

WETLANDS OF THE AMERICAS

Birds from wetland areas of North and South America

Why are wetlands important?

- Wetlands are low-lying areas of land regularly or permanently covered with either fresh or salt water.
- Wetlands are home to many species of wildlife and are useful in flood control and the removal of excess pollutants and nutrients from the water. They also help with sediment trapping and produce natural products such as rice and cranberries.

American flamingos:

- Flamingos live in shallow, salty lagoons and lakes in the Caribbean and the Galapagos Islands.
- Their diet in the wild consists of aquatic invertebrates that they filter out of the water - their bill acts like a sieve.
- Flamingos eat tiny crustaceans containing carotenoid pigments; these pigments give the flamingos' feathers their pink color.
- Flamingos are highly social birds that live in large colonies with thousands of birds.

Brown pelican:

- Brown pelicans live along the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coasts, from the southern U.S. to South America.
- In the wild, pelicans scoop fish and water into their beak and pouch like a net, filter water out through the side of their bill, then tip their head back and swallow their catch.
- Brown pelicans are threatened by agricultural pesticides - like bald eagles, they nearly disappeared because of the use of DDT and its effects on their eggs
- Our brown pelicans, "Ralph" and "Dexter", were both injured in the wild.

DID YOU KNOW? The "pouch" under the brown pelican's beak can hold more than 2 gallons of water!



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