



TOURISM DESTINATIONS, FACILITIES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ZIMBABWE

Phanos Matura¹

Jemitias Mapira²ⁱ,

¹Tourism Consultant, Masvingo City, Zimbabwe

²Department of Geography & Environmental Science,
Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo City, Zimbabwe

Abstract:

Major tourist attractions in Zimbabwe include: natural, cultural, historical, and wildlife found in game reserves and national parks. The Victoria Falls are among the major wonders of the country with a height of 108m and a width of up to 1708m. At peak flow of the Zambezi river nearly 550 million litres of water flow into the gorge. Due to the force of the water, the spray is pushed up into the sky reaching heights of over 400m which can be viewed from a distance of 50km away and can be felt throughout the town. Lakes Tokwe-Mukosi and Mutirikwi, Hwange and Gonarezhou national parks, Nyangani, Vumba and Chimanimani mountains, Great Zimbabwe Monuments and some cities are other attractions. This paper examines tourist attractions, facilities, arrivals, occupancy, challenges and opportunities in the country. It provides a comprehensive database of information about local tourist destinations, attractions and facilities in Zimbabwe. Since there is little information on the subject of Zimbabwe's tourism destinations, this paper seeks to fill that gap. The information in this study was assembled in March 2018, based on document interrogation or literature surveys.

Keywords: Victoria Falls, lakes, Eastern Highlands, Great Zimbabwe Monuments, wildlife, Zimbabwe

1. Introduction

At the global level most (80%) of the international tourism occurs between industrialized nations (Munowenyu, 1996). On the other hand, tourism between industrialized and developing countries is quite small. For example, 10% of the global tourists travel from developing to advanced nations. While 5% move from the industrialized to developing nations, the remaining 5% travel among developing countries. Most European tourists go to Spain and Portugal. This leaves African

¹ Correspondence: email jmapira2000@gmail.com

countries with very few tourists from Europe. Furthermore, due to the use of air transport, most southern African countries are not favored by tourists from Europe and North America. Several factors encourage tourism including: natural, cultural, climatic factors, scenic environments, national parks and game reserves (Munowenyu, 1996). Examples of natural attractions are high mountains, rift valleys, gorges, rapids, falls and wildlife. Some of the highest mountains in East Africa include Mt Kilimanjaro (Tanzania) and Mt Kenya (Kenya). At the global level, several factors influence tourism. They include affluence, good and efficient transport as well as good communications. Most tourists are rich and they can afford to visit other countries. Such tourists favor to visit places which are well linked with good roads, railway lines and air transport. For example, the collapse of the national railways of Zimbabwe in recent years has exerted a negative impact on tourist arrivals in the country. Cultural assets such as the pyramids of Egypt are a further tourist attraction.

Climatic factors can also attract some tourists. For example, Europeans and North Americans are often attracted to African coasts during summer as they engage in activities like sun bathing on sandy coastal beaches. Others like to view wildlife in its natural habitats as well as engaging in hunting safaris. Natural vegetation is another attraction. Examples include equatorial rain forests in Africa and Latin America. Such regions are attractive to natural scientists such as biologists and naturalists. Munowenyu (1996) also outlines the advantages and disadvantages of tourism at the global level. According to him in 1992, Zimbabwe received Z\$524 million from tourists. Tourism also creates employment due to its labor intensive nature. It transforms some inhospitable areas into lucrative ones through the creation of game reserves and national parks. The industry also promotes agricultural activities such as poultry and market gardening. Some areas have also emerged as tourist resorts in remote areas. Finally, tourism has promoted sound conservation practices. It has led to the preservation of various endangered species.

Some of the disadvantages of tourism include the erosion of cultures. As local people mix with foreigners, their traditions are negatively influenced in manners such as dress and other behavioral traits. Tourism arrivals also fluctuate in response to public holidays and seasons. This leads to overcrowding during certain times thereby leading to the damage of ecosystems. Income from the industry also tends to fluctuate in response to the global economic situation. Tourism can lead to conflicts in land uses such as agriculture and human settlements. The advertisement of tourist facilities is costly while the importation of some food stuffs for tourists often leads to foreign currency leakage. The import component ranges from less than 15% for advanced nations and up to 40% in developing countries. Since the industry requires semi-skilled workers such as waiters and dishwashers, the majority of jobs are lowly paid. On the other hand, the focus on tourism can lead to the neglect of activities such as agriculture which are crucial in feeding the nation. Social problems such as prostitution can lead to the transmission and spread of venereal diseases including HIV and AIDS.

