

# Flevo Birdwatching

Tour date:	November, 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2016 From 07.30 until 16.00 hrs.
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>
Aalscholver	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Koereiger	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Grote zilverreiger	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Blauwe reiger	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Lepelaar	(Eurasian) Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Wilde zwaan	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
Knobbelzwaan	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Grauwe gans	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Bergeend	(Common) Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Smient	(Eurasian) Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Wilde eend	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Krakeend	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>
Wintertaling	(Common) Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Tafeleend	(Common) Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Kuifeend	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Topper	(Greater) Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>
Nonnetje	Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>
Buizerd	(Common) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Zeearend	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Torenavalk	(Common) Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Waterhoen	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Goudplevier	(European) Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>
Kievit	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Stormmeeuw	(Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Grote mantelmeeuw	Greater Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Witte kwikstaart	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
(H) Winterkoning	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>

Excursion executed by:

**RAFIKI BIRDWATCHING**



Roodborst	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Merel	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Spreeuw	(Common) Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Ekster	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Zwarte kraai	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
(H) Vink	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>

35	2	37
Soorten waargenomen / Species observed	(H) = Alleen gehoord / Heard only	Total

**Remarkable:** Smew to the client, Cattle Egret and a late Spoonbill were the most unexpected species.

**Weather:** A cold, wet and grey day. Temperature started below freezing, and never climbed to much more, some 5°C. Wind from the southeast, up to 3 Beaufort, bringing rain even before lunch. And it never stopped afterwards.

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 Southwest of Almere. (Just outside map left lower corner): A stop on a dead-end part of the dike, allows for a look around. Views on Amsterdam, the former coast line of the Zuiderzee north and east of Amsterdam. Normally there are Great Crested Grebes, Cormorants, Coot, and assorted gulls. A bit further on there is a monument indicating where a 15<sup>th</sup> century ship sank, and a windgenerator marked with a silhouette of a WW-II bomber found close to that site. Due to the weather we did not see Amsterdam, it was a bit foggy. But, gulls waiting to be fed (?) by someone doing a migration count kept our attention for a while. Gulls belied their names: Black-headed gulls, in winter plumage with only a tiny dark spot behind the eye, and a single Common Gull, Mew Gull to the Americans. Great Crested Grebe swam at some distance, we saw them closer by, later that day. Driving along the dike, to the north we arrived at a sheltered piece of the lake; Pampushaven. The number of Tufted Duck was very impressive, in between them were Common Pochard, Coot, Mallard, Gadwall, and a handful of Greater Scaup. The latter occur on the lake in bigger numbers but tend to stay near the middle. So, a nice species to find. Frequently, flocks of Starling sped past.

The next stop was near the Lock and Pumping house "Block van Kuffelaer" (close to 18). A fair number of ducks and grebes here as well. A female Smew was swimming in between them and a second female landed in the group as well. Clear white throat, brown cap on the head. We then drove to the next place.

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. Coffee, and a call to the car rental agency. The car rear axle was not properly aligned, (14500 km old, later on, even the manager of the rental did not notice what was wrong). The mechanic that came stated that the car was safe, so we continued. But in the mean time we had spent time on the observation floor. A flight of Wigeon, very nervous, was swimming on the lake. After a while they started grazing on the grassland and then suddenly they were back in the water. In two or three portions they flew off. We also saw Mallard, Teal, Lapwing and White Wagtail. A number of Red Deer were hardly visible in the distance.

# Flevo Birdwatching

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. Rain had now really started, so we had soup and sandwiches. With the windscreen wipers on, we sat in the car and saw Common Buzzard just over the railway tracks, getting views in the telescope was difficult, because the birds were quite active and the rain dense. We drove on towards Oostvaardersveld.

Krakeendhut (5) Combined with the following Poelruiterhut (6): These now are located in the same re-development area, Oostvaardersveld. 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 are lucky to see a number of Whooper Swans. They are mixed with a number of Mute Swans. Whooper are real winter visitors, so maybe the weather is going to be cold in the near future. Lapwings seemed to be on the move to the south as well. Greylag Geese, Teal, Tufted Ducks and Common Pochard use the ponds here as well. A bit further on we stop at a place where the herd of Konik horses is grazing. The animals look well fed and in good condition. A white shape is walking in between them. Despite being next to the equid species we still have to call it Cattle Egret. An unexpected find, Mediterranean in origin, but quite a common species in parts of the US of A.

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. On Keersluisplas (Translated: the pond near the sluice) we find a group of more than a dozen Great Egrets. One bird looks a bit odd, using the telescope we find that it is a Spoonbill, a late straggler. I will not give any more weather predictions. In the top of a tree sits a juvenile White-tailed Eagle. It flies off, but lands again just in the next tree. The views are not great, but the bill tells all. On the deeper water of Bovenwater there are no new additions to the list, so we turn south again over Oostvaardersdijk.

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 forfeit on the nest, as we have already seen the eagle. And the fog is prohibiting such long-distance views. The

Excursion executed by:

RAFIKI BIRDWATCHING



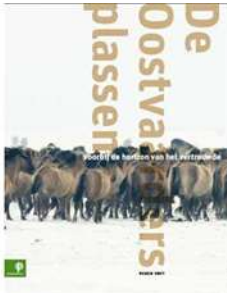
breakwater on the other side is just within the limit. Greater Black-backed Gull sits between other gulls, Black-headed-, Common- and Herring Gull. Another female Smew swims close by, giving good but short views.

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 overgrown and probably safely holds other species. . OK, we see the island, but nothing else really. So we continue. And of course, we keep on seeing Great Crested Grebes, Coots, Tufted Ducks and the occasional Cormorant. But the weather affects the light by now and we decide to head back to Amsterdam.

# Flevo Birdwatching

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



Title: De Oostvaardersplassen, grenzen van het vertrouwde.  
Ruben Smit.  
Text: Rinske Hillen and Jan in samenwerking met Frans Vera. ISBN 978-90-



voorbij de  
Fotography:  
Daan Hillen,  
816300-1-6.

T  
z  
n, nieuwe natuur op oude  
: 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. Premièred in september 2013

Observation points in Flevoland, near the Oostvaardersplassen area.

Excursion executed by:

**RAFIKI BIRDWATCHING**





- 1 Oostvaarder hut + rest
- 2 Kotterbos heuvel
- 3 Hugo de Vries heuvel
- 4 Lepelaarsplas hut
- 5 Krakeend hut
- 6 Poelruiter hut
- 7 KI Praambult heuvel
- 8 Gr Praambult heuvel
- 9 Keersluisplas hut
- 10 Zeearend hut
- 11 Wigbels Eiland hut
- 12 Kluut hut
- 13 Grauwe Gans hut
- 14 Grote Zilverreiger hut
- 15 Kwelwater heuvel
- 16 Parking zuid dijk
- 17 Parking noord dijk
- 18 Trekvogellandje dijk
- 19 Natte Graslanden