

# SITE PROTOCOL FOR WATERBIRD COUNTS: BLUE LAGOON

1. **Name of the Site:** Blue Lagoon NP

2. **Coordinates:**

	Latitude	Longitude
Point 1 - Start	-15.459468	27.464889
Point 2 - End	-15.488674	27.484904
Point 3 - Camp	-15.453237	27.457475

3. **Description:** See Google map attached.

There is a campsite, Point 3 on the map, with few facilities; bring your own water, food and cooking facilities. It is usually more convenient to arrive the afternoon before the count and stay overnight because of the distance from Lusaka.

The count site is a causeway running out into the Kafue Flats. It is approximately 4.25km long with a “dog leg” bend about 2.6 km along it from the start count point. At the end of the causeway is a turning circle with the remains of a viewing platform on. At the beginning of the causeway there is an abandoned concrete building on left or north/ northwest edge of the causeway, and a few metres beyond this there are two pools, one on either side of the causeway. If the water level is high in the wet season these pools may not be visible as separate pools.

Over most of its length the causeway runs through seasonally flooded grasslands with a few smaller patches of reed, and with a small patch at the end on the western side of the turning circle. To the south and east there are large reed areas visible in the middle distance, Points 4 to 5 on the map. In the dry season there are usually several standing pools visible from the end of the causeway.

The water depth varies from about 1 metre + in the wet season to dry along most of the length at the height of the dry season. In July there should still be some standing water along the length of the causeway.

**Note:** There is a very good image of the site on Google Earth in which the two pools as well as the end are clearly visible. Use the co-ordinates below to find it.

4. **Count:** The count starts at the two pools, Point 1 on the map, at the beginning of the causeway. The count is done by driving the length of the causeway, stopping every 500 – 600 metres and counting from that point for 5 minutes and in a circle of 200 metres radius. This helps to avoid overlap and double counting. This gives 7 count points including the end point.

When the end of the causeway, Point 2, is reached the count is made for about 30 minutes. Again out to a distance of approximately 200 metres.

There are two exceptions to this method. First, if the count is restricted to 200 metres it is unlikely that any Marsh Harriers, or other raptors on the list, will be counted, so all relevant raptors should be counted no matter how far out they are.

Secondly, all Wattled Cranes should be counted, again, no matter how far from the count point they are. Wattled Cranes can frequently be seen nesting far out to the South west in the breeding season, and if they are nesting this should be noted.

**Flying birds.** It is usually assumed that birds flying overhead are part of the population of the Kafue Flats, and are therefore counted. But please try to make a note in the report of approximately how many were flying as opposed to how many were on the ground.

5. **Time:** The counts should start soon after dawn, usually around 6 am and it should take approximately 1 hour to reach the end of the causeway. The counts can also be made in the evening, but whichever you choose, morning or evening or even both, please make a note in the report. If both morning and evening counts are done, please keep them separate, with a separate list for each.
6. **Tools:** Binoculars should be used for all point counts out to the 200 metre radius. For Wattled Crane counts a telescope should be used if available to try and identify as many as possible, and their nests if they are nesting.
7. **Additional Information:** In the dry season it is likely that much of the length will be dry. Please give an indication of where the flooded areas start, either in terms of distance along the causeway, or giving GPS co-ordinates.

GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE OF BLUE LAGOON CAUSEWAY AND CAMPSITE

