

## STORM CHAOS

## Last moments on camera

## STAFF REPORTER

**T**UESDAY evening's heavy rains have pushed up even further the level of the water at Kamfers Dam and shocked conservationists yesterday watched as several baby flamingo chicks drowned as a result of the breeding island flooding.

Tania Anderson, who has been monitoring the breeding of the flamingos via a webcam on the island, said yesterday she had been watching two two-day-old chicks and an egg.

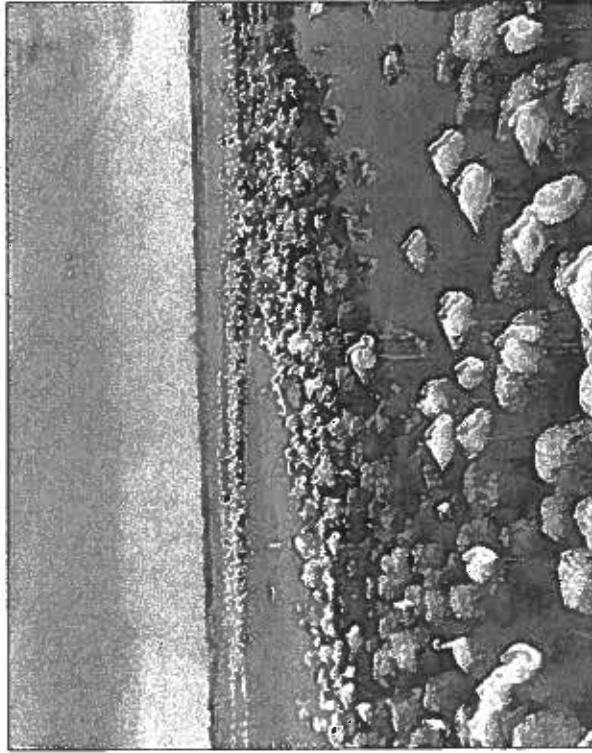
"Yesterday morning they were gone, probably washed away by the rising water. As I was watching I saw another chick floating in the water. Basically it was drowning and the sad part was that there was nothing I could do," she said.

Anderson pointed out that these were just the nests she could see in front of the camera.

"We have probably lost dozens, if not hundreds, of eggs and chicks on the island in the past few days."

Anderson said the level of the water, which has been rising constantly over the past few months, had risen again during the night after 40 millimetres of rain fell in the area.

"The island is flooding and we're in danger of losing this interna-



**BARELY HANGING ON:** A picture taken with a webcam (above) shows the flooded flamingo breeding island in Kamfers Dam yesterday morning. Several flamingo chicks drowned as the water level kept rising (right).

tionally important site."

It is not only the flamingo breeding island which is threatened, but also the railway lines which surround Kamfers Dam.

The line to the east of Kamfers Dam, which is an important haulage and passenger line, is in danger of being flooded, while

trains which use the line to the west of Kamfers Dam have to adhere to a speed limit as Transnet is worried about trains derailing.

This is one of the country's most lucrative lines, as it transports manganese from the Postmasburg area.

Mark Anderson, executive di-



the deteriorating water quality, the rising water levels and the North-gate housing development.

"The matter will now be taken to court, as both the Save the Flamingo Association and the Booth family have decided to take the matter on review under the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act," he said.

"Their review applications, amounting to more than 1 500 pages, were recently launched in the Northern Cape High Court with the MEC of Environmental Affairs and Nature Conservation, the DTEC and the Northgate developer cited as respondents."

Ekapu Mining packed 5 000 sandbags around the island in the past two years but this has not helped to prevent the flooding of the island.

According to him, much of the island is under water and many of the nests have been flooded.

"This is due to increased inflow of sewage water from the Homevale waste water treatment works, early-summer rains and limited evaporation due to cool temperatures."

He said yesterday it was "sad to see flamingo chicks dying before our eyes but we will continue to fight this battle as this internationally important Lesser Flamingo breeding site deserves to be protected".

rector of BirdLife South Africa, said yesterday the Save the Flamingo Association had been involved in consultation, debate and litigation with the Sol Plaatje Municipality and the Northern Cape Department of Tourism, Environment and Conservation (DTEC) in its attempts to resolve the issues of