

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: **31st of October and 1st of November 2018**

Excursion: Province of Flevoland – The Netherlands

Guide: Taco & Pim

Driver: Mink

Day 1: 31st of October 2018

- National Park “New Land”
- Lepelaarplassen
- Oostvaardersplassen
- Oostvaardersdijk
- Farmland part of the township of Zeewolde

On the last day of October (2018) we met our group “Welshman” around 9.00 o'clock next to their hotel in the city of Almere. We drove through the city towards the dyke. All this land is reclaimed in 1968. Before this it was a large inland lake and before the 1930's this was an inland sea.

The fresh water attracts lots of overwintering ducks. We stopped at a good spot for overwintering birds. We saw hundreds of Tufted ducks and Common pochards. Closeby we found a rare inland visitor, a Velvet scoter! It was a beautiful adult male.

*“The velvet scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), also called a velvet duck, is a large sea duck, which breeds over the far north of Europe and Asia west of the Yenisey basin. The genus name is derived from Ancient Greek melas “black” and netta “duck”. The species name is from the Latin fuscus “dusky brown”.*
(Source: Wikipedia)



Velvet Scoter – Almere.

Also present were the first overwintering Goldeneye's from the north and we saw at least one female Greater scaup. A Little grebe and a group Great crested grebe gave “act de presence”.

Meadow pipets, Greylag geese and White fronted geese were flying over.

Our next stop was at a small lake next to the dyke. Here were three species of swan present: Mute swan, Bewick's swan and Whooper swan. The last two are only overwintering in the area.

On top of a pole in the "Ijsselmeer" (the large lake on the other side of the dyke) sat a very late Common tern, lots of its friends already left Western Europe. An Eurasian curlew flew over. In a tree top we saw a Northern goshawk. From the reedfields we heard Bearded reedlings.



We also heard our first Cettis warbler. This species was really rare in the area 10 years ago but due to a warmer climate they start breeding more northerly.

We followed the dyke to the north, big groups of Starlings were flying over. Also we heard migrating Skylarks. On the dyke we saw at least 8 hovering Common kestrels, there is a lot of food around.

We stopped at a parking place and we were lucky; a adult White tailed eagle was sitting in top of a dead tree. This magnificent bird starts breeding in this area 11 years ago, the first for the Netherlands. It's nickname is flying door because from wingtip to another it's a least 2.30 meter!

And we were lucky again; a rare Rough legged buzzard was flying over really closeby. This raptor comes from the north and overwinters in the area.

"The rough-legged buzzard (Buteo lagopus), also called the rough-legged hawk, is a medium-large bird of prey. It is found in Arctic and Subarctic regions of North America and Eurasia during the breeding season and migrates south for the winter".

(Source: Wikipedia)





Common tern – Almere.





White tailed eagle – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

We continued following the dyke and stopped at another parking place. Here we drank a cup of coffee or tea. We saw a Mew gull and Great cormorant flew over.

We made a short walk to a bird hide (or blind). We saw a Reed bunting, Blue tits and Great tits.

From the swamps we heard the distinctive call of the Waterrail. A Great spotted woodpecker flew over. Some people of the group heard Bearded reedlings (or Bearded tits)



Common Kestrel – Lelystad.



Our next stop was at the visitor centre where we had an extensive lunch with soup and bread with naturally Dutch cheese.

Redwings flew over and House sparrows were looking for food around our table.



Redwing – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.



After lunch we drove to the “hotspot” for birds at the moment, due to the low water level many shorebird were attracted to the area. From the birdhide we saw a Spotted redshank, Black tailed godwit, Ruff, Dunlin and many Pied avocets.



Pied avocet, Common teal & Northern lapwing – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

At this hotspot we saw also hundreds of Common teal and Northern shoveler, also some Common shelducks.

Next to the path to the bird hide we saw: Song trush, Goldcrest, Common blackbird and we heard the call of a Short toed tree creeper!

From here we drove to a field called “Oostvaarderveld”. We saw a big group of wild horses called konikhorses.





We also saw a gorgeous male Stonechat and a male Greenfinch.

A bit further we saw a big flock of fieldfares, just arrived from Scandinavia.

From a blind we saw about five Water pipets, an overwintering species in the Netherlands.



Water pipet – Oostvaardersveld – Lelystad.

On the water some Northern pintails, Northern shovelers and Common teal.

It was time to go to our last stop, some farmfields on our way back to Almere.



Here we saw many raptors, also the overwintering Hen harrier!
Also Rough legged buzzard, Common buzzard and Common kestrel.
Our first day birdwatching was full with birds and lovely weather!!



On day 1 we saw / heard the following **83 birdspecies**:

Barnacle goose, Greylag goose, White fronted goose, Egyptian goose, Mute swan, Whooper swan, Tundra swan, Common shelduck, Northern shoveler, Gadwall, Eurasian wigeon, Mallard, Northern pintail, Common teal, Common pochard, Tufted duck, Greater scaup, Velvet scoter, Goldeneye, Common merganser, Little grebe, Great crested grebe, Grey heron, Great egret, Great cormorant, Sparrow hawk, Northern goshawk, Western marsh harrier, Hen harrier, White tailed eagle, Rough legged buzzard, Common buzzard, Waterrail, Common coot, Pied avocet, Northern lapwing, Eurasian curlew, Black tailed godwit, Ruff, DunIn, Spotted redshank, Black headed gull, Lesser black backed gull, Great black backed gull, Herring gull, Mew gull, Caspian gull, Common tern, Stock dove, Wood pigeon, Collared dove, Rock pigeon (domestica), Great spotted woodpecker, Common kestrel, Great grey shrike, Eurasian jay, Eurasian magpie, Western jackdaw, Carrion crow, Blue tit, Great tit, Bearded tit, Sky lark, Cettis warbler, Long tailed tit, Common chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Winter wren, Short toed tree creeper, Common startling, Common blackbird, Fieldfare, Redwing, Song trush, Robin, Stonechat, House sparrow, White wagtail, Meadow pipet, Water pipet, Chaffinch, Common greenfinch and Reed bunting!!!