2. Research methodology

Document analysis or research was employed in this study to review and evaluate both printed and electronic literature. The resultant data was examined and interpreted in order to elicit the meanings behind it. Reports and documents from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), as well as reports from the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry were used to get an insight into Zimbabwe's tourist destinations and related characteristics. The aim was to assemble a body of information that could benefit both researchers and the reading public on the main traits of Zimbabwe's tourism industry. Documents were also employed to identify the facilities, attractions, tourist activities as well as performance as indicated by occupancies and receipts. Some of the demerits of document studies include: some reports were not helpful at all to the study due to insufficient detail, low retrieve-ability and biased selectivity leading to time wasting. The information acquired from the numerous documents was analysed and it yielded the views that are expressed in this paper.

3. Tourism attractions in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is one of the smaller countries in southern Africa. In terms of size it covers 390 589 square kilometers, about half of Zambia's total space (752 610) and over twice the size of Malawi (118 480). On the other hand, Botswana (581 730), Mozambique (799 380) and Tanzania (945 090) are also much larger than Zimbabwe. The country has various tourist attractions which include: natural, cultural and wildlife sites as well as cities. Although the country has vast potential in terms of tourism potential, it has been stagnant over the last forty years (Munyenza, 2018). At the present moment the country's tourism sector is operating at 30% of its full potential capacity. Secondly, the sector has remained static in terms of growth for the past forty years. Thirdly, it has also remained elitist for many years thereby promoting foreign at the expense of domestic tourism. Fourthly, transport is a major hurdle since the collapse of the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) several decades ago. Finally, the use of air transport to Victoria Falls is nearly equivalent to flying to Europe. Consequently, there is a need to re-surface the main highways and revive the NRZ in order to promote both domestic and foreign tourists.

4. Major tourist attractions in Zimbabwe

Major tourist attractions in Zimbabwe include: Victoria Falls, Great Zimbabwe Monuments, Masvingo City, Lakes Kariba, Tokwe-Mukosi and Mutirikwi, Gonarezhou National Park, Eastern Highlands, Hwange National Park, Save Conserancy and the South eastern lowveldt.

4.1 Victoria Falls

Victoria Falls is a UNESCO World Heritage Site which was discovered in 1855 by David Livingstone. Its breathtaking views, scenery and a wide range of activities makes it the best tourist attraction in Zimbabwe and Africa (Tourism Investor Guide, 2014; This is Zimbabwe, 2016/17). In terms of activities, visitors can embark on a variety of activities including elephant back safaris in the wilderness, white water rafting, guided canoe safaris, walking with lions, sunset cruises, fishing, flight of angels, bungee jumping, gorge swinging, zip lining, cultural villages tours, shopping for African curios and authentic art, sampling and eating local cuisine (This is Zimbabwe, 2016/17). Victoria Falls receives 27.9% of visitors who come to Zimbabwe and they stay for an average of 2.0 nights in the resort town. Tourists visit Victoria Falls for different reasons which among them include; leisure 82.4%, business 5.6%, VFR 6.4%, MICE 0.4%, education 1.0%, shopping 0.3%, religious activity 1.1%, transit visitor 1.8%, and other 1.1% (ZVES, 2015/16). In terms of facilities Victoria Falls has an international airport through which 37.2% of visitors use as a port of entry and exit for Zimbabwe, with 41.3% being female and 33.6% being male (ZVES, 2015/16).

