characters)

1. Bond G (1975) The Geology and Formation of the Victoria Falls. In: Phillipson D W (Ed).
2. Clark, John Desmond. (1952) The Victoria Falls: A Handbook to the Victoria Falls, the Batoka Gorge, and part of the Upper Zambesi River Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia : Commission for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Monuments and Relics.
3. Hattle,J. (n.d.). Zimbabwe ' s Climate. Dept.of Meteorological Services for the Zimbabwe Tourist Board, Harare.
4. Munyaradzi Chenje. State of the Environment in the Zambezi Basin 2000. Maseru, Lusaka and Harare: SADC, IUCN, ZRA, and SARDC, 2000
5. Nugent C (1990) The Formation of the Victoria Falls. In: Phillipson D W (Ed), Second Edition.
6. The Victoria Falls Bush Telegraph, Nov 2010, Issue No 5
- Hartley, R. (1993) The Batoka Gorges – Haven for birds of prey, African Wildlife, Vol 47, pages 74-78, July.
7. UNESCO/IUCN (2006), report to the World Heritage Committee on the mission carried out in November 2006.

6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)

<no file available>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)

<1 file(s) uploaded>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory

<no file available>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports

<no file available>

v. site management plan

<1 file(s) uploaded>

vi. other published literature

<3 file(s) uploaded>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:



Victoria Falls (
amazingvictoriafalls.com,
22-04-2015)



Diverse Plants found within the Victoria Falls National Park

Plant species (NPWA,
28-11-2012)



The Victoria Falls Suspension Bridge with a view of the falls

Victoria Falls (NPWA,
28-11-2012)



tourism in Victoria Falls (NPWA,
28-11-2012)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation