

# IUCN SSC Flamingo Specialist Group

2019 Report



Cathy King



Paul Rose

## Co-chairs

Cathy King (1)  
Paul Rose (2)

## Red List Authority

BirdLife International

## Location/Affiliation

(1) Zoo de Lagos, Portugal  
(2) WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre, UK

## Number of members

196

## Social networks

Facebook: Flamingo Specialist Group  
Twitter: @FlamingoSpecGrp  
Website: [www.flamingo-sg.org](http://www.flamingo-sg.org)



## Mission statement

The mission statement of the WI-IUCN SSC Flamingo Specialist Group (FSG) is to actively promote flamingo research and conservation worldwide by developing conservation action plans for the most threatened species, and by encouraging information exchange and cooperation amongst flamingo specialists, and with other relevant organisations, particularly the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), Wetlands International, Ramsar Convention, WWF International and BirdLife International.

## Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we hope to have succeeded in our aims of re-launching the FSG website and newsletter (as an online publication). We hope to have strengthened and developed links within the membership to identify roles that individuals can play in the running of the FSG. We plan to recruit new members from specific areas of the world (i.e. the Middle East and Asia) and attempt to build our links with existing *in situ* flamingo conservation, management and ecology organisations. We aim to build capacity across our membership by encouraging interaction with online forums and across group email discussion, as well as encourage members to submit papers to the new, re-launched newsletter. Finally, we hope to provide a new resource centre of flamingo-centred information (both *in* and *ex situ*) in the form of a website, for all (members and non-members) to engage with. Promoting the work of conserva-

tion scientists and flamingo biologists will result in increased exposure for these species, and therefore, a better chance of secured populations for the future. We hope that by continuing to support the work of scientists and flamingo biologists in the field, the conservation status of all six species does not deteriorate, and that those species currently Vulnerable or Near Threatened can be more secured in their habitats, so that future assessments of populations show an upward trend in numbers, rather than a decline. The good work currently undertaken with the Andean and Puna Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus andinus* and *P. jamesi*, showing stable population trends) needs to be monitored, as current Red Lists assessments suggest potential declines due to past poor breeding success and human-caused impacts on populations. Continued observation of mining activities around breeding locations of Lesser Flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*) in East Africa is required, as this is potentially the biggest threat to the largest wild population of this Near Threatened species.

## Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

### Assess

Green List: assess flamingos as part of the IUCN Green Listing test.

Red List: provide new data for the 2020 Red List assessment.

### Plan

Planning: (1) investigate logistical, technical and funding needs for a pan-African Lesser Flamingo population survey; (2) establish working groups to address three priority actions.

Caribbean flamingos displaying  
Photo: Paul Rose



### **Act**

Conservation actions: work with the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) to assess implementation of Lesser Flamingo Species Action Plan conservation objectives and tasks.

### **Network**

Membership: renew and overhaul membership, including collecting details on individual member roles in FSG.

Proposal development and funding: develop funding opportunities and availability of grants for *in situ* flamingo conservation. Advertise and promote funding options for *in situ* flamingo conservation and work on the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) small grants fund.

Synergy: (1) identify and recruit a programme officer for the FSG; (2) maintain collaboration with field-based programmes (e.g. Grupo Conservación de Flamencos Altoandinos – Peru, Tour du Valat) and continue to help, support and promote *in situ* flamingo conservation strategies with those organisations working in the field.

### **Communicate**

Communication: (1) re-launch the *Flamingo* newsletter in the form of an online scientific publication; (2) develop a new website for the FSG to link to current activities and social media campaigns; (3) build a social media presence across various platforms to promote wider education on flamingo conservation issues, and to use as a platform for fundraising or capacity building; (4) re-visit and re-draw the FSG mission statement.

Scientific meetings: (1) organise a workshop for flamingo keepers to increase awareness of current science in flamingo management (provide information based on best practice



Caribbean flamingo performing  
a courtship display  
Photo: Paul Rose

to zoo professionals); (2) integrate the role of the FSG with the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA; FSG aims at annual EAZA meetings to encourage links between different flamingo stakeholders).