4.2 Great Zimbabwe

The main attraction for visitors and tourists to Masvingo is the UNESCO World Heritage Site that is the Great Zimbabwe National Monument, from which the country derives its name. It is a great architectural feature which is breathtaking, interesting and fascinating for anyone interested in Zimbabwe's history (This is Zimbabwe 2016/17). The ruins are located 27km from Masvingo's CBD are near Lake Mutirikwi. Great Zimbabwe is a product of the Iron Age, built and inhabited from the 12th to the 15th centuries by the Karanga tribe, descendants of the modern-day Shona. The city was later abandoned and fell to ruin. The ancient city of Great Zimbabwe was once home to 20 000 people (Mpofu, Muponda, Mutatmi, and Tavuyanago, 2009). It is made up of conical towers, columns and meandering stone walls at least five metres high. The Great Zimbabwe is the largest and most intact of all the ruins in Africa making it outstanding.

4.3 Other attractions in Masvingo

Within a fifty kilometer radius from Masvingo central business district, there are several tourist attractions in addition to the world famous great Zimbabwe. Masvingo is the oldest town in Zimbabwe having been established on the 13th of August in 1890 by the British Pioneer Column (Bulpin, 1968). Due to its long history Masvingo is home to historically significant monuments as the Old Fort Tower, dating from 1891, St Andrews Chapel, Mutirikwi Dam and Dam wall, Lake Tokwe-Mukosi located in Masvingo's Chivi district is also a tourist attraction and is the largest inland lake in Zimbabwe followed by Lake Mutirikwi. There is also the Kyle recreational Park which is home to over 25 species of wild mammal including buffalo, white rhino, zebra, giraffe, leopard, crocodile and the hippo (This Is Zimbabwe 2016/17). Recently Masvingo's tourism appeal was boosted by the commissioning of Lake Tokwe-Mukosi

which is now the country's largest inland lake. That made Masvingo unique as it now boasts of two largest inland lakes in the land, that is, Lake Mutirikwi and Lake Tugwi Mukosi.

4.4 Tourist facilities in Masvingo

Masvingo has designated tourist facilities which among them include hotels, lodges, guest houses, clubs and restaurants. It has an airport and has a railway line connected to major cities in one way or another. According to ZVES (2016/17) Masvingo receives 4.2% of the visitors to Zimbabwe and these visitors spend an average of 5.0 nights in Masvingo. Visitors come to Masvingo for a diversity of reasons which among them include: leisure 17.3%, business 8.1%, VFR 55.8%, MICE 0.2%, education 0.4%, health 0.1%, shopping 0.1%, religious activity 6.8%, transit visitors 8.5% and others 2.8%. Masvingo airport was not part of the visitor exit survey but currently there is very low activity due to the absence of scheduled airlines.

4.5 Tourist activities in Masvingo

Visitors can embark on a number of activities in Masvingo. In terms of the water based activities tourists can embark on fishing, boat cruises and swimming; land based activities include sightseeing, game viewing, shopping, sporting facilities for the majority of sport codes are available including cricket, minding the fact that the first cricket match took place in Masvingo in 1890 when the town was known as Fort Victoria.

4.6 Kariba

Kariba can best be described as one of Africa's best attractions which is located in the North west of Zimbabwe, close to 365km from the capital, Harare. Notable features at Kariba are the parks, the history and heritage and the waters. Kariba Dam is one of the largest manmade lakes in Africa built in 1955 for a variety of purposes including tourism and hospitality (This is Zimbabwe, 2016/17).

4.6.1 Kariba's Parks

Kariba's Parks are a well-kept secret haven for wildlife. Notable parks are the Mana Pools National Park and Matusadonha National Park which are best described as Zimbabwe's unique animal habitats. Mana Pools National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a wide variety of mammal species and over 350 bird species and aquatic wildlife. Both Mana Pools and Matusadonha boast of the big seven. Tourist activities which visitors can undertake in these parks include; canoeing, fishing, lion tracking, viewing fossil remains, game drives, and walking safaris, mountain hiking, escarpment climbing, bird watching and boating safaris (Tourism Investor Guide, 2014; This Is Zimbabwe, 2016/17). Mana Pools National Park is a major attraction for tourists to Kariba as it receives 0.7% of visitors who come to Zimbabwe. Moreover, the visitors stay for an average of 4.0 nights in Mana Pools. Tourists visit Mana Pools National Park

for the following reasons; leisure 84.9%, business 3.0%, VFR 10.8%, MICE 0.6%, and other 0.6% (ZVES, 2015/17)

4.6.2 Kariba's History and heritage; Kariba

The dam wall is the second largest man made structure in Africa after the pyramids of Egypt. It was built from 1955 to 1959. It is 128 metres high and 617 metres wide and it has six floodgates which when opened each can release water at a rate of 2000 to 3000 cubic metres per second. There is Kariba Museum where visitors can learn about the Tonga people especially on how they worshipped the river god '*Nyami Nyami*', how they speared buffalo on foot and how they hunted the hippo on hand made canoes (Tourism Investor Guide, 2014; This Is Zimbabwe, 2016/17).

