

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: 10th of August 2018

Excursion: Oostvaardersplassen Full day tour

Guide: Pim

At 8 am I'll met Gaynell & Ted at their hotel in Almere. From here we drove to the nature reserve "The Oostvaardersplassen" between the cities of Almere and Lelystad. Birding already started during our ride to the reserve. We saw Greylag geese and Barnacle geese on the farmland and some hovering Common Kestrels. Also lots of Barn swallows and House martins.



"Welcome to the Oostvaardersplassen".

Our first stop was at a viewing point. We saw hundreds of Red deer. In a dead tree there sat a Hobby, the only raptor fast enough to hunt on swallows. Also our first Eurasian spoonbill, much more to follow today. Lots of European goldfinches were attracted to the vegetation, some Common linits in the flock of Goldfinches. A Western marsharrier (female) was hunting above the field.

On our next stop we made a short hike. In the first birdhide we saw a mother Tufted duck witch chicks. Also about five Little grebe were present. A Common sandpiper was sitting near the edge of the water. The last months The Netherlands nearly got no rain at all, so the waterlevel was very low everywhere. On the mudbanks we saw lots of White wagtails.





Great crested grebe – Oostvaardersplassen.

In the next bird hide we saw a breeding Great crested Grebe, Lots of Common coots and a pair of Moorhens. On the other side of the water we saw a Red fox passing by.



Red fox – Oostvaardersplassen.

In the area lives a lot of Red foxes due to the many food, they eat Greylag geese, but also dead Red deer. On the field we saw some wild horses called "Konik" horses.

The birdhide was occupied by Barn swallows which built their nest inside. There were still some youngs present. The Barn swallows were very tame and came closeby.



Barn swallow – Oostvaardersplassen.



Mute swan – Oostvaardersplassen.

During the rest of the hike back to the car we discovered a family of Spotted flycatchers, lots of Common chiffchaffs, some Chaffinches, Great spotted woodpeckers and European greenfinches.

Back at the car we drove to the city of Lelystad to visit a breeding colony of White storks in a power pylon. One nest was still occupied. There was also a dead White stork baby, maybe due to the very dry period lately.



White stork – Lelystad.



“Our house sparrow”



From here we drove to a part of the nature reserve you can call a heaven for shorebirds. Thousand of shorebirds were there due to the low water level. Hundreds of Pied avocets, Black tailed godwits, Northern shovelers, Ruffs and even Curlew sandpipers. Just amazing!

For about 20 minutes it started raining with lots of wind, we were lucky we were in the hide. We saw some Black terns flying over and also the elegant Black winged stilt!



Also present lots of Black headed gulls, Herring gull and Caspian gull. We also saw Common shellducks and Rudy shellducks. After 20 minutes the heavy rain was gone (and it never returned today....).



Pied avocet – Oostvaardersplassen.



Black winged stilt – Oostvaardersplassen.

Back at the car we made another stop at the dyke to the visitor centre. Here we saw Common redshanks and one Common greenshank, also a few Green sandpipers. From a distance we saw a big group of Eurasian spoonbills.



We stopped shortly at the visitor centre and after that made a hike through the woods of willow trees. Here we saw a Short toed tree creeper, some Spotted flycatchers, Blue tits and House sparrows.

Our next stop was at the dyke, here we walked to a nearby birdhide. From here we saw one Little ringed plover, Common sandpipers and next to the path we heard Bearded reedlings and Waterrails.

Our last stop was at the southside of the nature reserve. From a viewing point we saw a big group of Rudy shellducks, Ruffs, Black tailed godwits and many more. From the visitor centre we saw just one Bar-headed goose.



Bar headed goose (Also Greylag goose, Mallard and Barnacle goose – Oostvaardersplassen.

Today we managed to see or hear the following **76 bird species**:

Barnacle goose, Greylag goose, Bar headed goose, Egyptian goose, Mute swan, Common shellduck, Rudy shellduck, Northern shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Common teal, Tufted duck, Little grebe, Great crested grebe, White stork, Eurasian spoonbill, Grey heron, Great egret, Little egret, Great cormorant, Western marsh harrier, Common buzzard, Waterrail (just heard), Common coot, Moorhen, Eurasian oystercatcher, Pied avocet, Black winged stilt, Northern lapwing, Golden plover, Little ringed plover, Black tailed godwit, Ruff, Curlew sandpiper, Common sandpiper, Green sandpiper, Common redshank, Common greenshank, Black headed gull, Lesser black backed gull, Herring gull, Mew gull, Caspian gull, Common tern, Black tern, Stock dove, Wood pigeon, Eurasian collared dove, Great spotted woodpecker, Common kestrel, Hobby, Eurasian Jay, Eurasian magpie, Western Jackdaw, Carrion crow, Northern willow tit, Great tit, Blue tit, Bearded reedling (just heard), Sand martin, House martin, Barn swallow, Common chiffchaff, Reed warbler, Winter wren (just heard), Short toed tree creeper, Common starling, Spotted flycatcher, Robin (just heard), House sparrow, White wagtail, Common chaffinch, Hawfinch, European greenfinch, European goldfinch and Common reed bunting.

Also Red deer, Red fox, Konik horses and "Heck" cattle.