Composition, diversity and size of diatoms consumed by the Andean Flamingo (Phoenicoparrus andinus) in Salar de Punta Negra, Antofagasta Region, Northern Chile

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In April 2009, at the Salar de Punta Negra (24°35'S, 68°58'W) in the Antofagasta Region of northern Chile, we quantified the composition, diversity, and size of diatoms, the only consumed prey by both adults and nestlings of Andean Flamingos (Phoenicoparrus andinus). We identified a total of 39 species, 34 in the faeces of nestlings and 25 in adult faeces. The most abundant species in both was Surirella sella and Denticula thermalis. The most frequent diatoms observed in the nestlings' faeces were S. sella, D. thermalis, Pinnularia sp. and Haloroundia speciosa, whereas in the adult faeces they were Denticula thermalis, Surirella sella, Pinnularia sp. and Haloroundia speciosa. There was no statistically significant difference in diatoms consumed by adults and nestlings. The dietary similarity between adults and nestlings was 0.644. The nestlings consumed a greater diversity of diatoms than adults. The most consumed diatom by adults (S. sella) was sized between 58 and 140 urn, with a gre