4.6.3 Kariba's Waters

Kariba's Waters offers opportunities for a variety of activities which among them include tiger fishing, canoeing, boating, houseboat safaris, houseboat stays, sunset cruises, and attend the Kariba Invitation Tiger fishing Tournament (Tourism Investor Guide, 2014; This Is Zimbabwe, 2016/17).

Kariba receives 1.5% of visitors who come to Zimbabwe and these visitors stay for an average of 3.9 nights in Kariba. Tourists come to Kariba for the following reasons; leisure 55.1%, business 9.3%, VFR 29.3%, MICE 0.3%, education 0.5%, religious activity 0.8%, transit visitor 0.3% and other 4.4% (ZVES, 2015/16)

4.7 Eastern Highlands

The Eastern Highlands is a natural holiday destination characterized by waterfalls, streams, wildlife and scenically breathtaking mountain views. The Eastern Highlands have a temperate climate, that is, it is cool and wet for the greater part of the year. The Eastern Highlands comprises Mutare, Bvumba Mountains, Chimanimani National Park, Nyanga, and Nyanga National Park among other notable attractions. Mutare is arguably the most picturesque city in Zimbabwe (This Is Zimbabwe 2016/17). It is surrounded by spectacular mountain scenery and also has a prominent place in the History of the early European settlers in the early 20th century. Mutare has a variety of tourist attractions including Mutare Museum, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Nyati Eco Game Park, Cecil Kopje, Thompson's Vlei Game Reserve, the Cross Kopje, and Utopia House Museum among other notable attractions (This Is Zimbabwe, 2016/17). Bvumba Mountains or simply Vumba is located along the Mozambican border, 25km south east of Mutare. The Vumba Mountains are popularly known as the "*mountains of the Mist*" and reach a height of 2000 metres. They offer magnificent views over the coffee plantations, the Burma valley. The other notable attraction in Vumba is the Bvumba Botanical Gardens. Mutare/Bvumba receives 7.5% of visitors to Zimbabwe who stay for an average of 3.2 nights. Tourists visit Mutare / Bvumba for the following reasons; Leisure 6.1%, business 19.6%, VFR 49.2%, MICE 0.1%, Education 2.0%, health 1.8%, shopping 9.8%, religious activity 7.4%, transit visitor 1.9% and other 2.1% (ZVES, 2015/16).

4.8 Chimanimani National Park

Chimanimani National Park is the gateway to the wildest, most rugged park in Zimbabwe. It is quite ideal for adventure tourism. It is renowned for breathtaking landscapes, crystal clear waterfalls, an untouched ecosystem, and spectacular hiking trails. It is a place of magic and mystery. Other notable attractions in Chimanimani include the '*Bridal Veil Falls*', the Arboretum, Green Mount and the Pork Pie Eland Sanctuary and Mawenge Mwena mountain caving site. Chimanimani receives 0.3% of visitors who come to Zimbabwe and they stay an average of 5.0 nights. People visit Chimanimani for several reasons which among them include: leisure 37.5%, business 8.3%, VFR 44.4%, Religious activity 4.2%, transit visitor 1.4% and other 4.2% (ZVES, 2015/16).

4.9 Nyanga

Nyanga forms part of the Eastern Highlands mountain range and is primarily a tourist town. Nyanga is a place of natural beauty with a great choice of activities including trout fishing, golf courses, mountain hiking and holiday resorts for recreation. Nyanga has the highest mountain and waterfall in Zimbabwe and is a haven of wildlife. It receives 1.0% of the visitors in Zimbabwe who stay an average of 3.9 nights. Visitors to Nyanga come for several reasons which include; leisure 25.2%, business 5.2%, VFR 61.7%, MICE 1.3%, education 1.3%, shopping 0.4%, religious activity 2.2%, other 2.6% (ZVES, 2015/16).

