

## GREATER FLAMINGO

### DISTRIBUTION & OBSERVATIONS

The Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) has the most widespread distribution of all flamingo species, ranging from Africa to southern Asia and the western Mediterranean; populations are also found in southern Europe. Greater Flamingos require shallow, salty lagoons, lakes and creeks (*khors*) in which to breed and feed successfully. They filter food from the water, feeding mostly on protozoa, algae, crustaceans, molluscs and insects. During breeding, flamingos seek out large, remote expanses of water free from human disturbance. A common visitor to the United Arab Emirates, the Greater Flamingo is a flagship species for conservation in Abu Dhabi Emirate and the United Arab Emirates.



### FLAMINGOS IN ABU DHABI EMIRATE

Greater Flamingos are commonly observed along the UAE coastline from Fujairah in the east to Faziya in the west. There are key sites, shown here, where populations congregate in large numbers along the coast and in several inland wetlands. The main flamingo sites in the Abu Dhabi Emirate include Al Watbha and Musaffah channel up to Al Aryam, where they can be seen year-round. Populations are also regularly observed near Dabb'iya, Bu Tinah and Marawah.

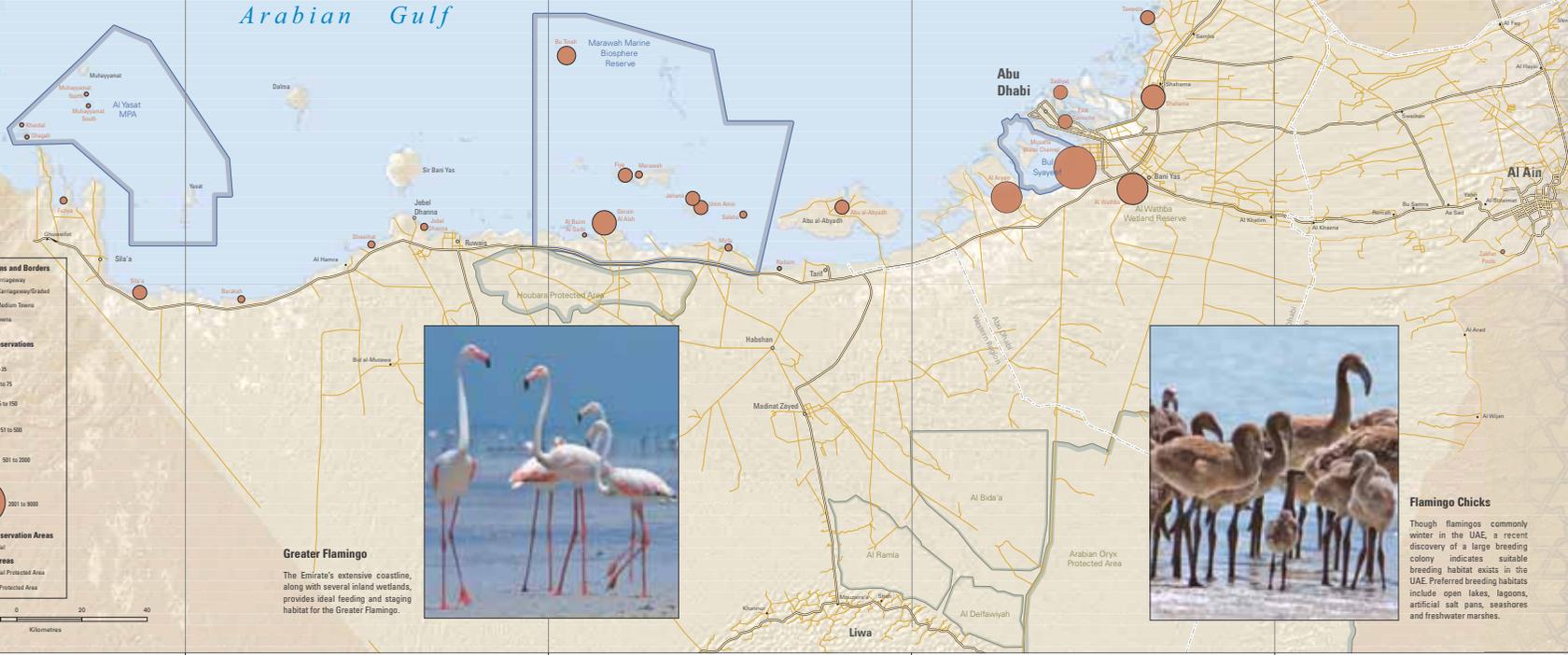
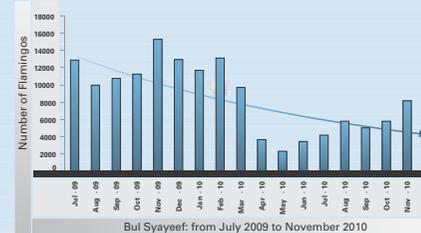
### Flamingo Breeding Areas

The first flamingo breeding colony to be recorded in the UAE was in Al Watbha in 1993, and then again in 1999, when 10 chicks successfully fledged at the reserve. A breeding colony was also discovered in Shahama. The most successful and by far the largest breeding colony to date occurred at Bul Sayeef, in 2009. Continued regular monitoring of this flagship species coupled with habitat protection, is essential to conserving flamingo populations in the UAE. Sites that support flamingo populations in the Emirate, such as Bul Sayeef, must be afforded additional formal protections to ensure continued breeding.



### Flamingo Population Numbers

The EAD bird monitoring programme routinely monitors flamingo populations at coastal and other favoured sites in the Emirate. In 2009, a colony of 18,000 flamingos, including 800 chicks, was discovered in Bul Sayeef, an intertidal area close to Abu Dhabi – to date the largest breeding population recorded in the UAE. This discovery is significant given that flamingos typically winter in the UAE, tending to select areas of Central Asia for breeding. During 2010, flamingo numbers in Bul Sayeef remained high but decreased because of high outward migration and disturbance, which may have limited additional breeding opportunities that year. Monitoring surveys indicate the flamingo population increased at Al Watbha, a protected wetland reserve. Between July 2009 and November 2010, the number of birds increased by over 3,000.



### Greater Flamingo

The Emirate's extensive coastline, along with several inland wetlands, provides ideal feeding and staging habitat for the Greater Flamingo.



### Flamingo Chicks

Though flamingos commonly winter in the UAE, a recent discovery of a large breeding colony indicates suitable breeding habitat exists in the UAE. Preferred breeding habitats include open lakes, lagoons, artificial salt pans, seashores and freshwater marshes.