



# Common Name

## Greater Flamingo

**Scientific Name** *Phoenicopterus ruber roseus*  
 FAMILY: Phoenicopteridae  
 ORDER: Phoenicopteriformes  
 AZA MANEGMENT: Green

### GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

- EUROPE
- ASIA
- NORTH AMERICA
- NEOTROPICAL
- AFRICA
- AUSTRALIA
- OTHER

### HABITAT

- FOREST
  - DESERT
  - GRASSLAND
  - COASTAL
  - RIVERINE
  - MONTANE
  - OTHER
- They inhabit large lagoons and saline and alkaline lakes.

### CIRCADIAN CYCLE

- DIURNAL

### TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE



From 20° F to 90° F

Greater flamingos can tolerate temperatures into the teens for several hours if they are in a sheltered area. They do not like standing on or being out in snow conditions.

### DIET

- FRUGIVORE
- CARNIVORE
- PISCIVORE
- INSECTIVORE
- NECTIVORE
- OMNIVORE
- FOLIVORE
- OTHER

In the wild, flamingos are filter feeders whose diet consists of algae, diatoms, mollusks, insect larvae and other aquatic invertebrates. There are several commercial flamingo products on the market that provide flamingos with the proper nutritional diet. A canthaxanthin supplement can be used for pink pigmentation of the feathers. Krill can be fed as an enrichment diet item.

### LIFE EXPECTANCY

	Median Life Expectancy	Maximum Longevity	
Within AZA	Mid 40s	N/A	
In the Wild	30	N/A	
Within AZA	Late 50s	N/A	
In the Wild	30	N/A	

CREPUSCULAR

NOCTURNAL

OTHER

# BREEDING INFORMATION

## AGE AT SEXUAL MATURITY



**Males** Three, but no birds under six have bred in the current population.



**Females** Three, but no birds under six have bred in the current population.

**Incubation period:** 28-32 days

**Fledgling Period:** 90-120 days



## CLUTCH SIZE, & EGG DESCRIPTION



Flamingos lay one egg which is elongated and symmetrical. Eggs are white with a chalky coating.

# CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION



## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

**Social Structures in the Wild:** Colonial

**Social Structures in Captivity:** Colonial



## COURTSHIP DISPLAYS

Head flagging, false feeding, wing-leg stretch, wing salute, and twist-preen



## NEST SITE DESCRIPTION

Flamingos should have a dedicated area for breeding with minimum disturbance. Different soils can be used and should be kept moist and pliable so mounds can be built.



## CHICK DEVELOPMENT

Chicks hatch after a 28-30 day incubation. They will leave the nest within a few days, but will often climb back into the nest for brooding. Nests should be maintained so birds can climb back in. In the wild young birds form a crèche while parents are out feeding, and they will display this same behavior in captivity. Chicks usually fledge at 60 -75 days.



## PARENTAL CARE

Both parents incubate the egg and help raise the chick. The pair takes turns with this responsibility. Adult flamingos secrete a "crop milk" to feed the chicks. When the chick leaves the nest, the parents continue to care for the chick for approximately six months and have been observed caring for chicks even until the next breeding year



## MIXED SPECIES EXHIBITS

**Compatible in mixed species exhibits?**

YES

NO

**Comments:** They are often kept with other bird species. If managed with mammals, they must have a secure area that the mammals cannot access.



## OPTIMAL HABITAT SIZE

Exhibit design should be considered when determining flock size. The pool should be large enough for the entire flock to wade in shallow water. There should be separate space for feeding and the nesting site should be located so the area can be serviced without disturbing nesting birds.

**Minimum Group Size:** 20

**Maximum Group Size:** As many as the exhibit size will allow



## MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Established greater flamingo flocks that have successfully bred may stop for unexplained reasons and more research is needed to identify the causes. AZA has a large population but a low reproductive success and providing birds to start new flocks has been challenging. Bumblefoot is common in flamingos and managers need to monitor birds for this condition. Zoos in northern climates need to have winter holding facilities, but should design them so they have outdoor access as birds can be let out many winter days.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS



## REFERENCES

Flamingo Husbandry Guidelines  
Handbooks of Birds of the World, Volume One, Page 525. Lynx Editions



## COMPLETED BY:

Name: Tom Schneider, Detroit Zoo

Date: 10/14/2014