

Status, Habitat Use, and Behaviour of Wintering Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* in Semi-Arid and Saharan Wetlands of Algeria

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Abstract : The Greater flamingo is considered the flagship species of wetlands across semi-arid and Saharan regions of Africa, especially Chotts and Sebkhas, which also concentrate significant numbers of bird species. Flamingos have different status (wintering and breeder) which vary between sites in different parts of Algeria. We conducted surveys and recorded banded flamingos across distinct regions within two climatic belts: semi-arid (Hauts Plateaux) and arid (Sahara), showing the importance of these sites in the migratory flyways particularly the relation between West Mediterranean and West Africa populations. The distribution of Greater flamingos varied between sites and seasons, where the concentrations mainly were in the wide, lees deep and salt lakes. Many of the sites (17) in the surveyed area were regularly supporting at least 1% of the regional population during winter. The analysis of Greater flamingos behaviour in different climatic regions in relation showed that the feeding is the dominant diurnal activity with rates exceeding 60% of the time. While feeding varies between seasons, and showed a negative relationship with the degree of disturbance.

Keywords : Algeria, greater flamingo, *Phoenicopterus roseus*, Sahara, semi-arid

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