

# Flevo Birdwatching

Tour date:	December 2nd, 2015
Name of area visited:	Zeeland, a mix of salt and fresh water, mud, open water and smaller lakes and ditches. An excursion from 08.30 AM until 16.00 PM.
Guide(s):	Robert de Groot

**Remarkable:** Lesser White-fronted Goose.

**Weather:** A bit of wind, SW 2 to 3 Beaufort. Overcast, but some sun for a short while. Temperature up to 10°C.

Nederlandse naam	English name	Scientific name
Fuut	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Dodaars	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Geoorde fuut	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
Aalscholver	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Grote zilverreiger	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Blauwe reiger	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Knobbelzwaan	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Kolgans	White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>
Dwerggans	Lesser White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser erythropus</i>
Grauwe gans	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Grote Canadese gans	Greater Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Brandgans	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
Rotgans	Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</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>
Krooneend	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>
Tafeleend	(Common) Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Kuifeend	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Zwarte zee-eend	(Common) Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>
Brilduiker	(Common) Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Middelste zaagbek	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Sperwer	(Eurasian) Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Buizerd	(Common) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Torenvalk	(Common) Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Fazant	(Common) Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Waterhoen	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>

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Scholekster	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Zilverplevier	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Kievit	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Steenloper	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Paarse strandloper	Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>
Wulp	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Tureluur	(Common) Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Grote mantelmeeuw	Greater Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Holenduif	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Turkse tortel	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Ijsvogel	(Common) Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Merel	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Koperwiek	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Zanglijster	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Pimpelmees	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
Spreeuw	(Common) Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Ekster	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Kauw	(Eurasian) Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Zwarte kraai	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Huisemus	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Vink	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
..	..	..
56	0	56
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.

We met in Willemstad, which is an hour and a half to reach here from Leiden, where the client lodged.

**Oude Land van Strijen (11)** An area of neglected meadows and a bit of open water; the area is partly reclaimed farmland. Like on many places in Zeeland and on the islands of Zuid-Holland, there is a constant struggle to keep dry feet and to keep the groundwater fresh. Seepage from deep layers is often salt to brackish, making agriculture difficult. Farmers are then willing and realistic enough to sell their farms. Especially in winter the area is a good place to look for geese. We see Greater White-fronted Goose, Barnacle and Greylag. It takes a long time before we find Lesser White-fronted Goose, and then three at most. A faint eye ring, smaller size and steeply angled forehead, with a narrow pointed white front. A fair number of Common Buzzard, with a very light coloured specimen as well. Over-enthusiastic birders sometimes identify these as Snowy Owls, we don't. A Sparrowhawk flies over, high, shortly after followed by an aeroplane, flying low and at speed. All Geese and Ducks take off. Within two minutes everything is back to normal.

**Hellegatsplein (1)** This is a road junction built up in the middle of the former estuaries of the Rhine and Meuse rivers. It connects the mainland of Brabant with the islands of Overflakkee and Putten. One can use a

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service road, to be able to stop. We see Heck cattle, introduced to keep the vegetation from running out of control. A Great Egret on the south side of the dam. Almost on the island of Overflakkee we stop to look north. Pintail, tens of them, together with Shoveler, Mallard Wigeon and Mute Swan.

**Stellendam (10)** We visit the outer harbour. In the harbour itself are tens of Great Crested Grebe. On the sand flats at the other side of the breakwater there is more to see. It is low tide. Merganser are fishing in the shallow creek. Common Redshank keep their feet dry, they forage on the sand. Goldeneye, Cormorant, more Great Crested Grebes. Some Shelducks, and in the far distance Seals on a sandbar, too far to distinguish which species. Close by two Brent walk on the sands, not a good place to find their food.

**Ouddorp (9)** We drive past Koudenhoek, a large reserve, set aside mainly for geese. Barnacle, Brent, Greylag, Greater White-fronted and some Egyptian representatives are making use of it. After a coffee break we slowly drive in the direction of the lighthouse. On the western side of the island lies a row of dunes covered with Seabuckthorn and Alderberry trees and golflinks. At the end of the road lies a wet meadow. Above it rises the lighthouse of Ouddorp. A Sparrowhawk flies in preparation of an aerial ambush. The wet area is used by many geese, Barnacle feature most among them. Wigeon and Mallard in good numbers. Wigeon are very skittish here also, as they are almost everywhere.

**Brouwersdam (8)** One of the few places in the Netherlands where there is a road on the seaward side of a dike. It normally gives good views out over the sea. This time as well, starting at the small sheltered harbour at the north end. So we see Oystercatcher, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone on the tarmac slope of the dam. A few Purple Sandpipers are foraging over there as well, but it is very difficult to spot them, as they are well camouflaged on such an artificial surface. Time for a slightly late lunch, 13.15PM. The sea is sparsely dotted with Goldeneye and Merganser. In between swims a Cormorant. Add a few Grebes and a single Scoter and the picture is complete. We stop near the sluice at the southern end of the dam. At that time the water level at sea is still lower than at the Grevelingen, so water comes out to sea through the sluice. Some Belgian birders look at the Seal that is fishing that current. What a shame that a kind of Berlin Wall is being constructed around the sluice. It blocks view and will not fully protect people from entering (and falling in). Offshore are more Seals. From there we follow the southern side of the Grevelingen past the villages of Den Osse and Brouwershaven (We see Redwing and Song Thrush here) towards:

**Dijkwater (4)** This is a deep water lake/pond that owes its existence to a breach in the dike. The water running in and out of the opening scoured out a deep hole. After repairing the dike no one bothered to fill the hole. It is now fringed by reeds. The moment we arrive a huge JCB starts cutting the vegetation in a ditch next to the road, the ducks and grebes cannot stomach the noise and they swim and fly off towards the back. Within two minutes all birds are more than one hundred meters away. Little Grebe, some 20 Black-necked Grebe and maybe 40 Great Crested Grebe all make use of it. Gadwall, Wigeon and Tufted Duck do the same. We continue until we reach:

**Grevelingendam (3)** Just while crossing the bridge and locks near Bruinisse, a Kingfisher flies past. Bill with wings. Uncharacteristically high, but still very quick. Along the service road we see many Brent, some 40, they graze on the soft shoulder. Blue plastic floats indicate mussel farming here, hanging cultures. By now time starts to become pressing, so we join the traffic on the main road, and reach Willemstad at about 16.00hrs. The client still has 10 hours of driving ahead.

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- 1 Hellegatsplein
- 2 Observation hide Krammer-sluisen
- 3 Grevelingendam (tidal)
- 4 Dijkwater
- 5 Plan Tureluur (Flauwers en Weevers Inlaag)
- 6 Plan Tureluur (Prunje)
- 7 Pijlerdam
- 8 Brouwersdam (tidal)
- 9 Ouddorp (Koudenhoek)
- 10 Stellendam (Buitenhaven)
- 11 Oude Land van Strijen

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