

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: 7th of August 2018

Excursion: Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve – Full day

Guide: Pim

On probably one of the hottest days ever in Almere (34 degrees celcius/ 93,2 fahrenheit) I met Jerry from Pennsylvania at the trainstation at 8 am. We drove to the Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve and took the highway because I wanted to show Jerry the White storks near the exit.

In the woods before the nature reserve we heard a singing Golden oriolus, a difficult bird to see. Our first stop was a walk to a nearby birdhide. Mosquitoes were common in this swamp area. Due to the low water level, there was no rain for months in this area, on the mudbanks there were many shorebirds. We saw for example: Pied avocet, Eurasian oystercatcher, Green sandpiper, Wood sandpiper, Curlew sandpiper, Black tailed godwit and many more.



Eurasian spoonbill – Oostvaardersplassen.

It was amazing how many birds were attracted to this area. Also hundreds of Northern shoveler, Common shelducks and Mallards.

Our next stop was at a bird hide near the visitor centre. Again the waterlevel was very low. We saw many Greylag geese and also Barnacle geese.

The air was filled with a lot of Barn swallows. Above the reedland we saw Western marsh harrier and a Northern goshawk sat in a tree.



Barnacle geese – Oostvaardersplassen.

From Wikipedia:

“Barnacle geese breed mainly on the Arctic islands of the North Atlantic. Barnacle geese frequently build their nests high on mountain cliffs, away from predators (primarily Arctic foxes and polar bears), but also away from food. Like all geese, the goslings are not fed by the adults. Instead of bringing food to the newly hatched goslings, the goslings are brought to the ground. Unable to fly, the three-day-old goslings jump off the cliff and fall; their small size, feathery down, and very light weight helps to protect some of them from serious injury when they hit the rocks below.....”.

From the visitor centre we walked for about 20 minutes in hot temperatures. We find the birds we were looking for like: Spotted flycatcher and Common redstart.



Spotted flycatcher – Oostvaardersplassen.

We drove to a colony of House martins, the build a nest from mud.





It was around noon and time for a cup of coffee with croissant and some Dutch cookies.

After this we visited a popular birdhide. Here a Great crested grebe was on it's nest. A Little grebe in summer plumage was also present. Also some Mute swans, Coots, Moorhens, Gadwalls and Great egrets. Inside the hut it was good but outside feels like an oven.

We took the car to the dyke, from here you saw the waterdifference between the big lake (Markermeer) and the nature reserve, more than 4 metres!

We did a walk to another birdhide and heard and saw some Bearded reedlings. In the air Barn swallows, Sand martins and Common swift.



Great crested grebe – Oostvaardersplassen.





We heard the really loud song of a Cetti's warbler. Also the Waterrail was calling loudly.

We drove over the dyke to the south and stopped at another nature reserve just for a few minutes good for Common redshanks and Common teals.

Our last stop was at the visitor centre of the Oostvaardersplassen in Almere. In the water a group of at least 23 Rudy shelducks and some ruffs. The temperature felt like a village in the middle of Spain.

Unless the tropical temperatures we saw many birds.

Thanks for joining this excursion. I hope you liked your full day of birdwatching!

We managed to see and hear the following **84 birdspecies** today:

Canada goose, Barnacle goose, Greylag goose, Egyptian goose, Mute swan, Common shelduck, Rudy shelduck, Northern shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Common teal, Tufted duck, Little grebe, Great crested grebe, White stork, Eurasian spoonbill, Grey heron, Great egret, Great cormorant, Eurasian sparrowhawk, Northern goshawk, Western marsh harrier, Common buzzard, Waterrail (just heard), Moorhen, Common coot, Eurasian oystercatcher, Black winged stilt, Pied avocet, Northern lapwing, Golden plover, Black tailed godwit, Ruff, Curlew sandpiper, Dunlin, Common snipe, Common sandpiper, Green sandpiper, Wood sandpiper, Common redshank, Spotted redshank, Black headed gull, Lesser black backed gull, Herring gull, Caspian gull, Little tern, Rock dove (domestica), Stock dove, Wood pigeon, Common cuckoo, Common swift, Great spotted woodpecker, Common kestrel, Golden oriolus (just heard), Eurasian jay, Eurasian magpie, Northern jackdaw, Carrion crow, Northern raven, Northern willow tit (just heard), Blue tit, Great tit, Bearded reedling, Sand martin, House martin, Barn swallow, Cetti's warbler, Willow warbler, Common chiffchaff, Sedge warbler, Reed warbler, Marsh warbler, Eurasian blackcap, Winter wren (just heard), Common starling, Spotted flycatcher, Common redstart, House sparrow, White wagtail, Common chaffinch, Hawfinch, European greenfinch, European goldfinch and Reed bunting.

And zero Common blackbirds ☺

Best regards,

Pim with a bad hair day ☺



Rudy shelduck – Oostvaardersplassen.