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GRATIS

Flamingos breed again

THE beloved and endangered lesser flamingos of Kamfersdam are breeding again.

The artificial breeding island at the dam was constructed by Ekapa Mining in September 2006 and last year the attention of the world was trained on Kimberley when the flamingos started breeding. According to Mr Mark Anderson, executive director of BirdLife South Africa, the first chick was observed on the island on 18 November. The breeding event last year caused quite a stir as it was the very first time that lesser flamingos bred in South Africa.

"The island's breeding flamingos are monitored around the clock by members of Save the Flamingo Association via a small camera that was installed on the island with generous funding from Nedbank, Ekapa Mining and Nugen. Audio facilities, infra red lights, and 24 hour monitoring allow conservationists to monitor any illegal activities and possible disturbance to the breeding flamingos.

"The camera also provides an excellent opportunity for scientific research. A Ph.D. study by a student from the Clemson University in America will commence during 2009. In due course the live stream, full colour images will be broadcast to the people of the world via Africam's website," Save the Flamingo Association said in a statement.

The public is reminded that access to the area close to the breeding island is strictly controlled, mainly because flamingos are very sensitive when breeding. "Any undue disturbance could easily result in the birds aborting their

breeding attempt," said Anderson.

It seems likely that the Kamfersdam's lesser flamingos will breed annually and this will almost certainly reverse the current negative population trend that has been observed in Southern Africa during recent decades.

Dr Brooks Childress, chairperson of the IUCN/SSC Flamingo Specialist Group, says that the frequent breeding of lesser flamingos at the Kamfersdam could reverse the species' population decline in Southern Africa with a safe breeding site and an abundant supply of food.



SELDOM seen footage of a lesser flamingo, keeping close to her newly hatched chick, was caught on tape by the webcam on the artificial breeding island at Kamfersdam. Photo: Flamcam

