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## The Greater Flamingo *Pheonicopterus roseus* and other birds at the Kibimba rice scheme, eastern Uganda

Kibimba rice scheme in eastern Uganda was started in 1974, with an initial area of 650 ha but now covers an area of 1 040 ha and is under the management of Tilda Uganda Ltd, a privately owned company. Kibimba wetland consists of a long, narrow strip of swampy land surrounded by small hills. It is located about 7 km from Lake Victoria and about 4 km from Lake Kimira, which drains into Lake Kyoga. It is within the Lake Victoria climatic zone which is characterised by relatively high rainfall and small annual variation in temperature, humidity and wind (Nachuha 2006).

On 30 April 2010, I had accompanied students to Kibimba rice scheme for fieldwork when I saw a single Greater Flamingo *Pheonicopterus roseus* among other bird species including the Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* (10 individuals), Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* (2), White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* (50), Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* (>200), African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* (12), Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* (30), Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* (35), hundreds of Cattle Egrets *Bubuculus ibis*, Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* and Yellow-billed Egrets *E. intermedia*, and various small waders. These birds were located in a flooded block with water up to about 30 cm deep, in a field that was being prepared for ploughing. However, due to the bad weather conditions on that day I was unable to take any pictures.

On 8 May 2010 I travelled back to Kibimba and confirmed this record. During the second visit, the bird was standing alone and occasionally foraging, but this time in a dry rice block that had recently transplanted rice. Talking to one of the employees of the scheme, I was informed that the bird had been present since around February 2010. Greater Flamingos are easily distinguishable from Lesser Flamingos *P. minor* by their larger size and paler plumage. Their bill is pink with a restricted black tip, and the legs are entirely pink (Urban *et al.* 1986). Photographs for this observation were taken and can be accessed on Nature Uganda's website: [www.natureuganda.org](http://www.natureuganda.org).

The presence of the Greater Flamingo and other birds at Kibimba rice

scheme implies that this artificial wetland is becoming increasingly important for waterbirds (see also Nachuha 2006; Nachuha & Byaruhanga 2009). In addition, water levels at Kibimba are shallow, and the pH of the water is slightly alkaline (pH 8) (Nachuha & Byaruhanga 2009) creating favourable conditions for this species.

The Greater Flamingo was classified as Least Concern under the 2009 IUCN Red List because it has a very large range with a large population that appears to be increasing (BirdLife International 2009). In East Africa it is common in Kenya, frequent in Tanzania and rare in Western Uganda (Van Perlo 1995). This record now adds eastern Uganda as part of its known range. Considering that this species is prone to irregular (nomadic or partially migratory) movements throughout its range (BirdLife International 2009), it is likely that this single bird came from other parts of East Africa.

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## First record of Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciatus* in Sudan

The Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciatus* is a Palearctic, Indo-malayan, marginally Afro-tropical species that is considered local and uncommon across its range, mostly scarce to rare, and generally declining (Fergusson-Lees & Christie 2001). In Africa it is distributed mainly in the Atlas Mountains and Cyrenaica, on the territories of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya (Fergusson-Lees & Christie 2001). Further east in northern Africa, it breeds in the Red Sea Mountains of Egypt, where it is uncommon to rare, particularly in Wadi el-Gemal, Bir Arbaq, Gebel Garf, Gebel Hamata and Gebel Elba (Goodman & Meininger 1989, Baha el Din 2000, Baha el Din, *in litt.*). It is not known to occur in Ethiopia and Eritrea (Ash & Atkins 2009), but is known to breed in Djibouti (Welch & Welch 1988, Redman *et al.* 2009).