

Flevo Birdwatching

Tour date:	September 7 th , 2015, From 07.30 until 13.30hrs.
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	Little 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>
Lepelaar	(Eurasian) Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Knobbelzwaan	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Zwarte zwaan	Black Swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>
Grauwe gans	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Brandgans	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
Nijlgans	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
Smient	(Eurasian) Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</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>
Tafeleend	(Common) Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Kuifeend	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Bruine kiekendief	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Buizerd	(Common) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Zeearend	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Torenvalk	(Common) Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Bontbekplevier	Great ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Kleine plevier	Little ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Kievit	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Steenloper	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Wulp	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Tureluur	(Common) Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Stormmeeuw	(Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Kleine mantelmeeuw	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Visdief	(Common) Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Zwarte stern	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
Houtduif	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>

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Halsbandparkiet	Rose ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Oeverzwaluw	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Boerenzwaluw	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Huiszwaluw	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
Witte kwikstaart	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Fitis	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</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>
Zwarte kraai	Carriion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Huismus	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Groenling	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Putter	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
..
50	0	50
Soorten waargenomen / Species observed	(H) = Alleen gehoord / Heard only	Total

Remarkable: Juvenile White-tailed Eagle

Weather: Clouds as if they were painted by Dutch Masters. Some rain fell from these clouds but it passed by most often. Wind from West, 2 Beaufort, temperature about 15 to 17 °C

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 near windmills, floating houses and stainless steel monuments (not on map): A first stop, close to Almeerder Zand, gives us a clear view of Amsterdam, Muiderberg, the island of Pampus. The part of open water holds Great Crested Grebes, Gadwall, Cormorants, and Common Pochard. Driving past land art marking the location of a historic shipwreck and a spot where a WW2 bomber lies, we continue towards the blue floating houses, noticing Common Buzzard and Greylag Geese next to the road. Near the houses we see Tufted Duck, Grey Heron. Following the water a couple of Egyptian Geese seek refuge on the open water. They are accompanied by a handful of goslings, still unable to fly, proof of late nesting. In a wet, ploughed field we notice both kinds of Ringed Plover. At a manure deposit we find White Wagtails. Insects swarm on the side that the sun shines on, and the Wagtails harvest fresh proteins. We take coffee and tea before we continue our visit to the next stop.

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. When you arrive here in the morning the best way is to quickly move towards the furthest hide, the sun is shining towards you and only on the way back you will be able to see colour in the birds that fly off in front of you. And we see more on the way back. But from the hides it does not make a lot of difference, so we scan the grasslands and see Greylags, Gadwall, Lapwing and just two Common Redshanks. A very big bird, brown blotched with white spots, sits on the ground. A juvenile White-tailed Eagle. All the time we are in the hide, it does not fly, but keeps looking around. Close to it lies something that very much looks like a Fox, head and bit of the back are visible, but this does not move at all. Fox-shaped object or the remains of a prey killed by the Eagle. Two Black Swans forage on the muddy parts east of the hide. These must have been introduced,

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or escaped species, Australia is a wee bit away. Shovelers are in eclipse plumage, but a bill like that cannot be mistaken. The Teal next to it could be identified by their size and the green speculum. Much like Green-winged Teal, which used to be conspecific.

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 wreck site. 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 overgrown and probably safely holds other species. We passed by this place, but did not stop. There were anyhow only few birds on the shallow lake to our east, and Lake IJssel, deeper, towards the west (left, driving in our direction) was relatively quiet. Black-headed Gull, Cormorant, Coot and Gadwall.

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. We tried to find more White-tailed Eagles here, but did not see any. No birds showed in the reeds, and clouds started leaking before we could walk towards the jetty. All other squalls and showers missed us before, but this one hit us. We turned the car, drove onto the footpath for some meters and with the windscreen wipers on, we had a look at the breakwater. Common Gulls, Black-headed Gulls and small groups of Terns; some Common, some Black.

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. We see Black Terns, changing to winter plumage. Many Common Pochard, some reasonably colourful almost in their bright winter colours. The Coots over here do not have a subterminal band over the bill, so they are *Fulica atra*, Common Coot, not *F. Americana*, American Coot. In the far distance even more Black Terns. Greyer upper parts than the Common, with another distribution of black on the head and neck.

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. As the Visitors Centre near Lelystad is closed, we are now in a bit of renal driven hurry. So we continue here without really stopping.

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.

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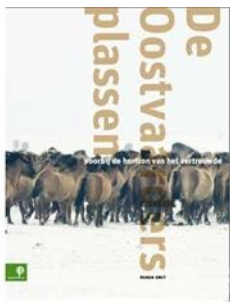
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Just a short stop over here, the plains seem empty, but a big herd of horses is about three kilometres to the south and spread evenly in the distance we see hundreds of Red Deer. Birdwise it is quiet, some Carrion Crows, a Great Egret.

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. 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.

Fortunately, this centre is open. What a relief. They serve tea and coffee, and the upper stories give us wide views over a big part of the Oostvaardersplassen. From here we see a Spoonbill, with the aid of a telescope, that is. Cormorants, Great Crested Grebe, Greylag Geese and some Barn Swallows. Sand Martins fly around the building and over the water. Yes, these are considered the same species as Bank Swallow in North America, so now the question arises: Are they really mixing somewhere, or are they geographically separated species? Splitting taxonomists unite, work to be done. Deer and Heck Cattle can be seen. A Grey Heron flies past the restaurant in a majestic fashion, broad winged and well determined. It lands on the edge of the reeds. Meanwhile the clock has ticked and we have to go back to Amsterdam.

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



Title: De Oostvaardersplassen, van het vertrouwde. Photography: Rinske Hillen and Jan Daan met Frans Vera. ISBN 978-90-



voorbij de grenzen Ruben Smit. Hillen, in samenwerking 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.



To the clients, having both worked in literature: a riddle.
Two clues, a QR tag and 822.33 T1-2, act 4 scene 3.

Enjoy puzzling and reading.

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