

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: 14th of november 2019

Tour: Half day excursion Oostvaardersplassen

Guide: Pim

Around 8.30 I met Quentin from Vancouver (Canada) at the small trainstation of Almere Centrum. From here we drove to the nature reserve Oostvaardersplassen. Our first stop was at a viewing point. From a distance we saw a large group of Red deer, on farmland we saw a few smaller Roe deer.

We saw our first White tailed eagle of the day, his nickname is “flying door”, because his wingspan is about 2.30 meters! At the moment there are about 10-12 of this large birds in the area and we saw this morning half of this population. In The Netherlands there are about 10 breeding pairs, it al started in the Oostvaardersplassen about 13 years ago.

We saw many Common buzzard, Common kestrel and a male Eurasian sparrowhawk was showing well closeby. We saw a large group of Barnacle geese and Greylag geese and a mixed group of hundreds of Northern lapwings and European golden plovers. Also a adult Whooper swan was present.



Eurasian sparrowhawk – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

“The whooper swan is a large white swan, bigger than a Bewick's swan. It has a long thin neck, which it usually holds erect, and black legs. Its black bill has a large triangular patch of yellow on it”.

Source: Rspb.org.

The Whooper swans we saw in the reserve today are mainly from Russia and Finland, a pair stays together for the rest of their life

On our second stop, also a viewing point, we saw a juvenile White tailed eagle and two adults in a tree. Also far away wild “Konik” horses and “Heck” cattle.

From two birdhides we saw many duck species like: Mallard, Gadwall, Northern shoveler, Eurasian wigeon, Tufted duck and Common pochard.



Red deer – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.



White tailed eagle – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.



Whooper swan – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

From the second birdhide we saw a flock of European goldfinches, Eurasian jay, Great tit, Blue tit and a fishing Great cormorant.



Great cormorant – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.



Eurasian jay – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

“The Eurasian jay (Garrulus glandarius) is a species of bird occurring over a vast region from Western Europe and north-west Africa to the Indian Subcontinent and further to the eastern seaboard of Asia and down into south-east Asia. Across its vast range, several very distinct racial forms have evolved to look very different from each other, especially when forms at the extremes of its range are compared”
Source: Wikipedia.

Our next stop was at the visitor centre. During our walk we saw Northern willow tit, Sung trush, Common blackbird, Long tailed tit and we heard the explosive song of the Cetti's warbler.

“Cetti's warbler /'tʃɛti/, Cettia cetti, is an Old World warbler. It is a small, brown bush-warbler which breeds in southern and central Europe, north-west Africa and east southern temperate Asia as far as Afghanistan and north-west Pakistan. The bird is named after the 18th century Italian zoologist, Francesco Cetti”.

Source: Wikipedia.





But one of the highlight of this morning birdwatching was maybe the sighting of a Common kingfisher, it brings a lot of colours into a grey (but dry) morning!



Common kingfisher – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

From a birdhide we saw Northern pintail, Common shelduck and Common teal. Also a group of the elegant Pied avocet was present!



Pied avocet – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.



Next to the visitor centre Brown rats were eating small apples.



Brown rat – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

Our last hike was close to the dyke, the main goal was to find Bearded reedlings and we managed to find a group of about 12 birds. Very beautiful and interesting birds.

*“Reedling, also called bearded tit, (species *Panurus biarmicus*), songbird often placed in the family *Panuridae* (order *Passeriformes*) but also sometimes classified with the *Sylviidae* or *Timaliidae*. It lives in reedy marshes from England to eastern Asia. About 16 cm (6.5 inches) long, the male wears subtle reddish, yellowish, and gray colours and has black moustaches, which are erectile (hence, “bearded”); the female is duller and lacks the black. The bill is small—quite different from those of the related parrotbills”.*

Source: Brittanica.com.



Bearded reedling (male) – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

This morning we saw or heard the following birdspecies:

Mute swan, Whooper swan, Greylag goose, Barnacle goose, Egyptian goose, Mallard, Gadwall, Eurasian wigeon, Tufted duck, Common pochard, Northern pintail, Common teal, Common shelduck, Northern shoveler, Common merganser, Wood pigeon, Waterrail, Eurasian coot, Great crested grebe, Pied avocet, Northern lapwing, European golden plover, Black headed gull, European herring gull, Great black-backed gull, Great cormorant, Grey heron, Great egret, Eurasian sparrowhawk, White tailed eagle, Common buzzard, Common kingfisher, Great spotted woodpecker, Common kestrel, European jay, European magpie, Carrion crow, Great tit, Blue tit, Northern willow tit, Bearded reedling, Long tailed tit, Cetti's warbler, Goldcrest, Winter wren, Common starling, Common blackbird, Song thrush, Red robin, House sparrow, Meadow pipet, Water pipet, Common chaffinch, Brambling and European goldfinch. (55 birdspecies).