4.10 Nyanga National Park

Nyanga National Park is 9400 square kilometers and is home to Nyanga's most popular attractions which include Nyangombe Falls, Mutarazi Falls, which is the highest waterfall in Zimbabwe and the second in Africa, Honde Valley, Mount Nyangani is Zimbabwe's highest at over 2500 meters, World's View, Pungwe Gorge and Falls, Lake Connemara, the ancient rock paintings. The Eastern Highlands has some of the best golf courses in Zimbabwe and the most notable ones include Toutbeck Resort Golf Course, Chimanimani Golf Course, Leopard Rock Golf Course, Hillside Golf Course, Aberfoyle Golf Course and Claremont Golf Course.

4.11 The south-eastern Lowveld

The Lowveld, located in the south east of Zimbabwe is a hub for cultural tourism. The major towns in the lowveld region include Chiredzi and Triangle which are known for sugar production in Zimbabwe and have vast opportunities for agri-tourism (Tourism Investor guide, 2014). The most notable tourist attractions in the Lowveld are the Gonarezhou National Park and Save Valley conservancy among other attractions. The Lowveld is home to the Shangaan people who hold a number of cultural festivals.

4.12 Gonarezhou National Park

Gonarezhou National Park is a place of many elephants when loosely translated. It is the wildest park in Zimbabwe. It is Zimbabwe's second largest national park after

Hwange and was established in 1975, which covers more than 5000 square kilometers. It has breathtaking rugged and beautiful landscapes. Gonarezhou is famous for its large, tusked elephants which can be found in large numbers in the park. It is also part of the Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Park which is an amalgam of Kruger Park of South Africa, Limpopo Park of Mozambique and Gonarezhou of Zimbabwe. The pan African park is to become one of the world's major peace parks dedicated to conservation, biodiversity and the economic development of communities (Tourism Investor Guide, 2014; This is Zimbabwe, 2016/17).

Tourist attractions and activities in Gonarezhou National Park include game viewing, bird watching, canoeing, fishing, walking safaris, mountain biking, abseiling, archery, photography safaris, sunset watching at Chilojo among other activities. Gonarezhou National Park receives 0.2% of visitors who come to Zimbabwe and they stay for an average of 5.0 nights in the area. Tourists visit Gonarezhou National park for a variety of reasons which among them include; leisure 71.2%, business 1.9%, and VFR 26.9% (ZVES, 2016/17).

4.13 Save Valley Conservancy

Save Valley Conservancy is one of the notable tourist attractions in the low veldt which offers opportunities for specialist activities such as wildlife viewing, bird watching, night spot lighting, falconry and rhino tracking on foot.

Other notable tourist attractions in the Lowveld include Shangaan people's annual cultural festivals including the Great Limpopo Cultural Fair, the Machangana Culture and Arts Festival, the Ndaou Cultural Festival and the Saila Traditional Fishing Ceremony, Malilangwe and High Syringa conservancies, Murray McDougall Museum, the Crocodile Farm, The Big Tree (1000 year old red mahogany tree which is 65 metres tall and has a diameter of 4.5 metres, it is the largest tree in Southern Africa), Chiredzi Ruins, Golf Courses (Triangle, Hippo Valley, Mkwesine), Chirinda Forest Botanical Reserve, Chivilila Falls, Dumbwi Falls, Samalema Gorge, and Chilojo Cliffs. The Lowveld receives 1% of visitors who come to Zimbabwe and they stay for an average of 8.2 nights, which is the longest across the whole country. Visitors come to the Lowveld (excluding Gonarezhou National Park) for a diversity of reasons which among them include; leisure 11.3%, business 11.3%, VFR 64.9%, MICE 1%, health 2.1%, religious activity 6.2%, transit visitor 1.0% and other 2.1% (ZVES, 2015/17).

