



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Zimbabwe

7 Ramsar Site(s) covering 453,828 ha

Chinhoyi Caves Recreational Park

Site number: 2,103 | Country: Zimbabwe | Administrative region: Mashonaland West administrative province

Area: 33.4 ha | Coordinates: 17°21'21"S 30°07'55"E | Designation dates: 03-05-2013

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The Chinhoyi Caves make up the most extensive cave system in Zimbabwe. The Site is a rare near-natural Karst system composed of limestone, dolomite, and a pool of cobalt blue water which is so clear that silver-hued fish and underwater rock formations are seen many metres below the surface. It receives at least between 750mm and 1000mm of rainfall a year, and supports a unique flora including the bleedwood tree *Pterocarpus angolensis*, Cape fig *Ficus sur* and violet tree *Securidaca longipedunculata*. Bird species include the bat hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus* and the grey crowned crane *Balearica regulorum*, while the fish found include largemouth bass *Micropterus salmoides* and gilt-head seabream *Sparus aurata*. The area serves as a camping and recreation site for the thousands of visitors to the Caves.

Cleveland Dam

Site number: 2,102 | Country: Zimbabwe | Administrative region: Harare Metropolitan Province

Area: 1,050 ha | Coordinates: 17°49'57"S 31°09'18"E | Designation dates: 03-05-2013

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Cleveland Dam is a unique peri-urban wetland within the Zambezian biome. It is the largest protected natural area in Harare and is known as a key biodiversity hotspot and Important Bird Area. Dominated by miombo woodlands, shrubs, grasslands and aquatic plants which protect the watershed, the wetland offers an important stopover, breeding and feeding ground for thousands of migrating birds including the African pygmy goose *Nettapus auritus*, the maccoa duck *Oxyura maccoa* and the African spoonbill *Platalea alba*. Other noteworthy species include the leopard *Panthera pardus*, the African rock python *Python sebae* and the vulnerable ground pangolin *Smutsia temminckii*. With its water capacity of 910 million litres, the dam is at the source of the Mukuvisi River, which stretches 42 km into Lake Chivero and from there supplies most of the drinking water to Harare City and neighbouring towns. The ecosystem services provided by Cleveland Dam include water purification, flood control and soil formation. Human activities in the Site include fishing, harvesting of non-timber forest products, bird watching, canoeing, tourism and walking safaris.

Driefontein Grasslands

Site number: 2,104 | Country: Zimbabwe | Administrative region: Masvingo, Midlands, Mashonaland East Provinces

Area: 201,194 ha | Coordinates: 19°15'39"S 30°46'38"E | Designation dates: 03-05-2013

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Dominated by a unique habitat of swamps, lakes, miombo woodlands and Kalahari desert sands, Driefontein Grasslands is home to about 85% of the total national population of the globally vulnerable wattled crane *Bugerus carunculatus* and the endangered grey crowned crane *Balearica regulorum*. It provides an ideal breeding and feeding ground for the secretary bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*, saddle-billed stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*, African marsh harrier *Circus ranivorus*, and the duck species found in the Site. Other noteworthy species that depend on the Site include the black-bellied bustard *Lissotis melanogaster* and the kori bustard *Ardeotis kori*, the black-breasted snake eagle *Circaetus pectoralis*, and the African fish eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*. Farmers use the wetlands for maize growing, small-scale farming, fishing, and cattle rearing. In 2010 the Conservation Action Plan for Wattled Crane and Grey Crowned Crane in Zimbabwe, which focused on Driefontein Grasslands, was developed to ensure the protection of the species against vlei fires and habitat loss.

Lake Chivero and Manyame

Site number: 2,105 | Country: Zimbabwe | Administrative region: Harare Metropolitan Province/Mashonaland West

Area: 29,260 ha | Coordinates: 17°50'02"S 30°39'02"E | Designation dates: 03-05-2013

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The Lake Chivero and Manyame Recreational Park is a typical "high vlei" environment, dominated by miombo woodlands which provide ideal habitat for several animal species including the white rhino *Ceratotherium simum*, the plains zebra *Equus quagga*, and the ground pangolin *Smutsia temminckii*. Serving as the main source of water for the city of Harare and its neighbouring towns, the wetland is of great hydrological importance to the country. It provides an ideal breeding and feeding environment for over 400 bird species including 20 species of migratory waterbirds. At the peak of the dry season, more than 20,000 waterbirds can congregate on the two lakes. The Site is an Important Bird Area and is known to host one of the highest densities of African fish eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* in Africa. Human activities in the Site include water sports, game viewing, bird watching, fishing and subsistence farming. The biggest threats includes water hyacinth invasion, pollution and siltation caused by the growth of human settlements in the catchment area.

