

Forests of Zimbabwe

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What is a tree?

- A woody perennial plant exceeding 9 feet high, with a trunk diameter at breast height of half foot and over.
- Many of the species here branch almost at ground level or sometimes are multiple-stemmed. Yet they are generally considered to be trees, and when they are a feature of an arid countryside they ARE trees to all who live among them.

Types of Forests

- African savanna woodlands: *Colophospermum mopane*, *B.spicifomis*, *B.tamarindoides*, *Uapaca kirkiana*, *Baikiaea plurijuga* (Zimbabwean teak), *Pterocarpus angolensis* (Mukwa), *Tectona grandis* (Teak)
- African savanna grasslands: *Acacia karroo* (Sweet thorn), *Adansonia digitata* (Baobab)
- Tropical rainforest: *Parinari curatellifolia*

Savanna types

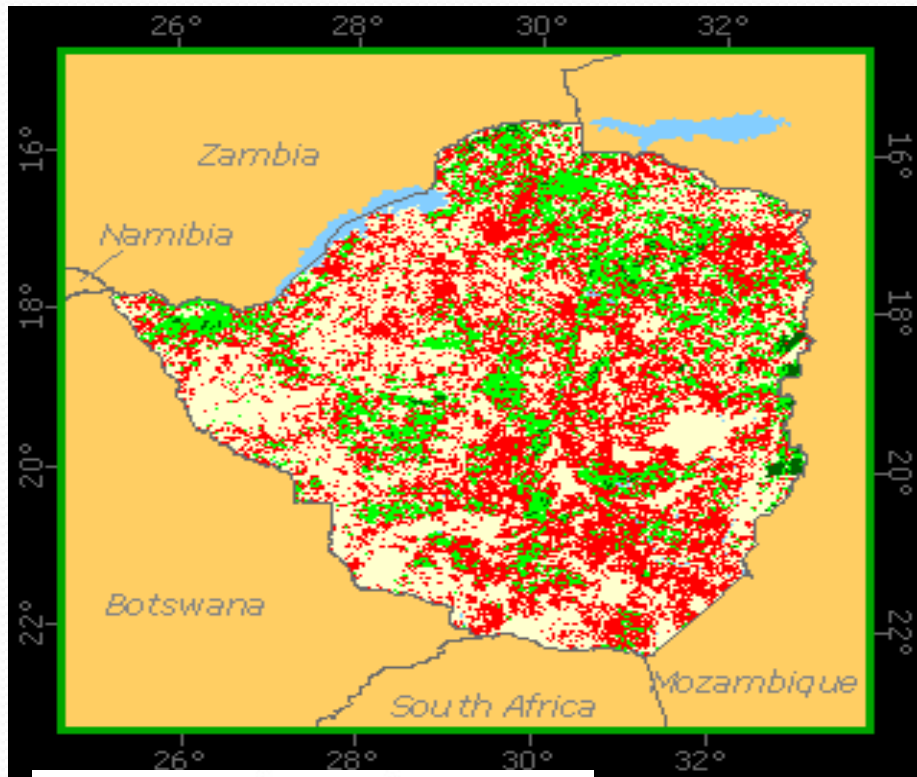
Savanna grasslands



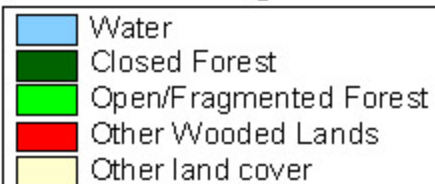
Savanna woodlands



Forestry Fast Facts



Legend



Forests in Pictures



Forests in Pictures



Physiographic features

Eastern Highlands



Victoria Falls



Physiography

RELIEF

- The country is a plateau, highland between 300 and 2000m above sea level, dominated by whaleback hills, boulder rock formations and featureless plains.
- It has central watershed, containing 4 major drainage basins which flow into the Indian ocean.

GEOLOGY & SOIL

- Much of the plateau is covered by intrusive igneous rocks, chiefly granite, carbonates, dolerite and silicates. A major feature is the basement complex, which includes greenstones, bonded ironstones and meta-sediments. These are mineralized and make up the gold belt west and south of the watershed, extending east towards the eastern highlands. The adjacent Zambezi and lower Save basins are dominated by the basaltic lava, sandstone and shale.
- The soil reflects great diversity. The central granites give rise to the sandy, heavy-textured leached soils with low inherent fertility. However, reddish-brown soils of the gold belts and dolerite dykes, found in areas of medium to high rainfalls, are considerably more fertile. These soils are well drained and easy to work on, making them the preferred tillable soils in the Zimbabwe plateau.

Physiography

VEGETATION

- The country has very little natural forest (56,000 hectares in a country area of 40 million hectares), but has large areas of tree Savannah and bushlands. Woodlands cover more than 53% of Zimbabwe total area, whilst bushlands cover a further 13%. FAO report a total area of tree farms in 2000 at 141,000 hectares, including 94,000 hectares of Pine, 21,000 hectares of Acacia, 13,000 hectares of Eucalyptus and 7,000 hectares of other conifers.

TEMPERATURE & RAINFALL

- The Zimbabwe plateau and adjacent lowlands experience cool, dry winters and hot, wet summers.
- There is a single rainy season, with most of the rains falling between November and March.
- Average temperature is 18C (64,4F), Average rainfall is 800 mm (31,5 inches), compared to Portland's average of 950 mm (37,5 inches).
- Rainfall is mostly convectional and relief in the mountainous east.

Land Distribution

- Total area: 38 685 000 square kilometers
- Total forests: 15 624 000 square kilometers

Deforestation

- -2% natural forests
- -1,5% plantations

Forest Ownership

- Public: 63%
- Private: 37%

Other Common Land Uses

- Agriculture, both crop and animal husbandry
- Urban development
- National parks
- Mining

NATURAL FORCES

- Recurrent droughts
- Floods
- Ozone layer depletion
- Moisture/ fog from Indian Ocean

Current Issues affecting Forests

- Deforestation
- Soil erosion
- Land degradation
- Air and water pollution
- Poor mining practices have led to toxic waste and heavy metal pollution
- Recurring droughts
- Resettlement of people on forestlands
- Illegal logging
- Energy shortages
- Bush fires (20,000Ha have been destroyed in the past 5 years)
- Changes in land use
- Out-dated forest policy (current Forest Act was last updated in 1996)
- Shortage of environmental awareness programs
- A forestry industry in decline and so on.

Recreation in Forests

- Camping
- Hunting
- Holiday homes
- Hiking
- Game drives
- Fishing

STATE PARKS DOING CONSERVATION

- Nyanga National Park
- Chimanimani National Park
- Chrinda Forest
- Vumba Gardens
- Victoria Falls Rainforest
- Imbeza Forest
- Gonarezhou National Park
- Hwange National Park
- Lake Kariba
- Mana Pools
- Matobo Hills

Forest Products

- Softwood and Hardwood lumber
- Wood chips
- Round poles
- Veneer & plywood
- Pine bark
- Honey
- Charcoal
- Wattle tanning bark
- Wood carvings
- Mushrooms
- Firewood
- Furniture

References

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