

ENVIRONMENTAL ATLAS
OF ABU DHABI EMIRATE





Photo Quiz

Why are Greater Flamingoes pink?

Maybe it's:

- > because they've got sunburn
- > they're always embarrassed
- > because pink is their favourite colour
- > because they are in love

Answer:

The presence of certain pigments in the algae and crustaceans that flamingoes feed on are what give the birds their distinctive pink plumage!

Notes

- > Flamingos eat algae and crustaceans that contain pigments called carotenoids.
- > For the most part, these pigments are found in the brine shrimp and blue-green algae that the birds eat. Enzymes in the liver break down the carotenoids into the pink and orange pigment molecules deposited in the feathers, bill, and legs of the flamingos.

Did you know?

- > The greater flamingo is instantly recognisable by its long, thin neck and legs, colourful plumage and distinctive downward-bending beak
- > The call is a goose-like, honking ka-haunk.
- > The most widespread flamingo species, the greater flamingo occurs across Africa, southern Europe, the Middle East, and into southern and southwestern Asia.
- > Greater flamingoes inhabit relatively shallow water bodies, including saline lagoons, salt pans, estuaries, and large saline or alkaline lakes.
- > Other than using freshwater inlets for bathing and drinking, the greater flamingo rarely inhabits areas of freshwater
- > The greater flamingo is a highly social species, nesting in large, dense colonies, often numbering as many as 20,000 pairs, or exceptionally up to 200,000 pairs.
- > The greater flamingo is protected under a range of international legislation
- > A variety of conservation initiatives are underway for the species including a satellite tracking programme in Abu Dhabi.