4.14 Hwange National Park

Hwange National Park is Zimbabwe's largest and most famous game reserve which covers 14650 square kilometers. It was designated as a national Park in 1929 and is the most pristine and well managed wildlife areas in the world with abundant and variety of wildlife. It is located in the North Western corner of Zimbabwe. It was the royal hunting ground of Mzilikazi in the 19th century. Hwange National Park is a melting pot of flora and fauna despite it being the driest national park. Over 100 mammal species inhabit this park. It is home to the big seven namely lion, leopard, elephant (has the largest population in the world of about 40 000), buffalo, rhino, hippopotamus, and the

crocodile. Hwange National park has Detema, Masuma, and Mandavu Dams as game viewing sites.

Apart from game viewing visitors can embark on bird watching as the park is a birdwatcher's paradise with over 400 bird species. Some of the activities include comfortable safari style game drives, sightseeing, tour guided walking safaris. Hwange offers unique safari experience. The park has a wide variety of accommodation including lodges, tree guest houses and fully serviced campsites (Meetings Zimbabwe, 2015; This Is Zimbabwe, 2016/17, Tourism Investor guide, 2014). Hwange receives 3.8% of visitors who come to Zimbabwe and they stay for an average of 3.4 nights in Hwange. Tourists visit Hwange for the following reasons; leisure 72.1%, business 8.4%, VFR 15.4%, MICE 0.4%, education 0.2%, religious activity 0.9%, transit visitor 0.9% and other 1.7% (ZVES, 2015/16).

4.15 Harare

Harare is Africa safest and friendliest cities. As Zimbabwe's capital city it is surprisingly un-crowded though it is home to over two million people. Formerly known as Salisbury, the city was established in 1890 and has one of the most developed infrastructures in sub Saharan Africa. It used to be Africa's sunshine city characterized by blue skies and warm temperatures throughout the year. The Jacaranda trees that reach full bloom in September and October makes Harare very attractive. In terms of accommodation, Harare is home to distinctive and world class hotels, lodges, restaurants and clubs. It has top corporate hotels, intimate lodges and guesthouses in and around the city centre. Harare has golf courses throughout the city and its suburbs. The capital also has modern shopping malls such as Joina city, Sam Levy's Village, Westgate and Eastgate shopping malls with top retail brands for entertainment and shopping.

4.15.1 Other attractions in Harare

Harare is a place of history and culture. It has the following places and attractions; the National Art Gallery, Harare Gardens, Botanical gardens, Greenwood Park, Mukuvisi woodlands, the National Heroes acre, featuring a burial ground for Zimbabwean patriots, statue and Tomb of the unknown soldier and the Eternal flame. Furthermore, Harare has the lion and cheetah park, Snake World, Lake Chivero recreational park, the Bird gardens, as well as various leisure centres. The Domboshava National Monument with its rich history, the balancing rocks at Epworth are a fascinating geological formation. In terms of festivals, Harare hosts the Harare International festival of the Arts (HIFA), Harare International Carnival among other events. These events showcase arts and culture embracing theatre, dance, music, circus, street performances, fashion, spoken word and visual arts.

Some 29.1% of tourists visit Harare and they spent an average of 7.4 nights in the city (ZVES 2016/17). 46.9% of visitors use Robert Gabriel Mugabe International airport for entry and exit with 43.1% being female and 50.1% being male. Tourists visit Harare for a variety of reasons which among them include; leisure 8.0%, business 26.5%, VFR

45%, MICE 1.0%, Education 0.9%, Health 0.4%, shopping 0.2%, religious activity 8.5%, transit visitors 4.1% and other 5.6% (ZVES 2016/17).

