

Final Report

Our initial challenge was to estimate flamingo numbers in the study area, covering 3 lakes. This was achieved through counts based on aerial photography of the population present. We discovered that flamingo populations fluctuated considerably in the study area. Reasons for this fluctuation include inter-lake movements (this takes place at night to avoid predation) and possible inter-region migration. Without simultaneous aerial censuses of the major East and Southern African lakes it is difficult to state with any accuracy the present conservation status of the Lesser flamingo and its future trends' tagging programme of groups of Lesser flamingos in East and South Africa populations might cast light on this. Our average population for Lake Bogoria during the study period was c.169, 000.

Having arrived at a local population estimate we sought to identify a basal mortality rate against which future trends can be discussed. Data published only records mortalities from specific events such as mass die-offs. We aimed to provide information to contribute to a "balanced mortality rate" which takes account of mass die-offs but also periods of low mortality. By walking a designated stretch of the lake coast each day for our study period we gathered information about daily mortalities. We did not distinguish between causes of death (eg age, sickness, and predation). We arrived at an estimate of 9 ± 3.7 flamingos dying per day for Lake Bogoria, and

Further studies on the species recruitment are needed to establish the future of the population. Limiting car and people's access to breeding areas would assist the breeding process - particularly if domestic dog access were severely limited. Continuous or at least periodic monitoring of the Lesser flamingo population is necessary to determine population dynamics. Monitoring the Lesser flamingo population would be a good way to monitor their fragile habitat as they accumulate toxins and other forms of pollution.