Day 2: 1st of November 2018

- Oostvaardersplassen area – Almere side
- Harderbroek
- Veluwemeer
- Drontermeer
- Vossemeer

Again we met the group from Wales at their hotel in Almere. The weather was still good for the start of november, more grey than yesterday and a bit of wind.



We first drove to the visitor centre of the Oostvaardersplassen southside.

From this viewing point we saw a large group of Eurasian wigeon and Gadwall. Also some noisy Egyptian goose. On the field there was a large group of wild horses and Red deer.

Closeby their sat a Northern raven, for the Netherlands not common.



Northern raven – Oostvaardersplassen – Lelystad.

We made a walk to the spotters hill. From here we saw two adult Perigrine falcon, the fastest bird in the world.

“The peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus), also known as the peregrine, and historically as the duck hawk in North America, is a widespread bird of prey (raptor) in the family Falconidae. A large, crow-sized falcon, it has a blue-grey back, barred white underparts, and a black head. As is typical of bird-eating raptors, peregrine falcons are sexually dimorphic, with females being considerably larger than males. The peregrine is renowned for its speed, reaching over 320 km/h (200 mph) during its characteristic hunting stoop (high-speed dive)”.

Source: Wikipedia.





A juvenile White tailed eagle was flying over, but it was too far away. Also some sparrow hawks were passing by.



From the visitor centre we drove to another viewingpoint, here we saw an adult White tailed eagle. We also saw a large flock of European goldfinches.

We said goodbye to the nature reserve Oostvaardersplassen and drove to another nature reserve for having our lunch. Here were lots of Great egrets and a Great bittern flew over, too short for most people of the group.



We had a lunch with lots of bread, cheeses, soup and hot chocolate. A male Mandarin duck was sitting next to the water. On the lake thousands of Common coot.



From our next stop we saw about 25 Red crested pochard, Tufted duck and Common pochard. Our second Hen harrier of the day flew over. Also a group of Common snipes flew over.





We followed the small lake between the old and the new land all the way up north. We saw a group of a few hundred Golden plover. Also Ruff, Northern pintail and Western marsh harrier.



We drove through the woods, this part of the province is older than the Almere part. So the trees are older. We stopped for a drink and a snack. Goldcrest, Siskin and Great spotted woodpecker were present.





After 3 pm it starts raining, first slowly.

It was time for our last stop. It was a surprise.

We drove to a shopping centre in the province of Flevoland.

“Are we going to shop” people asked.

“No we are going to see some nice birds”.

And suddenly we saw nine Long eared owls in some trees next to the shops and many people.



Long eared owl – Flevoland.

*“The long-eared owl is a medium-sized owl, 31–40 cm (12–16 in) in length with an 86–100 cm (34–39 in) wingspan and a body mass of 178–435 g (6.3–15.3 oz). It has erect blackish ear-tufts, which are positioned in the centre of the head. The ear-tufts are used to make the owl appear larger to other owls while perched. The female is larger in size and darker in colouration than the male. The long-eared owl's brownish feathers are vertically streaked. Tarsus and toes are entirely feathered. Eye disks are also characteristic in this species. However, the eye disks of *A. otus* are darker in colour or*

rusty-orange. This nocturnal species is perhaps most easily seen perched in a tree in its daytime roost, sometimes in small groups during the winter months”.

Source: Wikipedia.





From here we drove back to Almere.

We say goodbye to our very friendly group from Wales.

It was a pleasure to guide you for two days.

On day 2 we saw / heard the following **67 birdspecies**: (underlined means not seen yesterday)

Mute swan, Barnacle goose, Greylag goose, Egyptian Goose, Common shelduck, Mandarine duck, Northern shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Common teal, Northern pintail, Common pochard, Red crested pochard, Tufted duck, Great crested grebe, Great bittern, Grey heron, Great egret, Great cormorant, Sparrow hawk, Northern goshawk, Western marsh harrier, Hen harrier, Common buzzard, White tailed eagle, Common moorhen, Common kestrel, Perigrine falcon, Common coot, Northern lapwing,

Golden plover, Ruff, Dunlin, Common snipe, Black headed gull, Lesser black backed gull, Great black backed gull, Herring gull, Mew gull, Stock dove, Wood pigeon, Long eared owl, Great spotted woodpecker, Eurasian jay, Eurasian magpie, Northern jackdaw, Carrion crow, Northern raven, Blue tit, Great tit, Sky lark, Long tailed tit, Goldcrest, Winter wren, Short toed tree creeper, Common starling, Common blackbird, Robin, Tree sparrow, White wagtail, Meadow pipit, Water pipit, Common chaffinch, Brambling, European greenfinch, European goldfinch and Reed bunting.

So on both days we “caught” 95 (!) birdspecies!!

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