

Tour date:	September 13th, 2016
Name of area visited:	Oostvaardersplassen, 5600 ha wetland between Almere and Lelystad Harderbroek, 300 ha wetland near Harderwijk Eemnes, area that consists of former mudflats at the southern end of the, the Zuiderzee. Currently it is meadowland, and next to one of the fringing lakes.
Guide(s):	Robert de Groot

Remarkable: Bearded Reedling

Weather: The hottest 13th of September ever since weather data started to be recorded. 31°C, little wind from SW

Nederlandse naam	English name	Scientific name
Fuut	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Aalscholver	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Kleine zilverreiger	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</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>
Casarca	Ruddy shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</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>
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>
Bruine kiekendief	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Buizerd	(Common) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Torenvalk	(Common) Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Waterhoen	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Kluut	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Kleine plevier	Little ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Kievit	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Oeverloper	(Common) Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Watersnip	(Common) Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>

	Stormmeeuw	(Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
	Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
	Grote mantelmeeuw	Greater Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</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>
	IJsvogel	(Common) Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
	Boerenzwaluw	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
	Witte kwikstaart	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
	Gele kwikstaart	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
	Winterkoning	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
	Paapje	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
	Roodborsttapuit	(Common) Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
	Tapuit	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
	Merel	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
(H)	Cetti's zanger	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
	Zwartkop	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
(H)	Fitis	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
	Tjiftjaf	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
	Baardman	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
	Pimpelmees	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
	Koolmees	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</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>
	Huisemus	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
	Vink	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
	Groenling	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
	Putter	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
	Kneu	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
	Rietgors	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>

	62	2	64
	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): First check over the southern part of Lake IJssel, called Markermeer. Cormorants, Great Crested Grebes, Tufted Ducks and Black-headed Gulls. Distant views over Amsterdam, Pampus island (an old fortress, meant to defend Amsterdam from naval attacks) and the old coastline between Muiden and Muiderberg. We then continued, following the western dike. Near a sheltered harbour we saw several smaller songbirds: Northern Wheatear, Reed Bunting and Yellow Wagtail. The latter have quite washed out

colours at this time of the year. Buzzards close to the road, some in the grass, others waiting, observing on fence posts.

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. Loads and loads of Common Snipe, some foraging, some standing quietly at the fringe of the reeds. No other waders can be seen here and now. Teal, again Common, are feeding on the mudflats. And we hear the soft "ting ting" sound of Bearded Reedling. We do see some, but each time the views are short. It is difficult to take good shots; photographic, rest assured.

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 wreck site. 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. Again the "ting ting" sound of Bearded Reedling. But now we get to see them properly. The width of the reedbed is not so big, so the birds are close by. They are numerous as well, a group of some thirty birds fly intermittently and many birds show pretty well. A Marsh Harrier sits in top of a dead tree, Spoonbills and Egrets fly in the distance. The breeding colony of Cormorants in the drowned bushes is not functional, the young have fledged.

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 good variety of gulls: Greater Black-backed being the biggest in size, not in number. The most numerous ones are Black-headed and Common Gull. Herring Gull comes third. We do not see terns, these have left during the weekend. They were still here on Friday. Along the dike we see some Kestrel, White Wagtail, and in the water the normal mix of Grebe, Coot, Tufted Duck and Cormorant. Especially near the fishing nets the density of birds increases, as if they are waiting for the fisherman to throw them some coarse fish (not economically interesting enough). Both Egrets, Great- and Little-, in one view. No problem in identifying.

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. Here we hear a Cetti's Warbler, and see Chiffchaff. Even a Willow Warbler calls. The unseasonal weather has fooled them also. A huge group of Lapwing is in the shallow water of the Keersluisplas.

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. Coffee and water at the visitor's centre. After that we walk in the direction of the hut, spotting a huge Terrapin, a released animal, which has survived and grown here for several years and some harsh winters. Some Blue Tits in the Willow forest, but generally quiet. From out of the hide we can see the Konik horses, Red Deer and many geese, Barnacle- and Greylag. But, with the windows closed, the heat and reduced visibility force us back quite soon.

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. A nice addition to the list is Wigeon, even though it is in eclipse. The shores of the new lake is used by other ducks as well, including Gadwall and Mallard. Barnacle Geese, Lapwing, Coot and Starling use it to rest or feed. Several Mute Swans float in deeper water.

