



FLAMINGOS



KEY INFORMATION

Flamingos can be found in places such as the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Mexico and South America. Flamingos enjoy warm, watery regions and shallow coasts and wetlands such as large, shallow lakes, lagoons, mangrove swamps, mudflats, inland lakes and small islands.

Their life span can be anywhere between 20 and 30 years in the wild or up to 50-60 years in a zoo. Flamingos can grow up to 5 feet tall and they only weigh 5-7 pounds.

APPEARANCE

Flamingos have pink feathers and black tip wings. They have a very long neck to help them catch food, along with long pink legs and webbed feet with three toes. This enables them to stand in deep water and stir up mud at the bottom to collect food. Flamingos have a hooked bill with a black tip that is curved down. Their beaks filter and strain out an algae or small crustaceans from the water.

Flamingos usually have yellow eyes, but babies are grey and have grey eyes. They stand on one leg to avoid getting tired from standing and will alternate legs to regulate their body temperature. It looks as though flamingos have a backward bending knee; however, it is actually their ankle.

DIET

Flamingos are omnivores because they eat algae, small seeds, tiny crustaceans, fly larvae, shrimp, plankton as well as other plants and animals that live in shallow waters. Flamingos get their pink colour from the pigment in the food that they eat.

They consume approximately 270 grams of food a day and they drink several gallons of water a day! A flamingo filters its food - when they spot their food, they plunge their head into the water, twist it upside down and scoop the food up using its upper beak like a shovel.

FUN FACTS

Flamingos' nests are made of mud, small stones, straw and feathers with enough room for 1 egg. The building of the nests take place up to 6 weeks before the egg is due to hatch. An egg tends to hatch after 30 days and both parents take turns to look after it.

The word flamingo comes from the Latin word flamenco which means 'fire' and refers to the bright colours of the birds' feathers. A group of flamingos is called a flamboyance. They live in large groups that have as many as 10,000 birds.



Find Out More...

<https://easyscienceforkids.com/all-about-flamingos/>

<https://nhpbs.org/natureworks/flamingo.htm>

<https://www.folly-farm.co.uk/zoo/meet-the-zoo-animals/chilean-flamingo/>

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. Where can flamingos be found?
2. Why do flamingos have long legs?
3. Why do they stand on one leg?
4. How do flamingos get their colour?
5. What does the Latin word for flamingo mean?