



# Ramsar Sites Information Service

## Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

# Zambia

8 Ramsar Site(s) covering 4,030,500 ha

### Bangweulu Swamps

Site number: 531 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Northern Province, Luapula Province, Central Province

Area: 1,100,000 ha | Coordinates: 11°25'S 29°58'59"E | Designation dates: 28-08-1991

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Bangweulu Swamps. 28/08/91; Northern Province; 1,100,000 ha; 11°25'S 029°59'E. Includes National Parks, Game Management Areas. In addition to providing a breeding ground for birds, fishes and wildlife (e.g., the African elephant *Loxodonta africana*, the buffalo *Syncerus caffer*, and Sitatunga *Tragelaphus spekei*), the site is known to support large numbers of the endemic, semi-aquatic Black Lechwe (vulnerable *Kobus lechwe*) and is home to the threatened Wattled crane (*Grus carunculatus*), as well as the only home in Zambia for the threatened Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*). The swamp is a natural flood controller and important for groundwater recharge and water quality control. The site contains the historical Nachikufu caves with bushman paintings, maintained by the National Heritage Conservation Commission. Threats to the wetland such as poaching will be addressed by the National Wetlands Steering Committee with a proposed general management plan that will steer development away from sensitive habitats. The Zambian Wildlife Authority in collaboration with WWF-Zambia office are collaborating on improving sustainable livelihoods and ecotourism possibilities. The site was extended from 250,000 to 1,100,000 ha on 2 February 2007. Ramsar site no. 531. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

### Busanga Swamps

Site number: 1,659 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Northwestern Province

Area: 200,000 ha | Coordinates: 14°04'59"S 25°46'59"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2007

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Busanga Swamps. 02/02/07; Northwestern Province; 200,000 ha; 14°05'S 025°47'E. Game Management Area, National Park in part. A wide variety of ecosystem types such as swamps (which serve in groundwater recharge and flood control for the Kafue and Zambezi rivers), lagoons, woodlands, rivers and large grassy plains dominated by grassland vegetation. It hosts the vulnerable Wattled crane (*Grus carunculatus*), Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), and Lion (*Panthera leo*) and supports significant numbers of migratory birds and other fauna such as the Blue Duiker (*Cephalophus silvicultor*), Wildbeest (*Connochaetes gnou*) and Zebra (*Equus burchelli*). There is a wide variety of fish, including *Tilapia* sp., and fishing is an important livelihood activity for the local population and a sport activity for tourists. The site is of local historical and traditional importance through fables arising from a Baobab tree located in this site. The National Park is state-owned with stress on non-consumptive use of resources such as tourism and other recreational activities, while the GMA is communally owned, allowing for sustainable consumptive use of resources in accordance with the Zambia Wildlife Act. There is an interim management plan which promotes public awareness, increased local participation and multi-sectoral approach in the wetland management. The Ngoma research station within the site also promotes vegetation research in the site. Ramsar site no. 1659. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

## Kafue Flats

Site number: 530 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Southern Province, Central Province  
Area: 600,500 ha | Coordinates: 15°40'59"S 27°16'E | Designation dates: 28-08-1991

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Kafue Flats. 28/08/91; Southern & Central Provinces; 600,500 ha; 15°41'S 027°16'E. National Parks, Game Management Areas. A vast expanse of floodplains, grasslands, woodland zones and geothermal areas of high biodiversity in a complex pattern of lagoons, oxbow lakes, abandoned river channels, marshes, and levees. The site supports many endangered and endemic species such as the endemic Kafue lechwe (*Kobus lechwe kafuensis*), Wattled crane (*Grus carunculatus*), and Sitatunga, amongst others, and it hosts migratory birds such as the White pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and the Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), as well as 67 fish species. The site possesses natural filtering and storage abilities, thus providing clean and plentiful water and acting as a natural sink for nutrients and other micro-elements. The inhabitants gain a living from fishing and pastoral grazing of livestock. The site is also of traditional and religious value to the Ila people of the Central Province and is of archaeological and historical interest owing to the Gwisho hot springs and Sebanzi hills in the Lochinvar National Park. Draft management plans for the Blue Lagoon and Lochinvar National Parks have been formulated with the participation of different stakeholders. This, together with the Zambian Wildlife Authority anti-poaching law enforcement unit, should combat the threats of over-fishing, poaching, poor management and weed invasion by *Mimosa pigra*. The site was extended from 83,000 to 600,500 ha on 2 February 2007. Ramsar site no. 530. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

## Luangwa Flood Plains

Site number: 1,660 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Eastern Province  
Area: 250,000 ha | Coordinates: 12°40'S 32°01'59"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2007

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Luangwa Flood Plains. 02/02/07; Eastern Province; 250,000 ha; 12°40'S 032°02'E. National Parks, Game Management Areas. Representative of the major wetland types of Southern Africa, the site is dominated by rivers that recharge many springs, freshwater lakes, lagoons, marshes and streams. There are also hot springs and brackish cold springs. The main habitats include evergreen miombo woodlands (with wild mango, African ebony, fig, and Natal mahogany) and the alluvial zone which sustains riverine vegetation. The plains host over 50 mammal species, including the African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) and the critically endangered Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*). It is an important breeding ground for birds like *Merops nubicoides*, *Merops bullockoides*, and *Hirundo paludicola*. The GMAs are a source of income and protein for inhabitants who work for hunting concessions and fish. A general management plan for the South Luangwa NP and surrounding GMAs was devised by the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) for protecting and maintaining the physical and ecological conditions and promoting research. Community environmental education programmes exist for educating local communities, for example, the South Luangwa Management Unit and the Chipembele Wildlife Education Centre. Ramsar site no. 1660. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

