

# Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: 11th of August 2018

Excursion: Texel "the bird island" Full day tour.

Guide: Pim

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My second day with a very friendly couple from Memphis, Tennessee. This time we left Almere around 6.30 am. It took about 1,5 hours to the Navy city of Den Helder. During our ride we saw groups of Northern lapwings, Greylag geese and Black headed gulls on the fields. New for the Europelist was a group of Canada geese.

Just before Den Helder we stopped at a bird hide. A couple of days ago some birders discovered a Terek sandpiper at this small nature reserve. We had about 10 minutes to find it, that was just impossible. There were a few hundred Common redshanks and most of them were sleeping. But we saw some Blue headed wagtails and also some Eurasian spoonbills closeby.



**Eurasian spoonbill – Den Helder.**

From here it was another 10 minutes to the ferry to the bird island of Texel. The ferry ride was smooth and painless and after about 20 minutes we arrived at Texel.

Our first stop was at a bird hide near the village of Oudeschild. From this hide we saw some Common sandpipers, Green sandpipers and in a group of cows around 30 Blue headed wagtails. Also a adult and juvenile Little ringed plover was present in front of the hide.



Our next stop was at “Ottersaat”, in spring an important breeding ground for Pied avocet and Common terns, this birds already left their nesting grounds. We saw some Rudy turnstones, Ruffs, Common sheelducks and our first Common ringed plovers. We also discovered a Common snipe.



**Common ringed plover – Texel.**



**Ruff – Texel.**

We were riding along the dyke on the side of the “Waddenzee” (zee=sea). They are improving this dyke so some parts were closed. We walked to the seaside and found a group of Common eider and also a few Black necked grebes in winter plumage.





We drove through small villages like “Oost” (which means “East”). Our next stop was at an excellent birding spot called “Utopia”. Here we found maybe the only Dark bellied brent goose of the island. In the winter months it’s common on Texel.

There was a large group, a few hundred Eurasian oystercatchers. Also our first Bar tailed godwit, this bird lives mostly close to the sea. We found a beautiful Grey plover, still in summer plumage.



**Mallard & Bar tailed godwit – Texel.**



**Eurasian oystercatcher – Texel.**

We also found our first Curlew, but it was sleeping most of the time. Some dunlins were walking on the mud.

From here we drove to Northernmost village of Texel called “The Cocksdoorp”. We had our lunch at an idyllic spot. On a field we saw our first Northern wheatear. Also a male Common linnet was present.

We stopped next to the lighthouse and saw the next island on the other side of the water, it’s called Vlieland. On a sandbank we saw around 180 Common seal and Grey seal.



**Herring gull – Texel.**







**(Common) seal – Between Texel & Vlieland.**

Close to the lighthouse we made a hike over the wide beach overlooking the Northsea. We saw lots of blue jellyfish, called Barrel jellyfish (*Rhizostoma pulmo*).



**Barrel Jellyfish – Texel.**

On the shore we saw groups of the funny Sanderlings, also common in the USA. We found our first Great black backed gull.

In the morning on our ride to Den Helder there were lots of rainbows, also some short showers. But on the island we had the best weather you can imagine. Beautiful clouds and mainly in the afternoon lots of sunshine. It was a bit windy, but that's usual at this island.





Don't mention my hair 😊 - at the northside of Texel.



From the beach we drove to a tiny nature reserve just outside Cocksdoorp. Gaynell discovered another Common kestrel.



**Common kestrel – Texel.**

Our next stop was at a viewing point overlooking “The Slufter”, this is an area where sometimes the sea comes inland after a storm, there is an opening in the dunes. We saw many Golden plovers, Curlew and a hunting Western marsh harrier.



**De Slufter – Texel.**

Our last stop was close to the ferry terminal, it's called "Mokbaai". Amazing how many birds were on this feeding grounds. Like Curlews, Golden plovers, Grey plovers, Dunlins, Red knot and many more.

Near the breeding colony of Eurasian spoonbill we saw about 70 Eurasian spoonbills.

It was now time for a cup of coffee and tea overlooking this unique area.



Today we managed to see the following **66 bird species**:

Dark bellied brent goose (new), Canada goose (new), Greylag goose, Barnacle goose, Egyptian goose, Mute swan, Common shellduck, Mallard, Common teal, Common pochard (new), Tufted duck, Common eider (new), Common pheasant (new), Great crested grebe, Black necked grebe (new), Eurasian spoonbill, Grey heron, Great cormorant, Common buzzard, Western marsh harrier, Common kestrel, Common coot, Eurasian oystercatcher, Northern lapwing, Golden plover, Grey plover (new), Little ringed plover, Common ringed plover (new), Curlew (new), Bar tailed godwit (new), Black tailed godwit, Rudy turnstone (new), Red knot (new), Ruff, Sanderling (new), Dunlin (new), Common snipe (new), Common sandpiper, Green sandpiper, Common redshank, Spotted redshank (new), Black headed gull, Great black backed gull (new). Lesser black backed gull, Herring gull, Sandwich tern (new), Common tern, Rock pigeon domestica (new), Wood pigeon, Eurasian collared dove, Stock dove, Eurasian magpie, Northern jackdaw, Carrion crow, Sky lark (new), Meadow pipet (new), House martin, Barn swallow, Common starling, Common blackbird (new), Northern wheatear (new), House sparrow, Blue headed wagtail (new), White wagtail, Common linet and European goldfinch.

So in two days we saw **99 different birdspecies!**

Gaynell & Ted it was a pleasure to guide you on the bird island of Texel, I hope you enjoyed it!

Have a great and safe journey!

Best regards,

Pim