

# Flevo Birdwatching

Tour date:	July 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2015
Name of area visited:	Oostvaardersplassen, 5600 ha wetland between Almere and Lelystad
Guide(s):	Robert de Groot

Nederlandse naam	English name	Scientific name
Fuut	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Dodaars	Littel Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Aalscholver	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Grote zilverreiger	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Blauwe reiger	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Ooievaar	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Lepelaar	(Eurasian) Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Knobbelzwaan	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Grauwe gans	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Grote Canadese gans	Greater Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Bergeend	(Common) Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Nijlgans	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
Wilde eend	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Krakeend	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>
Slobeend	(Northern) Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Wintertaling	(Common) Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Zomertaling	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
Tafeleend	(Common) Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Kuifeend	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Bruine kiekendief	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Sperwer	(Eurasian) Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Buizerd	(Common) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Torenvalk	(Common) Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Scholekster	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Kleine plevier	Little ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Kievit	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Kemphaan	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
Grutto	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
Tureluur	(Common) Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Groenpootruiter	(Common) Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Bosruiter	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Zwartkopmeeuw	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>
Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Stormmeeuw	(Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>

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	Kleine mantelmeeuw	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
	Visdief	(Common) Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
	Houtduif	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
	Holenduif	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
(H)	Turkse tortel	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
(H)	Koekoek	(Common) Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
	Gierzwaluw	(Common) Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
	Boerenzwaluw	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
	Huiszwaluw	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
	Witte kwikstaart	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
(H)	Winterkoning	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
	Merel	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
	Zanglijster	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
	Grote lijster	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
	Rietzanger	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
	Bosrietzanger	Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
	Kleine karekiet	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
	Spotvogel	Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>
	Grasmus	(Common) Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
	Zwartkop	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
	Tjiftjaf	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
	Baardman	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
	Koolmees	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
	Spreeuw	(Common) Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
	Gaai	(Eurasian) Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
	Ekster	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
	Kauw	(Eurasian) Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
	Zwarte kraai	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
	Huismus	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
(H)	Vink	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
	Groenling	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
	Putter	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
	Kneu	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
	Rietgors	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
..	..	..	..
	66	4	70
	Soorten waargenomen /	(H) = Alleen gehoord /	Total
	Species observed	Heard only	

**Remarkable:** 8 Bearded Reedlings on mud, or 1 Mediterranean Gull?

**Weather:** Hot, full blasting sun, but fortunately with a bit of breeze.

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Locations that were visited, in chronological order. Numbers in brackets correspond to numbers on the map below. In green, a general description, in black the actual observations.

Area SW of Almere (not on map). A look over open water with distant views of Amsterdam, Muiderberg, Pampus-island (with its fortress). Very few birds, but at least a Great Crested Grebe. We drive on, see a Red Fox, next to the road, but it disappears into a field of wheat, when we stop. Next to the blue floating homes we notice many more Grebes, Coots and some Grey Herons. We then go to a manure dump, which only has a White Wagtail on top of it. The manure is from a chicken farm, and much more stinging to the eyes than before, when horse manure was over there. A few steps back we inhale fresher air and scan a field on which many gulls are foraging; Black-headed, but also a Mediterranean Gull. Now that has a real black head, compared to the dark chocolate brown of its congener. A good tick. When we drive towards Almere we make a short stop next to a field of alfalfa. A thrush draws our attention, Mystle Thrush. It is slightly bigger than a Song Thrush, with more greyish tones in the plumage, a longer tail, no doubt about its ID.

