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Foraging Behavior, Direct Interference and Habitat Use in Three Species of Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus Chilensis*, *Phoenicoparrus Andinus* and *Phoenicoparrus Jamesi*) in Mar Chiquita Lagoon, Córdoba, Argentina

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The Laguna Mar Chiquita, located northeast of the province of Córdoba in Argentina, is the only non-Andean place where three flamingo species regularly coexist in the southern part of South America. Two of these species, Phoenicoparrus andinus and P. jamesi occur in Mar Chiquita in the winter. In the summer they nest in the high-Andean wetlands. The third species, Phoenicopterus chilensis resides throughout the year in Mar Chiquita.

The aim of this study was to evaluate habitat use and interactions between the three species. Monthly observations were performed with 20-60X telescope at two sites on the south coast during 18 months. From the data we obtained we were able to evaluate four factors: the association between the feeding species, differences in deep foraging behavior, the occurrence of inter and intraspecific direct interference (aggression) and habitat selectivity.

We found that P. andinus and P. jamesi never eat together and we also discovered that even though they formed monospecific flocks, these species were most often associated with P. chilensis in mixed flocks. P. jamesi never used deeper areas to feed. Direct interference during feeding was more common in P. chilensis. The three species selected and used mainly shallower areas.

Key words: *Phoenicoparrus andinus*, *Phoenicoparrus jamesi*, *Phoenicopterus chilensis*, Mar Chiquita, interactions, foraging depth, selectivity.

Fig. 1. Photo of the flamingos (Phoenicoparrus andinus) in the cost of the Mar Chiquita lagoon.

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