

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Birding tour Oostvaardersplassen – Morning of the 28th of august 2017

Guide: Pim

The start of the morning was already beautiful; no clouds and full of sunshine (later 25 degrees celcius). I met Jaye and Kim around 8 o'clock in the morning at the trainstation of Almere Oostvaarders.

We then drove for about 20 minutes to the nature reserve. We stopped at a spotting point with a good view over the terrain. The first bird we spotted feels like home for Jaye and Kim, it was the majestic osprey. Further away we saw a white tailed eagle, it was an adult. This big bird often called "flying door" breeds in the area for over 10 years now.



Osprey – Oostvaardersplassen

We saw lots of birds at our first stop like: Great tit, Eurasian Jay. Great spotted woodpecker. Blue tit, Common whitethroat, Common buzzard, Common chiffchaff, Mute swan, Aegyptian goose, Greylag goose and Barnacle goose for example.

The second stop was at a bird hide. Here we saw a Common greenshank, Green sandpiper, Little egret, Little grebe, Northern shoveler, Gadwall and Garganey.

On the other side we saw: Grey heron, Great egret and in the air lots of Barn swallows.



Garganey - Oostvaardersplassen

At the visitor centre we start a walk to a big bird hide. Along the walk we saw: Long tailed tit, Short toed treecreeper, Eurasian nuthatch, Northern willow tit, White wagtail and much more.

We saw lots of wild horses called “konik-horse”, “konik” is Polish for little horse.



Konikhorses – Oostvaardersplassen

From the birdhide we have seen: Western marsh harrier, Northern goshawk, a group of at least 25 Eurasian spoonbill, Northern Pintail, Eurasian wigeon, Common redshank, Northern lapwing and hundreds and hundreds of red deer.



During our walk back to the visitor centre another young White tailed eagle flew over. One of the ladies saw a red fox crossing the path. We heard a lesser spotted woodpecker and Waterrail.

Back at the visitor centre it was about time for a cup of tea or coffee with a dutch "stroomwafel" and some fruit.

Above a recreational lake we saw: Common tern, Red crested grebe and Black headed gull.



Our last stop was at the dyke. Here it was easy to see that the nature reserve is below sea level (-5 metres). We made a walk to another bird hide occupied by Barn swallows.

During the short walk we saw groups of Bearded reedlings.

I told you during the excursion the story of the stomach of the bearded reedling and found something about it on the internet:

The Bearded Reedling remains all year in the Netherlands. If your menu is animal food (insects), what do you eat in winter when there are no insects? The Bearded Reedling is eating the seeds of reed during the winter. How is that possible? The stomach of this bird species and some other bird species has a specific characteristic.

A part of the stomach is in the breeding time (summer) a limp organ (has a soft/flaccid muscle). In this period the bird eats in particular animal food such as insects and spiders. In the winter there is a switch to reed seed. This is possible because the stomach of the Bearded Reedling changes from a soft muscle in a hard muscle. A hard muscle is needed in order to squash and digest seeds. By this change the stomach tilts somehow in the body.

This specific characteristic of the stomach, the changing of structure of the stomach, means that the stomach is adapted to the food what is available. This adaptation of the stomach also has its downside. In the event of a sudden early frost period or late frost period, when the stomach is tuned to insects, this may become fatal to the bird.

At the bird hide we saw a few Common sandpipers. During the walk we heard the loud noise of the Cetti's warbler. This bird was 5-10 years ago very rare and is increasing the last years due to a climate change.

I hope you liked the day out in the Oostvaardersplassen.

We heard and have seen this 74 bird species: (not bad for august ☺).

Mute swan, Greylag goose, Barnacle goose, Egyptian goose, Common shelduck, Mallard, Gadwall, Northern pintail, Northern shoveler, Eurasian wigeon, Winter teal, Garganey, Common pochard, Tufted duck, Little grebe, Great crested grebe, Great cormorant, Great egret, Little egret, Grey heron, Eurasian spoonbill, Osprey, White tailed eagle, Western marsh harrier, Northern goshawk, Common kestrel, Common buzzard, Water rail, Eurasian coot, Northern lapwing, Green sandpiper, Common sandpiper, Common redshank, Common greenshank, Black headed gull, Lesser black backed gull, Herring gull, Mew gull, Common tern, Stock dove, Wood pigeon, Collared dove, Great spotted woodpecker, Lesser spotted woodpecker, House martin, Sand martin, Barn swallow, Dunnock, White wagtail, Spotted flycatcher, Common whitethroat, Reed warbler, Cetti's warbler, Willow warbler, Common chiffchaff, Winter wren, Great tit, Blue tit, Northern willow tit, Long tailed tit, Bearded reedling, Eurasian nuthatch, Short toed treecreeper, Eurasian magpie, Eurasian jay, Western jackdaw, Carrion crow, Common starling, House sparrow, Common chaffinch, Common linnet, European goldfinch, European greenfinch and Reed bunting. And some mammals: hundreds of Konik horses, >1000 Red deer and 20 Heck cattle.