Natte Graslanden (19): Reclaimed agricultural land. The area is kept open using cattle. But these are just for grazing. The open, treeless, area offers opportunities for waterfowl, waders and herons. The White-tailed Eagle uses this area for hunting, as well as do Goshawk, Marsh Harrier and, in winter, Peregrine. Water level drop slightly during summer, exposing mudflats and freshwater mussels. A number of observation screens is available, one is covered with a roof. The bushes around the area are good for warblers, Cuckoo, finches. Before we reach here we stop at the small forest at the beginning of the neighbourhood. A line of big cherry trees is full with fruits. Many Blackbirds are feeding on it, we hope for Golden Oriole, but do not see nor hear any. Jays fly past, as well as some Song Thrushes. We move on and park at the beginning of the footpath. From there we walk towards the dike, notice a Chiffchaff, calling. Then returning along what is also a bicycle path, we start adding to the list: Reed Bunting, Icterine Warbler, Sedge, Whitethroat, Starling, White Wagtail, Greenfinch. These birds all use the thick brambles, Alderberry and willow bushes next to the path and on the dike that surrounds the grassland. The first viewing screen shows only a short glimpse of a Common Pochard. The path leading to it has been cleared, but the vegetation in front of it now blocks the view. Forgot to bring my scythe. The second viewing spot, covered with a roof, gives us more to look at. Garganey, still faintly "eyebrowed" white, but definitely having started to moult. A Little Grebe swims in front, as do Tufted Ducks. Lapwing, Wood Sandpiper, Red- and Greenshank on the shallow end of the pond. The Greylag Geese, that have nested here with apparently little threat from Foxes, are widely spread over the area, a few Great Egrets and Even two Spoonbills, but they do not show well, as they are partly hidden by an embankment. We move to the third hide, a screen without roof. The sun burns down really hard on us, but we persevere. The reward is at least a very good view on some Spoonbills. More Tufted Ducks, Common Pochard and Wood Sandpiper. A Little Ringed Plover shows well in the telescope, even the yellow eye ring is visible in this bright light. Walking back, we get good views of Sedge Warbler and more of the species we saw here earlier. Once back at the car, we open the first of several bottles of water we drink today.

Kwelwater (15): One of the better spots for Bearded Reedling and, during spring, Bluethroat. The fresh water lake, at one of the lowest points in the polder, dries up partly in summer. Avocets, Black-tailed Godwits, ducks make good use of it at those times. Coffee tastes perfect. We see the Godwits, Black-tailed, but Avocets are not to be seen. In return many Ruff and Reeve show, the males are still having the thick necks and head plumes in strikingly different colors. Some Shelduck here, and Common Teal.

Parking Zuid (16): From this point you can look over large reed beds. A line of bushes growing on a shallow ridge forms a breeding colony for Cormorants and Spoonbills. Recently Great Egret have started nesting in the area, so check for these as well. Listen for booming Bittern, look for Marsh Harriers, Raven and Common Buzzard. The line of trees along the dike going to the north offers good chances for Hobby and Kestrel. A little round island close to the dike, is a leftover of a project that unfortunately started in the Second Worldwar. A Liberator bomber, returning from Germany, had been damaged, and it crashed into what was then still Lake IJssel. Only one of the crew survived. After the polder dried out, the wreckage stuck out above the water. It was recovered ,together with the remains of five of the crew. When the dragline returned after having pulled out the wreck, it also took with it all the sand and clay that were used to build a temporary dam to the wrecksite. This was all dumped on a single spot, creating a round island. Originally it was covered with shell and pebbles to facilitate breeding for terns and plovers. But plants had it their way, so now it is

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overgrown and probably safely holds other species. Yes, we do see the Cormorant colony. As happens more often this day, haziness changes, so with the sun from the opposite side, the views are there, but they are not brilliant. Out over Lake IJssel, we do see very few birds, if it flies, it is either a Cormorant or a Common Tern. If it swims it is most likely a GC Grebe. Nowhere do we see the fishing flotillas of Cormorants.

Parking Noord (17): Next to a breakwater and jetty at the IJsselmeer side of the road. On that side we normally see many gulls, ducks and terns. The breakwater itself is a resting area for terns and gulls. The sheltered water has some vegetation that is used by Snipe, ducks and geese. On the land side we can cast a distant view towards the nest of the White-tailed Eagle. This point is closest to that nest, if you are not the forester. The wide expanse of shallow open water at that side is normally sparsely occupied by birds. During periods of strong wind however, flocks of ducks and geese congregate here. If there is a deception for the client this day, it happens now: The nest of the White-tailed Eagle is empty. Good news, of course, for the eagles, two young hatched and fledged, but a birder wants to see birds. There are many, Common Tern, Black-headed Gull and Stock Dove. By now we have also seen several Marsh Harriers flying above the reeds. Here we see two that are rollercoasting in the air, a male and female bird, so probably some pair bonding. We do not see the exchange of prey.