Mana Pools National Park

Site number: 2,106 | Country: Zimbabwe | Administrative region: Mashonaland West Province

Area: 220,034 ha | Coordinates: 15°58'16"S 29°27'32"E | Designation dates: 03-05-2013

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Mana Pools National Park is characterized by four large permanent pools formed by the meanderings of the middle Zambezi River, and shaped by a unique vegetation of large mahogany, wild fig, acacia and baobab trees which provide undisturbed nesting habitats for many birds of prey in the area. The concentration of large mammals such as hippopotamus, elephants, buffalo, zebra and giraffe with associated predators such as Nile crocodile, leopards, hyena, cheetah and lions reveals the robust ecological health of the Mana ecosystem. The cliffs and banks support hundreds of migrant breeding southern carmine bee-eaters (*Merops nubicoides*) which feed on insects found near the water pools. Over 450 residents and migratory bird species breeds in the Mana wetlands. With its rich and varied biodiversity, extensive wetlands and splendid landscape, the Site attracts over 7,000 visitors each year for recreational activities including camping, fishing, canoeing and game-viewing safaris. The potential threats include poaching and mining.

Monavale Wetland

Site number: 2,107 | Country: Zimbabwe | Administrative region: Harare Metropolitan Province
Area: 507 ha | Coordinates: 17°48'22"S 31°00'26"E | Designation dates: 03-05-2013

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The Monavale Wetland, also known as the Monavale vlei, is an urban wetland characterized by miombo woodlands. It plays an important role in the fragile ecosystem of the Manyame catchment basin, the main supplier of water for the city of Harare and its suburbs. It supports a variety of birds, mammals, rodents, amphibians and reptiles including the near-threatened Cape clawless otter *Aonyx capensis* and many other wetland-dependant animals which maintain the biological diversity of the Site. The other hydrological functions of Monavale include water storage, groundwater recharge and water purification. There is an active local community-based organization, which spearheads the management of the wetland and offers training in wetland rehabilitation and restoration. Other human activities include agriculture and crop farming.

Victoria Falls National Park

Site number: 2,108 | Country: Zimbabwe | Administrative region: Matabeleland North Province
Area: 1,750 ha | Coordinates: 17°58'54"S 25°51'38"E | Designation dates: 03-05-2013

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Dominated by a unique vegetation of mopane forest and miombo woodlands, and characterized by basaltic gorges shaped by the Zambezi River, the Victoria Falls National Park is a natural wonder and a biodiversity hotspot. Also designated as a World Heritage site for its exceptional geological features and natural beauty, the Park is known for the largest and most spectacular waterfalls in the world, the Mosi-oa-Tunya ("The smoke that thunders") or Victoria Falls. Animal species recorded in the Site include a sizeable number of elephants, buffalo, lions, leopards and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis*, of which 10% of the world population lives in the Park. Hippopotamus, giraffe, zebra, antelopes, warthog, baboons and other monkeys, and Nile crocodiles can also be found in large numbers. The Site also supports a wealth of reptiles, amphibians and over 500 bird species including falcons, eagles, black storks and herons, which feed and nest in the area. The flora is made up of about 400 species of trees, shrub, grasses, sedges and ferns, notably including the hairy leaved Cape fig (*Ficus sur*), the African olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*) and the Natal mahogany (*Trichilia emetica*). The other most common tree species include the wild date palm (*Phoenix reclinata*) which together with the waterboom (*Ilex mitis*) and red milkwood (*Sapotaceae*) species make up over 80% of the trees in the Site. Thousands of tourists travel to the park each year for sightseeing, rafting, boating, and game viewing.