

Flevo Birdwatching

Tour date:	March 30 th , 2016
Name of area visited:	Oostvaardersplassen, 5600 ha wetland between Almere and Lelystad, Excursion lasting from 08.00 until 16.45.
Guide(s):	Robert de Groot

Remarkable: Bullfinch, a pair.

Weather: Sunny, apart from some clouds and a five minute shower. Temperatures rising from 5 until 10 °C. Wind, stiff, from the south, 3 Beaufort.

	Nederlandse naam	English name	Scientific name
	Fuut	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
	Dodaars	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
	Aalscholver	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
	Grote zilverreiger	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
	Blauwe reiger	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
	Lepelaar	(Eurasian) Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
	Knobbelzwaan	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
	Grauwe gans	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
	Brandgans	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
	Bergeend	(Common) Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
	Nijlgans	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
	Smient	(Eurasian) Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
	Wilde eend	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
	Krakeend	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>
	Pijlstaart	(Northern) Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
	Slobeend	(Northern) Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
	Wintertaling	(Common) Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
	Tafeleend	(Common) Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
	Kuifeend	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
	Nonnetje	Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>
	Grote zaagbek	(Common) Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
	Bruine kiekendief	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
	Buizerd	(Common) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
	Zeearend	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
(H)	Waterral	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
	Waterhoen	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
	Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
	Scholekster	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
	Kleine plevier	Little ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
	Kievit	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
	Bonte strandloper	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
	Tureluur	(Common) Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
	Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
	Stormmeeuw	(Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>

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Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Kleine mantelmeeuw	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Houtduif	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Holenduif	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Grote bonte specht	Great spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Boerenzwaluw	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Graspieper	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Witte kwikstaart	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Winterkoning	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Heggenus	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Roodborst	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Merel	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Zanglijster	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Tjiftjaf	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Baardman	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
Matkop	Willow Tit	<i>Parus montanus</i>
Pimpelmees	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
Koolmees	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Staartmees	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Boomkruiper	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
Spreeuw	(Common) Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Ekster	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Kauw	(Eurasian) Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Raaf	(Common) Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Zwarte kraai	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Huismus	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Vink	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Groenling	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Goudvink	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
Kneu	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
Rietgors	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
..
64	1	65
Soorten waargenomen / Species observed	(H) = Alleen gehoord / Heard only	Total

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 SW of Almere, (not on map) Close to a group of wind turbines, the dike straightens out and together with a breakwater form the Pampushaven; a sheltered port normally, but now the wind blew straight into it. The blue, floating houses are still not occupied, and a sheltered corner of the lake attracts birds: We look out over the southernmost part of Lake IJssel. Amsterdam, Muiderberg and Muiderberg on the horizon. Cormorants, Common Gulls, Black-headed Gulls. A good start with big numbers of Great Crested Grebe, Tufted Duck, a sextuplet of Great Egrets, and other assorted ducks, some Common Pochard and a female Goosander. The bird is named Common Merganser in the United States, and that causes confusion. Near a dung heap we find White Wagtails.

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Natte Graslanden (19): Reclaimed agricultural land. The area is kept open using cattle. But these are just for grazing. The open, treeless, area offers opportunities for waterfowl, waders and herons. The White-tailed Eagle uses this area for hunting, as well as do Goshawk, Marsh Harrier and, in winter, Peregrine. Water level drop slightly during summer, exposing mudflats and freshwater mussels. A number of observation screens is available, one is covered with a roof. The bushes around the area are good for warblers, Cuckoo, finches.

Let me first excuse myself for making a mistake. The easiest translation, from Tjiftjaf into Chiffchaff was not made. I translated it as Willow Warbler and that was a mistake, the birds were Chiffchaffs, black legs and onomatopoeic song. I must have been overcome with the arrival of the first birds representing spring. We saw Barnswallow, heard and saw Chiffchaff, the Little Grebes were singing. Lapwings tumbled in the air over the fields, lovestruck. Anyway, we did not see a single Willow Warbler. Close to where we had parked, there is a bird house, visited by Greenfinch, House Sparrow, some Chaffinches in attendance. A cat, "European Pygmy Tiger", was kept under surveillance by the birds. Walking towards the dike we checked the ditch at the foot of it. A Little Grebe, several Greylag Geese and Coots. So we walked back some 50 meters and then headed for the grassland area. We were stopped by some movement now and then, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff. But suddenly a brilliant light red spot stood out. Bullfinch. Both male and the slightly duller female. At the first screen we notice Great Egret, and in the distance huge flocks of Barnacle Geese. We quickly walk over to the hide. From here good views again. Common Teal, once thought conspecific with Green-winged Teal. Wigeon, Shoveler, Pintail, Shelduck in the water or on the mud. Redshanks patrol the shoreline, the fields are inspected by a big flock of Dunlin and some Lesser Ringed Plover. There are many more Egrets, all Great, Mute Swan, to add white accents. A Barnswallow is picked up from afar, but comes closer and closer to finally fly over the hide. Summer is getting near. We head back for some coffee and tea at the car. A Common Pochard, couple, swim in the canal close to the car.

