

# Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: Wednesday 29th of June 2022

Excursion: Oostvaardersplassen half day tour

Guide: Pim

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Around 9.00 o'clock I met Dana, her husband, daughter & partner. Already on the parking place birdwatching started with a well showing Common redstart (male). The picture below is taken just ten minutes before we met. It's the same individual. They nest in a nearby box starting it's career as a box for maps of the area. Four years ago the Common redstarts took this box over and we also saw the female shortly!



## **Common redstart – Oostvaardersplassen.**

In a nearby birdhide we saw nesting Barn swallows, the first nest was already ready to fly and showing very well outside the hide. Common redstarts are in the "Sahel" region in Africa during the winter but Barn swallows fly all the way to the south, even till South-Africa!

On the lake we saw a Caspian gull, Black headed gull, Mute swan, Greylag goose and hunting Barn swallows. Outside we heard a Bluethroat singing loudly but we could not find him. In the reed we heard the shy song of the Reed warbler and the explosive song of the Cetti's warbler.

"Cetti's warbler is a small, brown bush-warbler which breeds in southern and central Europe, northwest Africa and the east Palearctic as far as Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan. The sexes are alike. The bird is named after the 18th century Italian zoologist, Francesco Cetti. This species is very difficult to see because of its skulking habits".

Source: Wikipedia.

Nowadays the Cetti's warbler is also quite common in The Netherlands due to the climate change.



Barn swallow – Oostvaardersplassen.



**Barn swallow (juvenile) – Oostvaardersplassen.**

We walked through some willow woodland. We heard the song of Common chiffchaff, Willow warbler and Common chaffinch. We also saw a female Blackcap.



But maybe the most interesting bird in this small forest was a juvenile Nightingale, normally a very withdrawn bird species. We heard the call of Spotted flycatchers but the birds were hidden in the dense vegetation. We saw a Short toed tree creeper walking on a branch.

*“The nightingale is a secretive bird which likes nothing better than hiding in the middle of an impenetrable bush or thicket”.*

Source: RSPB.org.

From a next bird hide we saw a few Reed warblers and heard the loud song of the Winter wren.

High in the air there were some Common swifts, a bird species eating, sleeping and mating high in the air!

We came out of this woodland and entered a more open area. Here we got a good view of a Sedge warbler also making his display flights. A White wagtail and his chick were sitting on the wooden bridge. On a branch we saw our first Great spotted woodpecker but it disappeared quickly.

From the reed we heard many Reed warblers but also Marsh warblers with all his strange sounds.



**Nightingale (juvenile) – Oostvaardersplassen.**



**Western marsh harrier – Oostvaardersplassen.**

During our walk in the open field we saw different species of finches, like: European goldfinch, European greenfinch and Common linnet. They overwinter in the Netherlands because they are depending on seeds and not on insects!



**Greenfinch – Oostvaardersplassen.**

We also saw a Common cuckoo in the top of a tree. A family of Common whitethroat was present and we saw Starlings (oops sorry). Western marsh harrier is the most common raptor in this area with around 60 breeding pairs!



**Lesser whitethroat – Oostvaardersplassen.**

From the large birdhide we saw many birds, shorebirds like Pied avocet, Eurasian oystercatcher, Northern lapwing, Ruff and our national bird: Black tailed godwit.

Also we saw many duck species like: Gadwall, Mallard, Northern shoveler, Common shelduck, Rudy shelduck, Common pochard, Common teal & Eurasian wigeon.

Far away we saw hundreds of Red deer & Konik horses. A Perigrine falcon was hunting after some Starlings, so the group flew close to each other. We also saw Greylag goose, Canada goose, Egyptian goose & Barnacle goose.



**Western marsh harrier – Oostvaardersplassen.**



**Konik horse – Oostvaardersplassen.**

On our way to a next bird hide we saw a Konik horse with a foal. It was pretty warm for this 5 week old foal.

We saw another bird species called Reed bunting and on a fence we saw a male Stonechat. From the next hide we discovered a immature White tailed eagle miles away and circling in the air. It's nickname is "flying door" because of it's wingspan of about 2.30 metres! There is one breeding pair in the area.

Did I mention we saw at least two beautiful male Bluethroat. It's a very common bird in the reserve with it's blue throat and orange tale.



**Stonechat – Oostvaardersplassen.**



**Reed bunting – Oostvaardersplassen.**

On this warm summer morning we were able to “catch” the following **61 birdspecies**:

Canada goose, Barnacle goose, Greylag goose, Egyptian goose, Mute swan, Common shelduck, Rudy shelduck, Northern shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Eurasian wigeon, Common teal, Common pochard, Tufted duck, Common swift, Common cuckoo, Stock dove, Eurasian oystercatcher, Pied avocet, Northern lapwing, Black tailed godwit, Ruff, Black headed gull, Caspian gull, Lesser black backed gull, Great cormorant, Grey heron, Great egret, Western marsh harrier, Perigrine falcon, White tailed eagle, Great spotted woodpecker, Carrion crow, Blue tit, Great tit, Sand martin, Barn swallow, Cetti's warbler, Common chiffchaff, Willow warbler, Sedge warbler, Reed warbler, Marsh warbler, Blackcap, Garden warbler, Lesser whitethroat, Common whitethroat, Winter wren, Short toed treecreeper, Starling, Common blackbird, Spotted flycatcher, Bluethroat, Common nightingale, Common redstart, Stonechat, White wagtail, Common chaffinch, European goldfinch, European greenfinch, Common linnet & Reed bunting.





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**Pims Birding tours**



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