Zimbabwe has updated the information on its seven Ramsar Sites. Covering over 450,000 hectares in total, they include unique wetland sites which are crucial to the country’s people as well as its wildlife. As well as providing water resources and livelihoods, they include important destinations for tourism and recreation.

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 (Ramsar Site no. 2108) 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, of which 10% of the world population lives in the Park.

Mana Pools (Site no. 2106) is a national park 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 Chinhoyi Caves Recreational Park (Site no. 2103) 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 supports a unique flora and a wide variety of bird and fish species.

Lake Chivero and Manyame (Site no. 2105) is dominated by miombo woodlands which provide ideal habitat for several animal species including the white rhino, the plains zebra and the ground pangolin. 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, and at the peak of the dry season, more than 20,000 waterbirds can congregate on the two lakes.

Dominated by a unique habitat of swamps, lakes, miombo woodlands and Kalahari desert sands, Driefontein Grasslands (Site no. 2104) is home to about 85% of the total national population of the globally vulnerable wattled crane and the endangered grey crowned crane. It provides an ideal breeding and feeding ground for the secretary bird, saddle-billed stork and the African marsh harrier.

Cleveland Dam (Site no. 2102) 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. The wetland offers an important stopover, breeding and feeding ground for thousands of migrating birds. 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.

Monavale Wetland (Site no. 2107), 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.

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