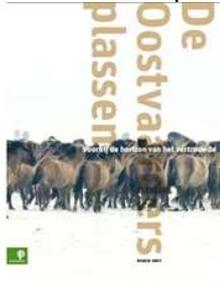
Grote Praambult (8): Generally you are looking towards the west, over large expanses of grassland. Check the herds of Heck Cattle. This breed is the result of attempts by the brothers Heck, directors of the Berlin Zoo, to recreate the Aurochs, the primeval species of cattle in these countries. They look 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. All grazers can be seen in their respective herds, the Konik in a herd of several hundred. Heck cattle in a much smaller group of about 10 to 15, and the Red Deer are more evenly spread over the area, but we do see hundreds of them as well. Raven fly over the area, Egyptian Geese, Great Egret. More Buzzard, another Marsh Harrier and Goldfinches. Several trains pass by, deafening us momentarily. Most animals however do not react, only those sitting on the wire fly off.

Harderbroek (separate map). Another birder told that he had seen Osprey and White-tailed Eagle here, earlier in the morning. Definitely worth a try. So we drove east to the dike opposite Harderwijk. A couple of Lesser Ringed Plover, Great Egret, a Spoonbill and some far-off ducks. None of the raptors, even

though we saw some big flights of gulls and Lapwings at the horizon. A small lake next to the road held several Red-crested Pochard. These were, like most ducks, in eclipse, but the red bill is a good field character. Driving towards the next point we again saw quite some Buzzards, in different shades of brown.

[Eemnes \(separate map\)](#). Another stop, on the old mainland, because we wanted to check for Ruddy Shelduck. Not only amazed by the immense number of Mute Swans, several hundred, but also big numbers of ducks, Tufted, Common Pochard, Gadwall, Mallard and Shoveler. The Ruddy Shelducks did not disappoint us, initially we found them very far off, but the colours are so distinctive, one cannot be wrong. Later on, scanning other areas of the lake we found a number closer by, and eventually some flew past. A Kingfisher posing for a short while, was an added bonus. I however flew off before photographic shots could be taken. From there we drove back, reaching Amsterdam shortly before 17.00 hours.

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



Title: De Oostvaardersplassen, voorbij de grenzen van het vertrouwde. Fotography: Ruben Smit.
Text: Rinske Hillen and Jan Daan Hillen, in samenwerking met Frans Vera. ISBN 978-90-816300-1-6.