Knardijk with adjacent lakes: Keersluisplas and Bovenwater (9): The Keersluisplas is shallow, muddy and frequented by Great Egret, Shoveler, and Spoonbill. On the opposite, northern, side of the road lies Bovenwater, far deeper, with a lot of submerged vegetation. Different birds here, Goldeneye, Goosander, Great Crested Grebe, Tufted Duck and Pochard in winter, Black-necked Grebe, Black Terns in summer. Two kinds of diving ducks: Tufted Duck and Common Pochard. Mute Swans on Bovenwater. A Swift flies over, we see very few today. Parts of Keersluisplas are now drying out. The mud is exposed and the client spots a group of Bearded Reedlings moving about on the mud. Eight birds, only one with those teardrop black spots on the face. So it will be a family with young ones and a male and female. Never before have I seen these birds foraging on mud. We take a coffee at the Visitors Centre and continue.

Krakeendhut (5) Combined with the following Poelruiterhut (6): These now are located in the same development area. This is disused agricultural land. By now, the JCB's, Caterpillars and assorted yellow machines have converted it into an area with a bit more differentiation in level. Shallow lakes, reed beds, open grassland and forest represent the landscapes found inside the park. But here one is allowed to enter, using the footpaths. This landscaping has happened during Autumn of 2014, so we do not yet know how attractive this area will be in the future. We have lunch near the sluice. During that lunch, we see many House Martins, recognisable by their white rumps. During each trip you have to contemplate the list. What did we see, and what needs to get some effort. The client mentions Stork, not sure if it is easily recognised. Within minutes one is visible in this area. Obliging it flies a short distance, tick; one more addition to the list. This bird has come back from the brink of local extinction. A breeding program raised the number of breeding pairs in the Netherlands from some 20 at the beginning of the 70's to about 750 in 2010. A successful program.

Grote Praambult (8): Generally you are looking towards the west, over large expanses of grassland. Check the herds of Heck Cattle. This breed is the result of attempts by the brothers Heck, directors of the Berlin Zoo, to recreate the Aurochs, the primeval species of cattle in these countries. They look similar but are about 2 thirds of the length. Also Konik horse, reminiscent of the Tarpan, the horse of yesteryears. The third big grazer is Red Deer. Their numbers swelled to over 2000 in this area. The big grazers prevent the grassland from becoming a mix of vegetations. The Savanna. The number of big grazers amazes. The damage to the forest, now non-existent near this point, is stunning. We do see Greylag Geese, as everywhere, more House Martins, one dark blob in a far off treetop might be a White-tailed Eagle, but it does not really move. We, however, start moving south.

Oostvaarders, Nature and Environmental Education Centre of town of Almere (1): This black and yellow three storey building has a restaurant and two observation decks. The top floor offers the widest views, but can be cold in winter. The lower one has windows and heating, so it is comfortable during the winter. In front you will see large groups of Greylag Geese, in spring accompanied by goslings. Waders, cormorants and ducks can be seen on the nearby water and shorelines. Raptors hunt everywhere, most of them will be Common Buzzard. From this place you have a wide view over the area. A second Red Fox shows in the foreground. It

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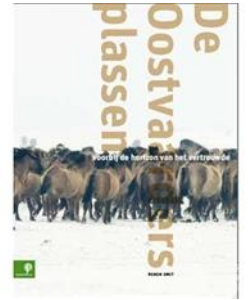
has prey, but we cannot define its nature. Then the Fox disappears in a slight depression. A big herd of Red Deer stampedes, away from the 4WD of the warden. Close by we notice more Black-tailed Godwit, Lapwing, domestic goose and Gadwall. The nest does not hold any eagle yet.



Next to the parking lot we find an adult Whitethroat feeding a young. The mobile phone helps in immortalising the scene: Adult at right, below.

If you want to read more or see more pictures? Books about the "Oostvaardersplassen":

Title: De Oostvaardersplassen, voorbij de grenzen van het vertrouwde. Photography: Ruben Smit. Text: Rinske Hillen and Jan Daan Hillen, in samenwerking met Frans Vera. ISBN 978-90-816300-1-6.



Title: Oostvaardersplassen, nieuwe natuur op oude zeebodem. Samenstelling: Bremer, P., Berg, L van den, Euverman, G., Wigbels, V., Tempel, J. Publisher : Staatsbosbeheer ISBN: 90-805009-2-5



The movie poster of "De Nieuwe Wildernis", a film by Ruben Smit. Very nice images, but a tear jerking story. Première in september 2013

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Observation points in Flevoland, near the Oostvaardersplassen area.



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