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# Breeding of Greater Flamingo in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

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For the first time in over 75 years, Greater Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber roseus*) bred in 1998 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The last time the species bred on the Arabian Peninsula was in Kuwait in 1922 (Ticehurst 1926).

On 7 June 1993, Aspinall & Hellyer (1999) observed 571 flamingos and 15 nests with 6 incubating birds and 2 eggs at Al Wathba Wetland Reserve (then called Al Ghar Lake) lying 40 km SE of the City of Abu Dhabi in Abu Dhabi Emirate. By 10 June 1993, there were 22 completed nests and on 6 July there were 4 newly hatched chicks. However, by 9 July the colony had deserted and an inspection on 11 July revealed that all eggs except one had been removed. Also found was a dead chick in the middle of the nesting area containing 79 nests, some complete and some partially complete.

Ever since that initial attempt in 1993, flocks of flamingos have occurred at Al Wathba WR throughout the year, with numbers averaging over 200 birds, and the largest flock comprising over 1500 birds.

On 27 Nov 1998, there were over 1500 birds and 89 nests, and by 11 Jan 1999 at least 12 contained eggs. Two days later, 44 nests were active. Unfortunately, an unplanned flow of treated wastewater entered the lake on 17 Jan which, together with strong W winds, caused many nests to be destroyed. However, on 10 Feb., 10 chicks were observed in a creche and these fledged in April, resulting in the first recorded successful breeding of Greater Flamingo in the Arabian peninsula in 75 years.

Al Wathba WR is managed by the Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA) of Abu Dhabi. The wetland itself is man-made, albeit not intentionally, and lies adjacent to the main sewage treatment plant for the City of Abu Dhabi, the Mafraq Water Treatment Plant operated by the Abu Dhabi Municipality. This plant collaborates in the management of the reserve by supplying both salt water and freshwater to maintain water levels in the wetland. The wetland environments include a range of water salinity from fresh to hyper-saline and associated fauna and flora. Recognizing the importance of this site for breeding flamingos and as a nesting, roosting and foraging area for other species, ERWDA began monitoring the functional nature of the lake and its environs. With these studies and the resulting effective management, ERWDA hopes to encourage future breeding by flamingos and maintain and increase the diversity of living organisms that are drawn to this unique area in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula.

## References Cited:

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