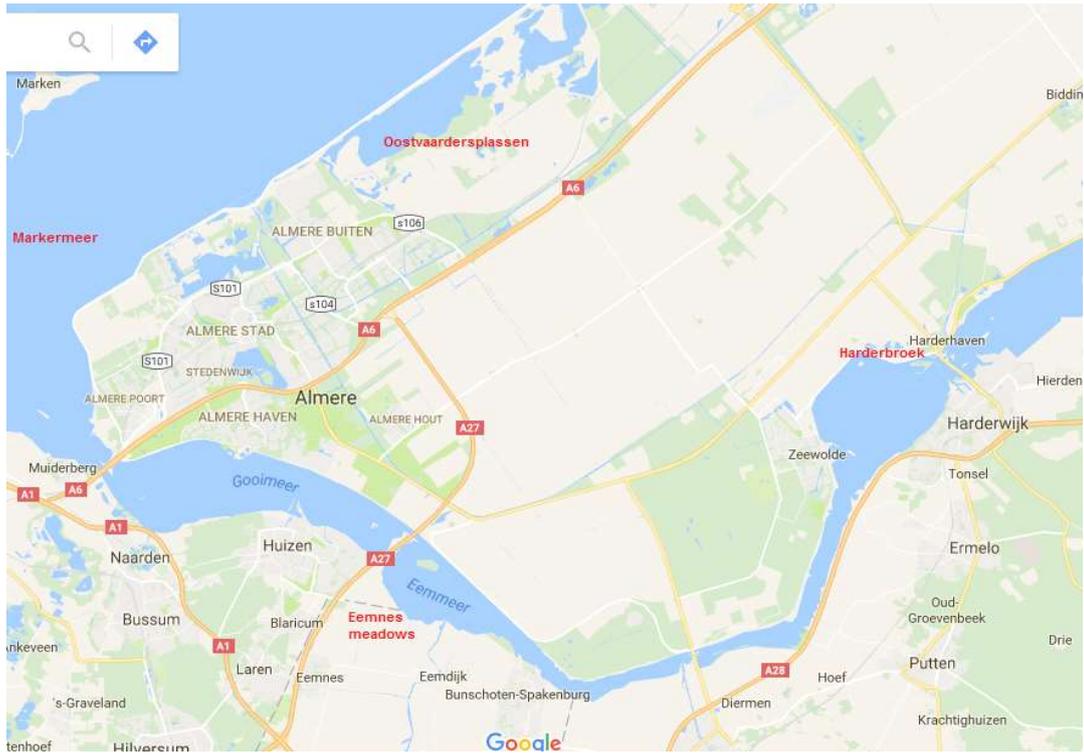


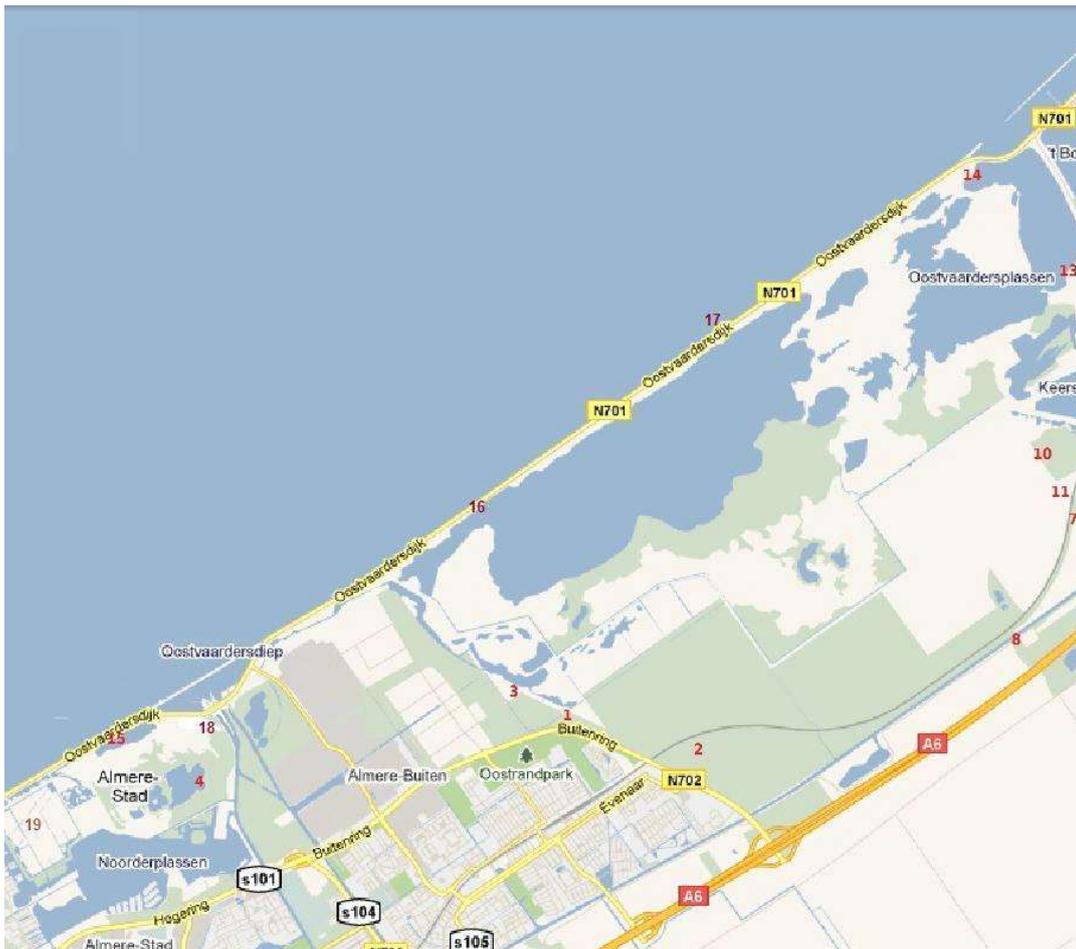
Title: Oostvaardersplassen, nieuwe natuur op oude zeebodem. Samenstelling: Bremer, P., Berg, L van den, Euverman, G., Wigbels, V., Tempel, J. Publisher : Staatsbosbeheer
ISBN: 90-805009-2-5



The movie poster of "De Nieuwe Wildernis", a film by Ruben Smit. Very nice images, but a tear jerking story. Premièred in september 2013

The birding areas we visited





Observation points in Flevoland, near the Oostvaardersplassen area.