



## Lesser Flamingos

**Source:** [TH](#)

A large number of **lesser flamingos** have recently arrived at **Chhaya pond** in Porbandar, Gujarat, from where they will migrate to the [Great Rann of Kutch](#), along the **India-Pakistan border**, for **breeding**.

### Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*):

- It is the **smallest flamingo** species, found across **sub-Saharan Africa**, and in parts of **India, Pakistan, and the Arabian Gulf**.
- In India, it primarily inhabits **brackish and coastal water bodies**.
- It is classified as **Near Threatened by the IUCN**, listed under **CITES Appendix II** and under **Schedule IV** of [WPA, 1972](#).

### Flamingos:

- **About:** [Flamingos](#) are **tall water birds** known for their **long, S-shaped necks and stick-like legs**.
  - They are **highly social** and often **seen in large flocks** inhabiting **shallow, eutrophic water bodies** such as **saline lagoons, salt pans, and alkaline lakes**.
- **Species:** There are 6 species of flamingos found globally in **tropical and subtropical regions**, with **only 2 found in India (Greater & Lesser Flamingo)**.
  - **Other Species:**
    - **Chilean Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*)
    - **American/Caribbean Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*)
    - **Andean Flamingo** (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*)
    - **James's or Puna Flamingo** (*Phoenicoparrus jamesi*)
- **Diet & Colouration:** Flamingos feed on **algae, molluscs, and crustaceans**. Their **plumage colour**, ranging from **white to pink** to **orange**, is determined by **carotenoid pigments** in their diet.
- **Common Migratory Route:**



**Smallest and most numerous flamingo species.**

# Lesser flamingo

(*Phoeniconaias minor*)

**GEOGRAPHIC RANGE:** In India – most of the population is in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra; southern Pakistan, Rift valley countries in eastern Africa, southern Africa

**HABITAT**  
Inland saline and alkaline waterbodies, coastal lagoons

**MOVEMENT**  
• Seen migrating locally or moving to other wetlands after dark  
• Occasional movement between east African and Indian populations

**FLOCKS – A FLAMBOYANCE**  
• Large populations are seen in the lagoons and intertidal wetlands near Mumbai  
• Usually nest in large colonies  
• Often the largest of any flamingo species colonies; can number over 1 million birds

**BREEDING**  
• Breed in inland alkaline lakes and waterbodies like the Rann of Kutch  
• Breeding might depend on local environmental conditions but mostly coincide with the wet season (monsoon)  
• Chicks often join a creche with thousands of other chicks  
• Adults identify their chicks in huge colonies through distinct sounds

**THREATS**  
• Habitat loss to agriculture, developmental projects  
• Pollution of waterbodies from heavy metals and agrochemicals  
• Show site fidelity (visit the same site every year) hence vulnerable to the abovementioned threats

**CONSERVATION STATUS:** NEAR THREATENED ON THE IUCN RED LIST

**Filter feeders; bill specialised for filtering; feed with beak upside down**  
**Surface feeder — bill is only partly submerged while feeding**

**Pink is derived from pigments in their diet**  
**Communicate by flashing the back feathers on their wings**

**Lifespan: up to 50 years**  
**Weight: 1.5-2 kg**

**EAT** Microscopic blue-green algae, diatoms (single-celled algae), small invertebrates (rotifers)

**Read More: [Flamingos, Himalayan Ibex and Blue Sheep](#)**