4.16 Bulawayo

This second largest city in Zimbabwe was founded in 1872 by King Mzilikazi, who was the first leader of the Ndebele people. It is the hub of history, culture and heritage. It is actually the best place to visit and appreciate the nation's heritage (This Is Zimbabwe, 2016-2017). Bulawayo is arguably one of Africa's most attractive cities with its combination of Victorian architecture and striking purple flowered jacaranda trees which gives the city its unique ambience. It is a city of history, culture and heritage. The most notable tourist attractions within greater Bulawayo include Matobo National Park and Khami Ruins. According to Zimbabwe Visitor Exit Survey 2016-2017 (ZVES 2016/17) tourist visit Bulawayo for a variety of reasons which are outline here; Business 11.2%, leisure 10.2%, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) 63.7%, religious reasons 8.4%, MICE 0.7% , Education 0.8%, health 0.1%, shopping 0.1%, transit visitors 1.0% and other reasons 2.6%. Moreso, visitors to Bulawayo spent 6.1 nights and nationally Bulawayo receives 22.6% of the total visitors to Zimbabwe which is a significant number (ZVES 2015/16). Interestingly, 15.6% visitors to Zimbabwe used J.M Nkomo airport as a port of exit with 15.6 % being female and 16.2 being male.

4.16.1 Matobo National Park

This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is located less than an hour's drive from Bulawayo Central Business District. It is the oldest national park in Zimbabwe having been established in 1926 as Rhodes Matopos National Park. It is now one of the country's main tourist attractions generally and a tourist attraction to Bulawayo. Matobo has breathtaking scenery and a variety of game including the famous white rhino. There are also many historical sites including the burial places of King Mzilikazi, and Cecil John Rhodes, Malindidzimu and the Mlimo shrine. It has a series of unique rock formations known as granite kopjes and wooded valleys formed over two billion years ago (Matopos Hills). It arguably has the greatest concentration of rock art in the world, with over 3000 registered sites within the park.

Visitors tour Matobo for the following reasons; leisure 57.8%, business 4.1%, VFR 28.7%, MICE 0.7%, education 0.5%, shopping and health 0.0%, religious activity 6.0%, transit visitors 0.5%, and others 1.8%. Matopos receives 1.8% of the visitors to Zimbabwe who spend only 2.4 nights in the area (ZVES 2015/16). Khami Ruins lie 22km west of Bulawayo. They were accorded the UNESCO World Heritage site status in 1986. Khami Ruins are a national monument and also a major tourist attraction to Bulawayo as cultural and heritage tourists flock to the ruins for different reasons.

4.16.2 Other tourist attractions in Bulawayo

Bulawayo is home to several tourist attractions which among them include Natural History Museum, Railway Museum, the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, herb markets, botanical gardens, Mzilikazi Art and Craft Centre, several hotels, lodges, guest houses

and restaurants, Chipangali Wildlife and Research Centre (this centre helps orphaned, sick, and abandoned wild animals including lion, leopard, cheetah, black rhino, antelope and the like). Bulawayo is an ideal destination for culture, history, archaeology, nature, and cuisine tourists (This Is Zimbabwe, 2016 – 17). The Joshua Nkomo International Airport is the air transport hub for Bulawayo (Tourism Investor guide, 2014).

5. Tourism and Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe

The tourism industry is well known globally as one of the fastest in terms of economic growth (Pearce, 1989). For a developing country such as Zimbabwe, it is a blessing in disguise. It has been known to bring a lot of foreign currency in countries such as Kenya (Munowenyu, 1996). Kenya has drawn most of its tourists from Europe and North America since attaining independence in the early 1960s. Its tourism sector is mainly based on natural wildlife and a rich culture characterized by dancing, traditional dress and singing. Zimbabwe, on the other hand has been undermined by political instability since the days of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. The international sanctions and the liberation war of the 1970s further damaged the country's image at the global level. If Zimbabwe has to catch up with Kenya in terms of tourism, it has a lot to do.

Obviously, its damaged roads and railway systems will have to be rehabilitated in order to promote sustainability of the sector at the national level. Furthermore, the country should entrench democracy as a national policy, conduct free, fair and peaceful elections and attract more foreign investors with a view to developing its economy. There is also a need to respect property rights as a matter of principle. In 2000, the country embarked on a controversial land reform program which dispossessed thousands of white farmers of their properties (Bond and Manyanya, 2003). The move by the present government to compensate these farmers should be encouraged by all interested parties and should send signals to future governments to avoid such drastic measures.

