



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

3 August 2018

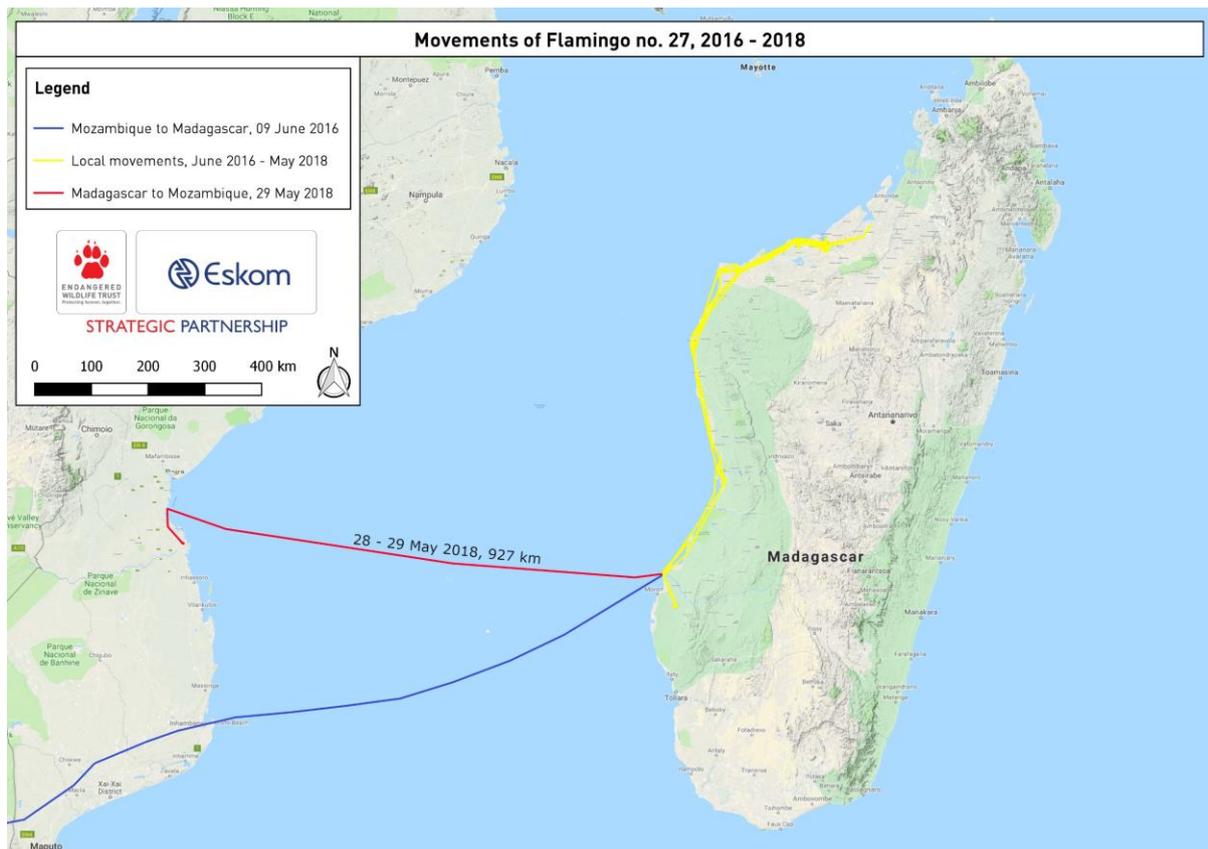
### Flamingo returns from two-year stay in Madagascar

*Start*



During 2016, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) fitted satellite tracking devices to twelve Lesser Flamingos in order to understand the flight behaviour of these threatened birds. The results were surprising, indicating long distance nocturnal movements that had previously been unrecorded. On 9 June 2016, the EWT recorded the first cross-border movement of an individual Lesser Flamingo to Madagascar<sup>1</sup>. Kucki, named by Eskom's Environmental Manager Deidre Herbst, after Kucki Low, the first South African woman to get her commercial pilots license and South Africa's first female flight instructor in 1970, covered a distance of 1,020km in a single flight! This flight was done in just under 24 hours. While on Madagascar, Kucki moved up and down the coast, all the while making her way up to Mahajanga. During her stay in Madagascar, she even survived the onslaught of cyclone Dineo, which

hit the coastline in 2017. Then, on 29 May 2018, Kucki finally made her return to mainland Africa, flying from Madagascar to Mozambique, and landing south of Beira. The flight covered a distance of 927km directly over the Mozambican Channel. Curiously, her arrival to and departure from Madagascar occurred at the exact same point in the mouth of the Mangoky River. Over the past month, she has been getting to know the Mozambican coastline better and we will continue to monitor her movements. This remarkable journey has raised even more questions around why flamingos undertake these movements and what environmental triggers contribute to the duration and direction of flights.



The Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) is listed as Near Threatened in both the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and in the Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. One of the known threats to Lesser Flamingos is collision with power lines. The EWT, in partnership with Eskom, initiated a project to assess the nocturnal movements of these birds, with the aim of mitigating this threat. While conventional bird flight diverters have proved to be effective for bird species that are active during the day, mortalities of species that fly at night, such as the Lesser Flamingo, were still being found under marked power lines. This suggested that conventional mitigation may not be effective, and more research needs to be conducted.

The project is supported by Eskom Research, Testing and Development. To assist in decreasing the number of bird mortalities on power line infrastructure, the EWT is encouraging members of the public to report any mortalities of wildlife related to energy infrastructure to its Wildlife and Energy Programme via email at [wep@ewt.org.za](mailto:wep@ewt.org.za) or telephonically (toll free) at 0860 111 535.

[1] The first media release on this particular Lesser Flamingo can be accessed [here](#).

*End*

### **About the Endangered Wildlife Trust**

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), champion of conservation in Africa, has worked tirelessly for over 45 years to save wildlife and habitats, with our vision being a world in which both humans and wildlife prosper in harmony with nature. From the smallest frog, to the majestic rhino; from sweeping grasslands to arid drylands; from our shorelines to winding rivers: the EWT is working with you, to protect our world.

The EWT's team of field-based specialists is spread across southern and East Africa, where committed conservation action is needed the most. Working with our partners, including businesses and governments, the EWT is at the forefront of conducting applied research, supporting community conservation and livelihoods, training and building capacity, addressing human wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion.

A beacon of hope for Africa's wildlife, landscapes and communities, the EWT is protecting forever, together. Find out more at [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)

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