Kwelwater (15): One of the better spots for Bearded Reedling and, during spring, Bluethroat. The fresh water lake, at one of the lowest points in the polder, dries up partly in summer. Avocets, Black-tailed Godwits, ducks make good use of it at those times. Two Bearded Reedling fly over the reedbed when we climb over the stairs. They are visible, unmistakable, but it is a lousy view if you are unfamiliar with that species. We wait quite some time for them to reappear, and manage only Reed Buntings, but these are seen very well. Male birds with jet-black heads, white collar and dark, striped backs. Some Shelduck on the water.

Trekvogellandje (18): Opposite the oldest building in this polder. The plot is next to the Lepelaarplassen and has been landscaped from agriculture to nature. In spring the area is largely flooded, giving feeding possibilities to waders and ducks. During summer it dries out, but autumn sees it going green again. Geese love it that way. It is quite wet actually. Birds are not so numerous. Several Greylag Geese, Great Egret. We hear Chiffchaff, Greenfinch and Song Thrush. The sun is shining but the wind is quite strong, so we do have a good look, but not a long one.

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. We drove past here, eyes flicking left and right. More grebes, Smew, coots, Tufted Duck and Gadwall. A foursome of Spoonbills flies towards us when we are driving on. Close enough to see them well.

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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. .A late lunch, soup and rolls. Meanwhile looking at Common-, Black-headed- and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. We see two Stock Dove, flying along the dike, more Smew, Cormorants, .

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. . Not so much variety on the water this time. Tufted Ducks mainly, Coot, Greylag and a few Egyptian Geese. Two Little Grebes. False alarm for another bird, but it proves to be a female Smew and not a Black-necked Grebe. Several Red Deer still close to the dike, in between the trunks of felled Willows. The views to the south are improving, by chainsaw. On the contrary, the shallow water holds few birds, and we look into the sun here. We quickly go to the next waypoint.

Zeearend (10): The big hut, named after the White-tailed Eagle. From here, one could see its' nest. The glass windows block the wind, but in summer it can be quite hot inside. The favourite of many, it is hardly ever a quiet place during the weekend. Shallow ponds nearby hold waders, like Godwit, Avocet, Little Ringed- and Golden Plover, Lapwing. A Red Fox has built a den underneath the concrete foundation. In summer 2015 the hut has been made accessible by improving the path, which is now lined with concrete, but the entrance to the den has been blocked, at least from the north. We ticked off quite a number of birds in the ravaged forest shortly after the entrance. The Robin (not the American thrush, but the bird that the English put on their Christmas cards), Song Thrush, Long-tailed-, Blue-, Great- and Willow Tit. A Wren singing from the top of a stick (and of his voice). The sun had broken through the clouds, so the fine colouring of this bird could be seen well. Continuing we were blocked from going to the hide, described above. Instead the path to Schollebaar was open. This is a straight stretch, followed by a wet, muddy bit that leads you to the two-story wooden hut. Only the tough persevere. From out of the hut we saw the Cormorant colony. Nests were occupied, but some seemed empty. Maybe that was the result of the storm the day before. On the way back Raven were flying their stunts and aerial acrobatics. We saw more than four of them. Egyptian Geese already had young. Walking across the path that we could not take. A huge bird with a strange silhouette flew past at great distance. Strange long tail, but white "rump", huge and quite a long neck, not like stork, but neither like an owl. Getting it in the telescope was difficult, but the verdict was "White-tailed Eagle with prey". We heard a Water Rail close to the forest.

Krakeendhut (5) Combined with the following Poelruiterhut (6): These now are located in the same development area. 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. Time slowly runs out when you are having fun. But we managed to make a few short stops here: On the ground we saw Linnet and Greenfinches. More Raven and some unidentified swallow/martin at too great a distance. A Common Buzzard at the side of the road. The Konik horses were at the far end of the Oostvaardersveld, contemplating the damage they did to the vegetation.

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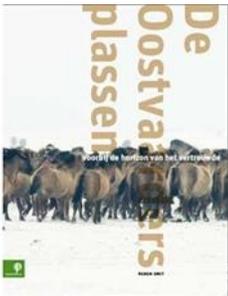
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Grote Praambult (8): Generally you are looking towards the west, over large expanses of grassland. Check the herds of Heck Cattle. This breed is the result of attempts by the brothers Heck, directors of the Berlin Zoo, to recreate the Aurochs, the 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. Thousands of Barnacle Geese, but the main portion of biomass is formed by hundreds of Konik Horses, Red Deer and tens of Heck Cattle. We do not add other species to the bird list here, and need to reach Amsterdam in time. So at about 16.45 we head back.

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



Title: De Oostvaardersplassen, van het vertrouwde. Photography: Text: Rinske Hillen and Jan Daan met Frans Vera. ISBN 978-90-



voorbij de grenzen Ruben Smit. Hillen, in samenwerking 816300-1-6.

Title: Oostvaardersplassen, nieuwe natuur op oude zeebodem. Samenstelling: 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

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Observation points in Flevoland, near the Oostvaardersplassen area.



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