

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: 8th of April 2022

Excursion: Oostvaardersplassen morning tour

Guide: Pim

This morning I was lucky to guide an excursion in the Oostvaardersplassen. I met Davor & Patti around 8.00 am at the trainstation of Almere Centrum. From here we drove in about 15 minutes to the southside of the Oostvaardersplassen, part of national park "New Land".



We saw a few thousand Barnacle geese and also Greylag geese with their chicks. We saw an elegant bird, the Pied avocet. Also Black headed gull, Eurasian wigeon, Eurasian Oystercatcher and Common Buzzard. About a mile away we saw hundreds of Red deer.



Pied avocet – Oostvaardersplassen.

We made a short hike to “spotters hil”. On our way to this viewing point we heard many Common chiffchaffs, Blue tit, Great tit and Cetti’s warbler.

A lovely song was the one of a Bluethroat, but the bird was playing hide and seek with us. Suddenly there was panic on the field, many Barnacle geese flew up. Two White tailed eagles flew over and a minute later we saw them sitting on the ground.

“The white-tailed eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla) is a very large species of sea eagle widely distributed across temperate Eurasia. Like all eagles, it is a member of the family Accipitridae (or accipitrids) which includes other diurnal raptors such as hawks, kites, and harriers. One of up to eleven members in the genus Haliaeetus, which are commonly called sea eagles, it is also referred to as the white-tailed sea-eagle. Sometimes, it is known as the ern or erne gray sea eagle and Eurasian sea eagle”.

Source: Wikipedia.



Greylag goose – Oostvaardersplassen.



Great cormorant – Oostvaardersplassen.

From the “spotters hill” we saw a large group of Black tailed godwits, the national bird of the Netherland. A big flock of Golden plovers flew over and we saw Northern lapwings.

Also some new duck species for the day: Common teal, Gadwall, Mallard, Common shelduck and Tufted duck. Suddenly three Mediterranean Gull flew over.

We also saw some Red fox, they have plenty of food in the reserve like the chicks of the Greylag goose and meet of a (dead) Red deer.

Far away was the big nest of a White tailed eagle with at least one bird on it.

On our way back we walk through the forest. We saw European goldfinch and European greenfinch, also some Common chaffinch. A Common kestrel was showing well.

Also we saw Common blackbird, Eurasian magpie and a Songtrush flew over.

A bird who looks like a photo model was a not so shy Dunnock!



Common kestrel – Oostvaardersplassen.



Dunnock – Oostvaardersplassen.

We took the dyke to go to the northern part of the reserve, you could easily see the waterlevel difference between the big lake and the reserve, almost 4 metres!

On the lake we saw Great crested grebes, Lesser black backed gulls and Eurasian coot.

Our next stop was at the visitor centre, on the nearby lake we saw almost hundred Northern shovelers. We heard many Common chiffchaffs but also some Willow warblers.

In the bush vegetation we saw Wren, Robin, Long tailed tit and Northern willow tit!



Wren – Oostvaardersplassen.



Robin – Oostvaardersplassen.

On our next walk to a bird hide we saw Eurasian blackcap and heard Song thrush and Great spotted woodpecker. From the hide we saw a Little grebe and some resting Roe deer.





Our next stop was again at a spotters hill, we saw thousands of Barnacle geese but also hundreds of wild horses (Konik horse), Red deer and Heck cattle. In a lake we saw many Mute swan and some Northern pintail.



Barnacle goose & Konik horse – Oostvaardersplassen.



Konik horse – Oostvaardersplassen.



Barnacle goose – Oostvaardersplassen.

On our last stop we saw two hunting White tailed eagle.

But even more rare was the sighting of a pair of Whooper swan, building a nest. Very rare in The Netherland, they normally built their nest in Finland and Russia.





White tailed eagle – Oostvaardersplassen.

We drove back to the station. We had a morning filled with many bird species and were extremely lucky with the weather.

We managed to “catch” the following bird species:

Barnacle goose, Greylag goose, Egyptian goose, Mute swan, Whooper swan, Common shelduck, Northern shoveler, Gadwall, Eurasian wigeon, Mallard, Northern pintail, Common teal, Common pochard, Tufted duck, Wood pigeon, Common moorhen, Eurasian coot, Little grebe, Great crested grebe, Eurasian oystercatcher, Pied avocet, Northern lapwing, Golden plover, Black tailed godwit, Black headed gull, Lesser black backed gull, Mediterranean Gull, Herring gull, Great cormorant, Grey heron, Great egret, Western marsh harrier, Common buzzard, White tailed eagle, Common kestrel, Great spotted woodpecker (heard only), Eurasian magpie, Western jackdaw, Carrion crow, Northern willow tit, Blue tit, Great tit, Long tailed tit, Cetti’s warbler, Common chiffchaf, Willow warbler, Eurasian blackcap, Wren, Common starling, Common blackbird, Song thrush, Robin, Bluethroat, Dunnock, White wagtail, Meadow pipit, Common chaffinch, European greenfinch, European goldfinch & Reed bunting.

60 birdspecies

Also Red fox, Red deer, Roe deer, Konik horse and Heck cattle!

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Photos & text: Pim Julsing.