

Cleveland Dam Ramsar Site

Introduction

Cleveland Dam is a reservoir located 12.5km from the Harare city centre under the municipal urban district of Greendale in Harare province, Zimbabwe. The Dam is leased to Haka Camp who manages it in collaboration with the City of Harare. It was constructed in 1913 for water supply for the city of Harare. Cleveland Dam covers an area of 2500 hectares and is one of the countries seven Ramsar sites. The Ramsar Convention provides a framework for wetland conservation and asks that nations promote the sustainable utilization and conservation of wetlands. Zimbabwe became a signatory to the convention in 2011.

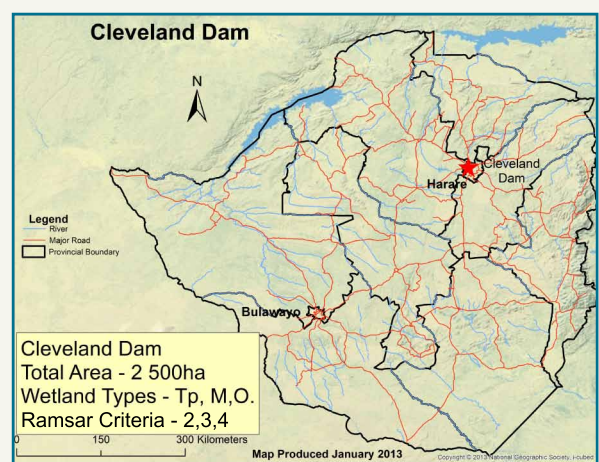
Cleveland Dam has a water capacity of 910 million litres. There are three principal water sources draining into the dam, namely the Mabvuku, Manresa and Chikurubi rivers. The catchment area is a public amenity and vital water source as the water from the Cleveland Dam ultimately flows into Lake Chivero and is distributed to people in Harare, Chitungwiza, Ruwa, and Norton Municipal towns for drinking and other industrial and domestic purposes.

Biodiversity

Much of the areas to the north and east of the site are covered by miombo woodland. The southern plateau area is being re-afforested through planting of indigenous tree species such as acacia and *Azanza garckeana*, *Julbernardia globiflora*, *Brachystegia spiciformis* and *Uapaca kirkiana*. A smaller, but sparse woodland lies at the centre of the grassland covering the northern section of the park. The rest of the site (about 1,500 hectares) is woodland grassland and grassland.

In total more than 30 mammal species have been recorded in the Haka Camp Game Park within the Cleveland catchment area and include; tsessebe, zebra, impala, giraffe, wildebeest, eland and notably on the Zimbabwean red list the python, pangolin and porcupine.

The permanent status of this wetland provides an important stopover and breeding and feeding site for large numbers of migrating water birds along the north/south migration route in the eastern part of southern Africa. The following birds and water birds have been recorded in the area: Pygmy Goose (rare), African Jacana, the African Fish Eagle, pelicans,



Map of Cleveland Dam Ramsar site



Miombo woodland at Haka Camp

cormorants, ibises, storks, egrets, spoonbills, herons and ducks.

The site acts an important refuge for breeding stocks of fish, which re-colonise the floodplain by migrating upstream during flooding events. Therefore the stock for the entire floodplain is protected within the park.



Impala and Blue Wildebeest grazing on the grasslands around Cleveland Dam

Cultural Values and Tourism

History reveals that people habited the Cleveland catchment area since the Stone Age. Rock paintings and several identified village sites are spread over the Cleveland Dam surroundings.

The site is benefiting the locals for fisheries production and supplying non- timber forest products. Haka Camp regularly conducts trainings within the area on beekeeping and conservation issues for Schools and residents of neighbouring Mabvuku /Tafara Townships. The Mashonaland Beekeepers Association and the Zimbabwe Beekeepers Association also use the site for beekeeping demonstrations and exhibitions.

The catchment is used for recreational purposes such as bird watching, fishing canoeing, game viewing, walking safaris, horse riding and regularly wedding functions and camps to the public around the city and beyond. Birdlife Zimbabwe utilises the area for bird walks at least once a month. The Tree Society of Zimbabwe utilises the area for tree outings and identification.



Left: A picnic spot in Haka game park. Right Honey - a forest product that Haka Camp are producing at the site

Threats

The Mabvuku River one of the sources of Cleveland Dam is impacted by agriculture upstream, resulting in reduced flows for most of the year. There are still occasional floods and in these instances the silt load is high. Intensive agriculture in the catchment results in silt loads following good rains. Eutrophication may soon result from the increased use of fertilizers

in the Cleveland catchment. The site has several invasive alien species including *Lantana Camara* and a number of tree species such as eucalyptus and exotic conifers which have become mixed into the indigenous woodlands.

The woodland was once cut for firewood and cleared for agricultural land by residents from neighboring suburbs of Mabvuku and Tafara. It has now regenerated itself since the park gained official protection. However urban settlement and increasing agriculture could become more of a threat to the site's catchment area in the future. Downstream, industries are drawing water from the dam for industrial use.



Exotic conifers with indigenous woodland behind

Conservation measures

There are various regulations under the Parks and Wildlife Management Act and The Environmental Management Act that protect the flora and fauna within this site. It is also declared as a wetland by the Government of Zimbabwe. The Haka Camp personnel regularly patrol the area to protect against tree cutting and poaching. Tree planting activities take place across the site to rehabilitate lost forest. Haka has established a tree nursery which donates trees to schools and other charities for tree planting events. Since the area gained official protection, Haka Camp has put up 1.8m electrified perimeter fence for the protection of the site from settlement and urban agriculture. An 8 hectare piece of land is planned to be developed into a Research and Resource Centre, this will be linked to the Haka Game Park and community development initiatives.

The Catchment is protected under Zimbabwe National Water Authority Act and its regulations and the City of Harare Municipality, Department of Amenities, Parks Recreational and Wildlife Section under Harare Water and Sanitation Department.

For more information on The Ramsar Convention or Cleveland Dam contact:

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