

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: Friday 17th of May 2019

Tour: Oostvaardersplassen morning excursion

Guide: Pim

I met Kate from Canberra (Australia) at 9.00 am at the the trainstation of Almere Centrum (Central). In about 20 minutes we drove over the dyke to our first stop. From the dyke you could easily see the water level difference between the lake and the nature reserve (part of reclaimed land in 1968).

At our first stop we saw a mix of wagtails including White wagtail, Grey headed wagtail and Blue headed wagtail. High in the air we saw some Common swifts, amazing birds because when they arrive in The Netherlands they were for about eight months in the air. They're sleeping and mating in the air. They built their nest under a roof. If the weather is bad in the Netherlands they can fly to France to feed.

A beautiful birds showed itself pretty well; a Great crested grebe. You can even find this bird in the canals in Amsterdam. It's (pre) mating ballet is spectacular!

We made a short hike through a reedfield, many birdspecies were singing, especially the warblers like: Reed warbler, Sedge warbler, Savi's warbler, Cetti's warbler and Willow warbler. We also heard Bearded reedlings, but they were not willing to pose.







Barn swallow – Oostvaardersplassen.

The large bird hide was occupied by many Barn swallows. On the water we saw Common shelduck, Gadwalls and Eurasian wigeon. On the dyke we saw a hunting Western marsh harrier and from the hide a Common buzzard flew over.



Common redstart – Oostvaardersplassen.

Our next stop was at the visitor centre. Closeby we saw a male Common redstart. During a short walk we saw Great tit, Blue tit, European goldfinch, Common reed bunting and we had a great look at some Common cuckoos, a very strange looking bird!



Common cuckoo – Oostvaardersplassen.



Due to more than 3000 grazing animals (Red deer, Wild “Konik” horse and Heck cattle) the wood was almost disappeared. Every young tree was swallowed by the animals. They moved some horses to other nature reserves (even to Spain and Belarus) and shoot a large part of the herd of the Red deer. The next years the trees can recover or new trees will grow. But still the dead wood is alive with dozens of Common redstarts and Winter wrens.



Mute swan – Oostvaardersplassen.

Back at the visitor centre we were lucky with a singing Bluethroat and it was posing just metres away. From the bird hide we saw yellow flowers, a pioneer plant that grows on the first land on the border of lakes. Marsh fleawort is the English name for this plant.

Next to the bird hide we heard the strange noise of a Grasshopper warbler. In the hide we saw nesting Barn swallows not shy at all.

Our next stop was at a lock, while sitting on a bank we drank a cup of coffee with a Dutch cookie called “Stroopwafel” while two White storks flew over pretty closeby, awesome!

The lock was very popular by nesting House martins they built a nest of mud. A Eurasian jay flew over the canal and from far away we heard the song of the Nightingale.

In the water some Common coots and one adult Common moorhen.





Bluethroat – Oostvaardersplassen.



Marsh fleawort – Oostvaardersplassen.



Barn swallow – Oostvaardersplassen.



Our next stop was at the “Oostvaardersfield”, a Northern raven flew over. On a mud island we saw Pied avocets (nesting) and one Common sandpiper. Also Common pochard and Tufted ducks were present.





Common green sandpiper – Oostvaardersplassen.

From another bird hide we saw just one Common greenshank, it's on it's way to the north. Also some Pied avocets and 3 Common ringed plovers.

On the water many Gadwalls, some Tufted ducks and from the road we had a good look at some Northern lapwings!



Common ringed plover – Oostvaardersplassen.

Our last stop was at a large viewing point where we saw a few hundred Red deer, wild horses and cattle. We also discovered a Northern wheatear!

It was perfect weather for birdwatching, about 16-17 degrees Celsius and not much wind.



Pied avocet – Oostvaardersplassen.

On this morning of birdwatching in the Oostvaardersplassen we managed to catch the following birdspecies:

Mute swan, Greylag goose, Barnacle goose, Egyptian goose, Common shelduck, Northern shoveler, Gadwall, Eurasian wigeon, Mallard, Common pochard, Tufted duck, Great crested grebe, White stork, Eurasian spoonbill, Grey heron, Great egret, Great cormorant, Western marsh harrier, Common buzzard, Common kestrel, Common moorhen, Common coot, Pied avocet, Northern lapwing, Common ringed plover, Common sandpiper, Common greenshank, Herring gull, Lesser black backed gull, Black headed gull, Common tern, Wood pigeon, Common cuckoo, Common swift, Eurasian jay, Eurasian magpie, Western jackdaw, Carrion crow, Northern raven, Blue tit, Great tit, Bearded reedling, Barn swallow, House martin, Cetti's warbler, Willow warbler, Common chiffchaff, Sedge warbler, Reed warbler, Grasshopper warbler, Savi's warbler, Eurasian blackcap, Garden warbler, Common whitethroat, Winter wren, Short toed tree creeper, Common starling, Common blackbird, Song thrush, Bluethroat, Common nightingale, Common redstart, Northern wheatear, Blue headed wagtail, Grey headed wagtail, White wagtail, Common chaffinch, European greenfinch, European goldfinch, Common linnet & Common reed bunting (71 birdspecies).

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