

FACTSHEET – Lesser Flamingo

The Lesser Flamingo has a flamboyant lifestyle, and congregations of over 100,000 gangling and gaudy individuals may be seen in northern Sua Pan at certain times. With such numbers, why is this species a bird of conservation concern?



The answer lies in the fact that Sua Pan is the only breeding site in Botswana, and one of only four sites in Africa. The birds do not breed here every year due to the ephemeral nature of the pan, but when conditions are right, it is 'boom or bust' and thousands of chicks are produced. Should something adverse happen to this breeding site, it would have a very significant impact on the species, as a large proportion of its 'eggs are all in one basket'. The southern part of Sua Pan where the birds breed is only protected by virtue of its

Photos: G McCulloch

remoteness - an improvement in the status of this area would be a conservation

breakthrough for the

species, particularly in the light of the current threats faced by another of the flamingos' breeding sites at Lake Natron in northern Tanzania.



An international Lesser Flamingo Action Plan, a blueprint for the conservation and survival of the species, has been developed, and in Botswana, is being implemented by the Dept. of Wildlife and National Parks, BirdLife Botswana and other stakeholders. It needs to be translated into concrete action on the ground to ensure that the current flamingo congregations remain "one of the greatest ornithological spectacles on earth".