

Flevo Birdwatching

birding tours in the Netherlands



Date: Sunday 17th of July 2022

Excursion: Oostvaardersplassen morning tour

Guide: Pim

On this sunny Sunday morning I was lucky to guide a friendly French couple in the Oostvaardersplassen area. We met at the train station of Almere and drove in about 25 minutes to the northside of the nature reserve.

Our first stop was at a viewing point. We saw hundreds of Red deer, Konik horses & Heck cattle. About 2.5 kilometres away we saw our first White tailed eagle of the day. This iconic bird species of the Oostvaardersplassen started nesting here 17 years ago, unique for the Netherlands. Nowadays we have 20 pairs in the Netherlands. Its nickname is “flying door”, because its wingspan is 2.30 metres!



Heck cattle & Red deer – Oostvaardersplassen.

Our next stop was also at a bird hide. Here we saw the national bird of the Netherlands: the Black tailed godwit. Also some Northern lapwings close by and a Ruff. In the water some duck species in eclipse plumage: Gadwall, Mallard & Common teal.

During our ride we also saw a few Common buzzards, the most common bird of prey in Holland.

From the visitors centre (northside) we start a hike in the area. Our first stop was in a bird hide occupied by nesting Barn swallows. On the lake we saw a group of Greylag geese & Eurasian wigeons. And from a distance we saw our second White tailed eagle in a treetop.

*“The white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) is a very large species of sea eagle widely distributed across temperate Eurasia. Like all eagles, it is a member of the family Accipitridae (or accipitrids) which includes other diurnal raptors such as hawks, kites, and harriers. One of up to eleven members in the genus *Haliaeetus*, which are commonly called sea eagles, it is also referred to as the white-tailed sea-eagle”.*

Source: Wikipedia.



Northern lapwing – Oostvaardersplassen.



Barn swallow – Oostvaardersplassen.



Greylag goose – Oostvaardersplassen.



White tailed eagle – Oostvaardersplassen.



We continued walking through some willow woodland. We saw Winter wren, Garden warbler, Common chiffchaff, Willow warbler and heard the fast song of the Blackcap. We also saw a Song thrush eating a snail (escargots).



Song thrush – Oostvaardersplassen.

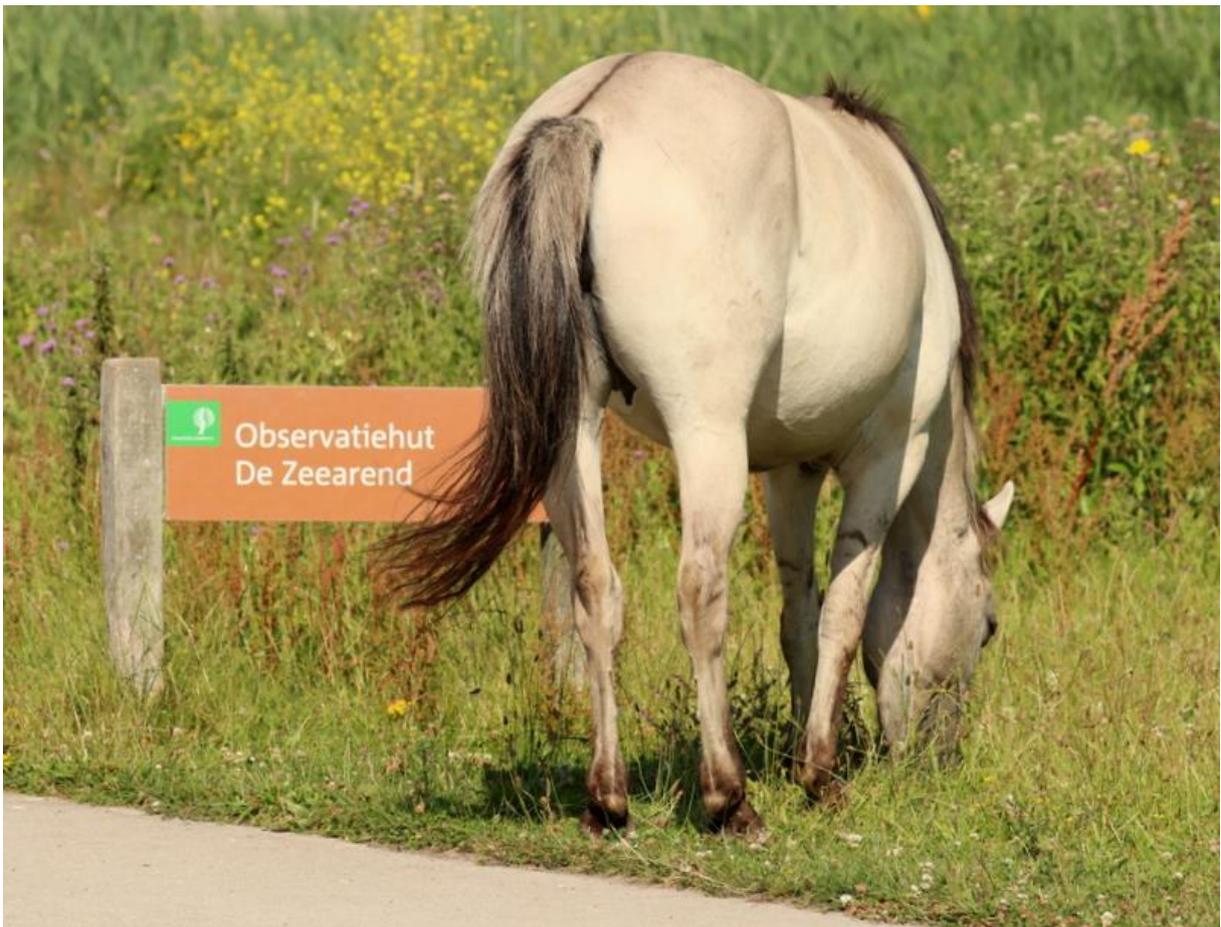
The next part of the hike was in a more open area, we saw lots of birds. Four finches: Chaffinch, Common linnet, European goldfinch & European greenfinch. We saw and heard many warblers, like Reed warbler, Sedge warbler, Cetti's warbler and Mars warbler! We also saw a juvenile Bluethroat.



White wagtail – Oostvaardersplassen.



Marsh warbler – Oostvaardersplassen.



Suddenly we saw a horse, a Konik horse, with a foal. In the area lives a large group of wild horses.



Konik horse – Oostvaardersplassen.

We also saw big flocks of Starlings, Carrion crow, Blackbird, Stonechat (male), Common whitethroat and some Great egrets. From the large bird hide we saw Heck cattle and close to these animals we found a rare Cattle egret!

Two immature White tailed eagle gave a great airshow. We also saw about five Western marsh harriers, in the area lives about 60 breeding pairs.



Heck cattle & Cattle egret – Oostvaardersplassen.

In the wetland we also saw Rudy and common Shelducks, Pied avocet, Eurasian spoonbills and Black tailed godwits.

From the next hide we saw a juvenile Bearded reedling (sometimes called Bearded tit), we saw on our way to the hide a Northern willow tit & Great tit.

On the bank of the water we saw a Red fox.



White tailed eagle – Oostvaardersplassen.



Red fox – Oostvaardersplassen.

From the visitors centre we drove back to the city of Almere to visit the southside of the area. We visited the visitor centre and had a nice view from the rooftop.

We saw House martins (from the other visitor centre we saw Sand martins) and also Barnacle geese. A common sandpiper flew over the water.

From here we drove back to the station.

Text & photos: Pim Julsing © 2022.