6. Conclusions

This paper has examined Zimbabwe's main tourist attractions which include: Victoria Falls, Lake Kariba, Tokwe-Mukosi, Mutirikwi, Nyanga, Vumba, Chimanimani, Hwange and Gonarezhou National Parks, Harare and Bulawayo. Zimbabwe is well known for its friendly and hospitable people. This augurs well for a peaceful environment. However, although the country has vast potential in terms of tourism potential, it has been stagnant over the last forty years. At the present moment the country's tourism sector is operating at 30% of its full potential capacity. Secondly, the sector has remained static in terms of growth for the past forty years. Thirdly, it has also remained elitist for many years thereby promoting foreign at the expense of domestic tourism. Fourthly, transport is a major hurdle since the collapse of the National Railways of

Zimbabwe (NRZ) several decades ago. Finally, the use of air transport to Victoria Falls is nearly equivalent to flying to Europe in terms of cost. Consequently, there is a need to re-surface the main highways and revive the NRZ in order to promote both domestic and foreign tourists. Fortunately, the new political climate seems to favor such developments.

About the Authors

Phanos Matura is a lecturer in the school of tourism and hospitality at Great Zimbabwe University. Jemitias Mapira is an associate professor in the department of geography and environmental science at Great Zimbabwe University.

References

1. Bond, P. and Manyanya, M. 2003. *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism and the Search for Social Justice*, Weaver Press Ltd, Harare
2. Bulpin, T.V 1968. *To the Banks of the Zambezi*, Books of Africa, Cape Town
3. Chibaya, T. 2013 From "Zimbabwe Africa's Paradise to Zimbabwe A World of Wonders": Benefits and Challenges of rebranding Zimbabwe as a tourist destination, *Developing Country Studies*, Vol 3, No. 5.
4. Creswell, J.W. 2014. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
5. Mbaiwa, J.E 2011 *Changes on traditional livelihood activities and lifestyles caused by tourism development in the Okavango Delta*, *Tourism Management Journal* DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2010.09.002
6. Mporofu, T.G., Muponda, Z.M., Mutami, N., and Tavuyanago, B. 2009. 'O' Level *Southern African History*, Priority Projects Publishing, Harare
7. *Meetings Zimbabwe* 2015. Zimbabwe Tourism Publications, Imprint International, England.
8. Munowenyu, E.M. 1996. 'A' Level *Geography: A Comprehensive Guide*, Longman Zimbabwe, Harare
9. Munyenza, S. Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) Morning News, 12 February, 2018
10. Nyaruwata, S. & Runyowa, D. 2017 Visitor Perceptions on Zimbabwe as a tourist destinations and implications for policy directions. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Vol 6 (2).
11. Pearce, D. 1989. *Tourist Development*, Longman, Harlow
12. Sanderson, A., Nyamadzawo. J., Nyaruwata, S., and Moyo, C. 2013 Positioning The Zimbabwe Tourism Sector for Growth: Issues and Challenges. *USAID Strategic Economic Research and Analysis – Zimbabwe (SERA) program*, Harare
13. *This Is Zimbabwe 2016-17*. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority Publications, Land & Marine Publications Ltd, Harare, Zimbabwe.
14. *Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) 2015/16*. Visitor Exit Survey 2015/16 Report. Harare, Zimbabwe: ZIMSTAT

15. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2000. Harare, Zimbabwe
16. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2001. Harare, Zimbabwe
17. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2002 Harare, Zimbabwe
18. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2003. Harare, Zimbabwe
19. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2004, Harare, Zimbabwe
20. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2005. Harare, Zimbabwe
21. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2006. Harare, Zimbabwe
22. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2007. Harare, Zimbabwe
23. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2008. Harare, Zimbabwe
24. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2009. Harare, Zimbabwe
25. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2010. Harare, Zimbabwe
26. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2011. Harare, Zimbabwe
27. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2012. Harare, Zimbabwe
28. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2013. Harare, Zimbabwe
29. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2014. Harare, Zimbabwe
30. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2015. Harare, Zimbabwe
31. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe
32. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Tourism Trends and Statistics 2017. Harare, Zimbabwe
33. Zimbabwe Tourism Investor Guide 2014 Zimbabwe Tourism Authority Publications, Harare, Zimbabwe
34. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) Summary of Historical Statistics: 1964 to 2010, Research and Development Unit, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Social Sciences Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).