

Q. Why were the Greater flamingos moved from WWT Slimbridge?

A. It's part of a wider strategy that evaluates the need for us to keep the species we do. The greater flamingo were the most common of all our flock both in-situ and ex-situ, our flamingo houses have aged and are in need of repair, but resources are not available to repair all of them. We also need to be aware of the environmental impact of keeping our flamingo as well as the funds need to keep and feed them to the highest standards. After great thought and discussions we came to the conclusion that one of the flocks had to be rehomed to make the above more possible.

Q. Are the flamingos being moved permanently or temporarily?

A. The animals have left on loan, so that we can monitor and have a say in their care, but the move is agreed with all parties to be permanent.

Q. Where have the Greater Flamingos been moved to?

A. The birds have been moved to other animal institutions in the UK, which have all been checked and vetted by our animals management teams at WWT.

Q. Are the new locations suitable for the well-being of the flamingos?

A. See above: all the institutions have everything the flamingos need, from suitable habitats and houses to staff with previous knowledge and skills of flamingos.

Q. How were the flamingos transported to their new locations?

A. The flock was caught in one go in specially designed areas which we made in their habitats. Our vet team then check all the birds for suitability to travel and collect data on their condition. They were then transported freestanding in the back of vans, which had been carefully padded for their protection, and driven very carefully to their new homes. This is now the industry standard for moving flamingo; birds have even been moved international in this way with great success.

Q. Will the public still have access to view the flamingos at their new locations?

A. Yes, they will. Some birds have gone to specialist private collections, but others will be on exhibit in their new habitat in the near future, after routine quarantine and – in some cases - after their new exhibits have been finished.

Q. What measures have been taken to ensure the safety and health of the flamingos during and after the move?

A. The care and welfare of our animals is always the most important factor for us in all our work, but especially when transporting them. Flamingo are quite a unique species and consequently have their challenges. However, with all our knowledge and experience with the species, we have were able to plan and implement precautions. This ranged from specialist catching areas, expert vets, padded vans, and huge number of experience and dedicated team members trained in handling and managing flamingos.

Q. Are there plans to bring new animals or exhibits to replace the Greater Flamingos at WWT Slimbridge?

A. The Chilean flamingos have been moved to our flamingo lagoon, they are currently in the house adjusting to their new surrounds, but we also have some maintenance work in the lagoon which is planned in for the new year. This includes subtle change to the terrain underwater as they are shorter species and many of these birds are older than the greater

flock. As soon as this work is completed and its safe for them to come out, you will be able to see them here.

Q. Is this part of a conservation effort or a breeding programme for the flamingos?

A. Flamingos are a unique and iconic species and are amazing wetland ambassadors for us that allows us to deliver our mission and goals to engage visitor in wetlands and ultimately wetland the worlds wetlands. While there are currently no formal breeding programmes for the species, there are proposals in the pipeline.

Q. Will the relocation of the greater flamingos have any impact on other species or exhibits at WWT Slimbridge?

A. With the Greater Flamingos leaving, we have moved our Chilean flamingos into the flamingo lagoon house and, after some exhibit works, they will be out in the new year. This leaves the South American/Chilean flamingo lagoon with just the ducks in there for the winter. This flamingo house needs a great deal of repairs; we do have a number of exciting plans for the area which could include a new species for Slimbridge, but none of this has been confirmed yet, so watch this species for an update next year.

Q. Are there any plans for future exhibits or activities involving other bird species at WWT Slimbridge?

A. We are working towards a wider living collection plan which will look at the reasons for why we keep and exhibit all our animals. This will include looking at bring in new species to enable us to tell more wetland stories and engage our visitors to take action for wetlands. We have a very good idea on what this will look like, hence we have been to react to the challenges with our flamingos and their exhibits, and make important but difficult decisions. We hope to be able to share these plans with you in the future, as soon they have been confirmed.

Q. Can visitors still learn about Greater Flamingos and their conservation at WWT Slimbridge, even though they are no longer at the site?

A. We currently have a small group of Greater Flamingos at Slimbridge who were assessed during the catch and found to have certain health issues. We are dedicated to providing them with the necessary care. Visitors can visit these flamingos in our Andean house. Beyond these individuals, we will continue to offer educational insights through our signage, featuring information about Greater Flamingos and their natural history. It's worth noting that Greater Flamingos are not considered a threatened species.