

### **Abandoned flamingo chicks rescued – published on 27.02.19**

About two thousand flamingo chicks have been rescued after being abandoned by their parents in drought-stricken areas. They are being nurtured by volunteers after a long period of dry weather made their breeding grounds a death trap. Via a Cape Town reserve centre, baby flamingos are being fed, weighed and cared for with loving concern.

Nick Stander, rehabilitation manager at the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds in Cape Town, said that her team had become involved as soon as they learned of the flamingoes' plight. Their organisation focuses on rehabilitation with the aim of releasing creatures back into the wild once health has been restored, and there is a good chance of independence and survival. The baby flamingos are not only sheltered, fed and nurtured, but are also given space in which to move around and exercise their legs.

Some two thousand chicks were relocated by air from the Kamfers Dam in the Northern Cape and taken some 950km to several locations.

Several conservation experts are actually questioning the intervention of the rescuers and asking questions like: What expertise led to the rescue decision? Whose decision was it? Was it the right decision?

The rescuers have no hesitation about the wisdom and the urgency of the rescue decision. It is true that nature has its own processes, and that nature is often ruthless, but we ourselves are an animal species and know that, while nature might operate ruthlessly in terms of prevailing circumstances, our lives would be barren without a nurturing of values.

People will be divided regarding whether we should intervene in tragic events that appear to be part of nature's processes, but our own human evolution depends on what we regard as behaviour that contributes to our value as human beings. We cannot always

see whether our interventions will prove to be worthwhile, but most of us would rather err by being compassionate than ignore the suffering of other living creatures because the survival of the fittest might seem like nature's way. For one thing, we know from observation that nature's way is often far from perfect. All animal welfare organisations, for instance, work for the survival of the helpless.

**ANIMAL ANGLE by Shirley Bell**