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## FEEDING HABITS OF THE SCARLET FLAMINGO.

J. C. HAMBLETON.

One of the favorite winter haunts of *Phoenicopterus ignipalliatu*s is found on the sandy beaches that abound on the west coast of South America, at about latitude 42° South.

On the north coast of the large island of Chiloe, there are several places of this sort where these beautiful birds may be seen in flocks of hundreds during the months of June, July and August, the winter months in that region.

I remember the first time I walked over one of their favorite resorts. It was on the Pudeto river, near the small town of Ancud. The tides here are rather high owing to the formation of the bay, and as a consequence it enters the river and floods great stretches of sand that border the left bank. As the tide goes out the flamingos may be seen here by hundreds. The first time I visited the place the tide had been out some hours and there were no birds to be seen. I was disappointed for the trip had been made for that special purpose.

However my attention was soon attracted to long rows of small hillocks of sand, or rather, to be more exact, circular ditches in the sand that appeared to have been made while the water was still present. These were about two or two and one-half feet in diameter by five or six inches wide and three or four inches deep. This, of course, gave the central portion the appearance of a small hill about eighteen or twenty inches in diameter. Upon inquiry I could get no information—no one had any idea how or by whom they had been made.

A few days later the mystery was solved when a second visit was made to the place at a more propitious moment.

Upon approaching to within a few hundred yards of where a regiment of these scarlet beauties was lined up, the birds took flight and it was then that I discovered who were the authors of my mysterious little hills.

By subsequent observations I found that the birds took their stand in the water when it was about a foot and a half deep, and at more or less regular intervals about eight or ten feet apart. Here

they remained stationary and turned round and round with their heads under water, catching the small crustacians that seem to be their principal diet. The form of their beak is such that when it is placed on the ground the upper mandible is underneath. This being large and strong, soon opens up the circular depression that first called my attention. Before the tide is all out they usually leave because the crustaceans have by this time hidden in the sand.

The flamingo frequents this coast only during the winter months and consequently does not nest here, nor is it known to nest west of the Andes mountains. Their nests and young, however, have been observed in great numbers in the small lakes of brackish water that abound on the plains of Patagonia east of the mountains. Undoubtedly these are the same birds that spend their winters in Chile, the lofty Andes proving no barrier to their flight. There are many roads by which they can pass, the mountains being intercepted by frequent rivers that empty into the Pacific, and have their origin beyond the snow-covered Andes, in the plains of the Argentine Republic.