

## Bujagali Falls

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Bujagali Falls is one the first big rapids you will encounter. If you would like to see it though you better hurry up. The whole series of rapids including Bujagali may soon disappear with the construction of a new dam.

Some ten kilometres below Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake and source of the River Nile, lie the little-known but stunningly beautiful Bujagali Falls. Although lacking a single massive drop of the kind that generally earns waterfalls their fame, the Bujagali are distinctive because of the sheer volume of water cascading over the series of low rapids that would otherwise be unremarkable. The luxuriant vegetation covering the river banks and islands, and the startling diversity of bird life attracted by the multitude of fish, complete the stunning vista, as illustrated in the photographs. Water entering the White (or Victoria) Nile – known locally as Omugga Kiyira – from the Lake takes fully three months to flow the 6400 km northwards to the Mediterranean Sea.

This peaceful corner of Uganda, not far from the country's second city of Jinja, might well have remained relatively obscure, save to local residents and the young travellers frequenting nearby campsites to experience the excitement of white water rafting and other forms of low-impact ecotourism. However, construction of a second hydro-electric dam near the falls, now under way, has thrust the area into the international spotlight. The powers that be deem the ageing Owen Falls Dam, completed in 1954 at the source of the Nile, inadequate to meet the region's increasing demand for electricity, and see the Bujagali Dam as a source of lucrative export revenue, mainly to neighbouring Kenya.