## **Activities and results 2019**

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### **Assess**

#### Green List

i. Two flamingo species (Andean Flamingo and Lesser Flamingo) were Green Listed by Paul Rose for the University of Oxford test of this conservation strategy. Publication of the Green List test (of species across IUCN Specialist Groups) is expected in 2020. (KSR #11, 12)

### **Network**

#### Membership

i. Membership continues to be reviewed and managed to ensure participation is as wide as possible with the mission and aims of the FSG.

#### Synergy

i. FSG was included in communications with government and zoo officials as well as BirdLife South Africa regarding the rescue of 1,800 lesser flamingo chicks and eggs at Kamfers Dam, South Africa, in January 2019. The FSG provided information on suitable tagging methods and companies providing the equipment, and helped to find funding for tagging of rescued chicks. Rescue volunteers were found via FSG communications. FSG also advised on which birds would be considered non-releasable. This was the first large-scale release effort of hand-reared flamingos, and the FSG will establish a working group to produce guidelines and protocols should such events occur in the future. (KSR #29)



Greater flamingo arguing  
Photo: Paul Rose

## Communicate

### Communication

**i.** One volume of the *Flamingo* newsletter was published in 2018 and one volume in 2019. The call for papers for the 2020 volume is now ongoing. The re-launch of *Flamingo* in 2018 has been successful in enabling further volumes to be published on the FSG website. (KSR #28)

**ii.** The FSG website is up and running, and new pages continue to be added. The website works well as a repository for the volumes of *Flamingo* (our online journal). (KSR #28)

**iii.** The FSG Facebook page achieved a milestone of over 5,000 likes in 2019 and is now climbing towards 6,000. The Twitter account has around 800 followers. We continue to monitor number of likes and followers on the Facebook page, as well as to evaluate the reach of posts to understand which content has the widest appeal and influence for those engaging with flamingos, their ecology and conservation. We are monitoring Twitter to find new ways of engaging with a Twitter audience (this may be through recruitment of a social media volunteer). (KSR #28)

### Scientific meetings

**i.** One workshop was held at Zoological Society of London (ZSL) London Zoo in July 2018. The output from this workshop was written up for the Association of British and Irish Wild Animal Keepers (ABWAK) journal *Rate!* and therefore was free to read for all ABWAK members and those interested parties with access to this publication. An audience of members from several different countries plus continued engagement with this workshop will see another one run in 2020. (KSR #18, 25)

**ii.** Presentations about FSG were given at several EAZA meetings in 2019 (e.g. the EAZA Bird Taxon Advisory Group mid-year meeting, EAZA Annual meeting, and the Moscow Zoo 155th Anniversary, with Russian translation), which attracted many people that do not attend the usual EAZA meetings, because of language barriers. Meeting participants were asked to provide feedback on what priorities they felt the FSG should have and in which activities we should be engaged. Individual attendees expressed approval for our current approach and activities. (KSR #29)

## Acknowledgements

We thank WWT Martin Mere for agreeing to host the 2020 ABWAK Flamingo Keepers' Workshop planned for Autumn 2020. We thank members of the Conservation Directorate at WWT (especially Robin Jones) for help maintaining the FSG's membership database and email list-serve and for providing IT and technical help. We thank WWT IT and media for helping continue to develop the website and for providing the platform for the website. Grateful thanks to former Chair Rebecca Lee for problem solving with the website and helping to bring the website back online after a problem with the host platform. Thank you to Molly Grace at the University of Oxford for including the FSG in her Green Listing research. At the time of writing, COVID-19 may affect some of the activities listed.

## Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

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Assess	1	
Network	2	
Communicate	5	

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Main KSRs addressed: 11, 12, 18, 25, 28, 29

Resolutions addressed: WCC 2016 Res 041, WCC 2016 Res 085

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KSR: Key Species Result