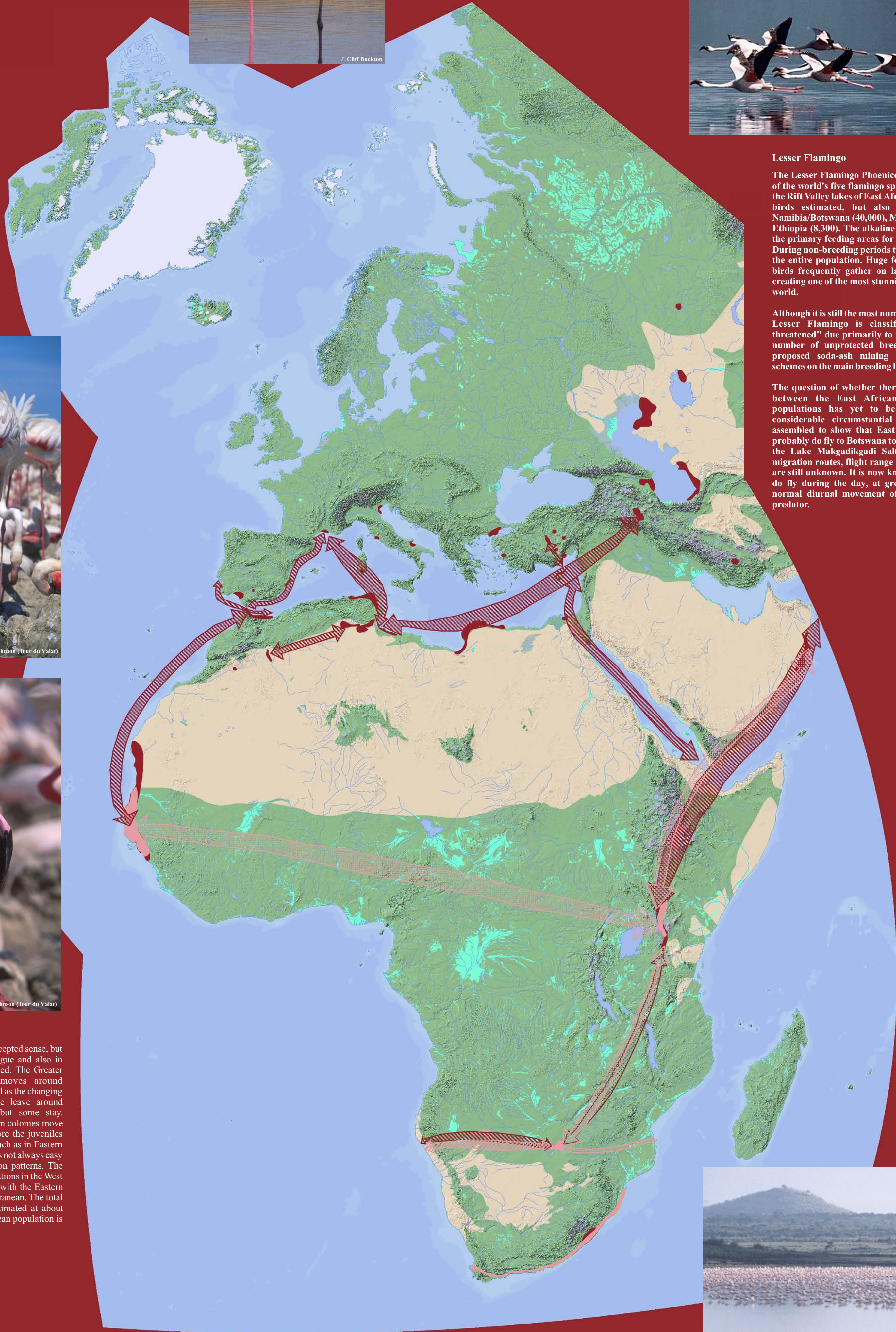


GREATER AND LESSER FLAMINGOS

Phoenicopterus ruber and *Phoeniconaias minor*

AFRICAN - EURASIAN MIGRATORY (WATER BIRD) AGREEMENT

Greater and Lesser Flamingos



Lesser Flamingo

The Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* is the smallest of the world's five flamingo species. It occurs primarily in the Rift Valley lakes of East Africa with about 4 to 5 million birds estimated, but also in small populations in Namibia/Botswana (40,000), Mauritania/Senegal (15,400), Ethiopia (8,300). The alkaline lakes of the Rift Valley are the primary feeding areas for the East Africa population. During non-breeding periods these lakes often hold almost the entire population. Huge feeding flocks of 1-2 million birds frequently gather on lakes Bogoria and Nakuru, creating one of the most stunning wildlife spectacles in the world.

Although it is still the most numerous of the five species, the Lesser Flamingo is classified as globally "near threatened" due primarily to its dependence on a limited number of unprotected breeding sites and threats of proposed soda-ash mining and hydro-electric power schemes on the main breeding lakes.

The question of whether there is occasional interchange between the East African and southern African populations has yet to be resolved definitely, but considerable circumstantial evidence has now been assembled to show that East African Lesser Flamingos probably do fly to Botswana to breed during periods when the Lake Makgadikgadi Salt Pans are flooded. Their migration routes, flight range and stopover places (if any) are still unknown. It is now known that Lesser Flamingos do fly during the day, at great heights, well above the normal diurnal movement of eagles, their main aerial predator.

Greater Flamingo

Flamingos are not true migrants in the accepted sense, but thanks to recent research in the Camargue and also in Africa movements have been investigated. The Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) moves around according to changing water levels as well as the changing seasons. Many birds in the Camargue leave around September to fly to North Africa, but some stay. Interestingly some juveniles from African colonies move north to Southern Europe, arriving before the juveniles fledge in the local colonies. Droughts, such as in Eastern Africa, can also cause movements and it is not always easy to distinguish from the regular migration patterns. The birds usually migrate at night. The populations in the West of Europe and North Africa do not mix with the Eastern ones. The border runs across the Mediterranean. The total population in Africa and Eurasia is estimated at about 500,000 birds. The Western Mediterranean population is estimated at about 80,000 birds.



LEGEND

- Greater flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) feeding and/or breeding site
- Lesser flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*) feeding and/or breeding site
- Greater flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) migration route
- Lesser flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*) migration route
- Greater flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) hypothetical migration route
- Lesser flamingos (*Phoeniconaias minor*) hypothetical migration route
- Mountains
- Deserts
- Water bodies
- Wetlands
- Glaciers

Projection: Lambert azimuthal
Latitude of centre of projection: 30 00 00