## Lukanga Swamps

Site number: 1,580 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Central Province  
Area: 260,000 ha | Coordinates: 14°24'S 27°37'59"E | Designation dates: 08-11-2005

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Lukanga Swamps. 08/11/05; Central Province; 260,000 ha; 14°24'S 027°38'E. The largest permanent water body in the Kafue basin, comprising generally shallow swamps that allow light penetration to the bottom, permitting high photosynthetic activity. They are a suitable habitat for birds and wildlife, hosting a number of threatened species such as the Wattled Crane, the Red Lechwe, African python, and the sitatunga, an antelope adapted to walking and swimming in marshy environments. The area is also an important breeding ground for fish, the most abundant of which is *Tilapia*, with *T. rendalli* and *T. sparmani* the predominant species. Fishing is the major economic activity, with the site supplying fish to three provinces (Lusaka, Central and Copperbelt) with a population of 6.1 million. The swamps are an important source of reed material for basketry, and act as a sediment trap and a trap for metals from the copperbelt of Zambia. Overfishing, deforestation, and use of agro-chemicals pose potential threats. It is proposed to develop a local strategic management plan with full participation of the local communities. Ramsar site no. 1580. Most recent RIS information: 2005.

## Mweru wa Ntipa

Site number: 1,661 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Northern Province  
Area: 490,000 ha | Coordinates: 08°52'S 29°46'59"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2007  
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Mweru wa Ntipa. 02/02/07; Northern Province; 490,000 ha; 08°52'S 29°47'E. Includes National Park, Game Management Areas. The main features are rivers, swamps, and the Lake Mweru wa Ntipa basin, which is surrounded by flat wetland plains with itigi thickets and miombo woodlands. Riverine evergreen forests (with *Ficus bussei*, *Ficus sycomorus*, *Trichilia emetica* and *Acacia adenocalyx*) are found on the river and lake shores. This diversity of habitats makes the site a home to more than 390 bird species such as the Wattled crane, Shoebill, Black stork, and Goliath's Heron. Mammal species found here include the slender-snouted crocodile (*Crocodylus cataphractus*), wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) and Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). The Mweru wa Ntipa lake records a number of indigenous fish species like the Green-Headed Bream (*Oreochromis macrochir*), Cat Fish (*Auchenoglanis occidentalis*), Mweru sardine (*Poecilothrissa moeruensis*) and Sharp Toothed Barbel (*Clarias mossambicus*). Fishing and cultivation of sorghum, millet, cassava, and rice in the swampy areas are major activities of local inhabitants. The problem of unsustainable fishing persists within the site and hopefully the implementation of the management plan for the the Mweru wa Ntipa National Park, as well as better enforcement of the fish bans during spawning periods, may help curb this. Ramsar site no. 1661. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

## Tanganyika

Site number: 1,671 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Northern Province  
Area: 230,000 ha | Coordinates: 08°31'S 30°52'59"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2007  
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Tanganyika. 02/02/07; Northern Province; 230,000 ha; 08°31'S 030°53'E. National Park, Game Management Area. Includes the Zambian part of Lake Tanganyika, Africa's deepest and longest lake, shared by Zambia, Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as shoreline areas of Nsumbu National Park and Kaputa GMA. The Zambian shoreline (about 238km) is steep and rocky, with some areas of shallow swampy land and limited stretches of sandy beaches. The site has a rich diversity of vegetation including riverine forest, woodland, thickets, shrub and grassland and hosts the African elephant, lion, wild dog, and endemic reptiles like the Lake Tanganyika Water Snake (*Lycodonomorphus bicolor*) and Water Cobra (*Boulengerina annulata*). The Zambian part of the lake hosts over 252 fish species, 82 of which are endemic (e.g., *Neolamprologus brichardi* and *Altolamprologus compressiceps*). The main inhabitants (Tabwa and Lungu peoples) practice artisanal fishing for a living but also trade forest products (grass, fuel wood and timber wood). The lake holds historical landmarks such as ruins of early missionary churches and some early Stone Age sites near the Kalambo Falls. A management plan has been finalized for the NP with UNDP assistance, aimed at decreasing poaching levels, ensuring proper waste disposal, restoring degraded habitats, and ensuring implementation of EIAs and land use plans for all development projects in the park, and will soon be implemented. There are plans to formulate a transnational fisheries management plan. Ramsar site no. 1671. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

## Zambezi Floodplains

Site number: 1,662 | Country: Zambia | Administrative region: Western Province

Area: 900,000 ha | Coordinates: 15°15'S 23°15'E | Designation dates: 02-02-2007

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Zambezi Floodplains. 02/02/07; Western Province; 900,000 ha; 15°15'S 023°15'E. Game Management Area. The second largest wetland in Zambia, chiefly riverine wetland consisting of the Zambezi River and its naturally formed floodplains. The small hills scattered on these plains stand out like islands during flood periods which extend from February to March. There is sparse riparian vegetation, small stands of *Acacia albida* in the floodplains, *Syzygium guineens* along the main river channel and patches of *Diplorhynchus* scrub and *Borassus* forest in the northern areas. Semi-evergreen woodlands found on the Kalahari sands have economically important species like *Baikiaea plurijuga* and *Pterocarpus angolensis*. The site hosts the vulnerable Lion (*Panthera leo*), several endemic reptiles, and the world's second largest migration of the Blue Wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*), as well many water birds. It is a major spawning ground for fish, with about 80 different fish species, and thus serves as a source of livelihood to the local inhabitants, along with harvesting of other wetland resources like reeds and sedges for handicraft, and rice cultivation. Potential threats include unsustainable fishing, poaching of wetland dependent animals, and dredging of canals. Traditional management of wetland resources has been affirmed through customary laws and village wetland conservation committees established with representatives from different stakeholder groups. Ramsar site no. 1662. Most recent RIS information: 2007.