

Flevo Birdwatching

Tour date:	November 26 th , 2016
Name of area visited:	Oostvaardersplassen, 5600 ha wetland between Almere and Lelystad
Guide(s):	Robert de Groot

	Nederlandse naam	English name	Scientific name
	Fuut	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
	Aalscholver	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
	Grote zilverreiger	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
	Blauwe reiger	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
	Wilde zwaan	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
	Knobbelzwaan	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
(H)	Kolgans	White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>
	Grauwe gans	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</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>
	Slobeend	(Northern) Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
	Wintertaling	(Common) Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
	Tafeleend	(Common) Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
	Kuifeend	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
	Brilduiker	(Common) Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
	Nonnetje	Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>
	Buizerd	(Common) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
	Torenvalk	(Common) Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
(H)	Waterral	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
	Waterhoen	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
	Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
	Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
	Stormmeeuw	(Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
	Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
	Houtduif	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
	Ijsvogel	(Common) Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
	Grote bonte specht	Great spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
	Graspieper	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
(H)	Winterkoning	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
	Heggemus	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
	Roodborst	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
	Merel	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
	Kramsvogel	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
	Grote lijster	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>

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Matkop	Willow Tit	<i>Parus montanus</i>
Pimpelmees	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
Koolmees	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Staartmees	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Spreeuw	(Common) Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Gaai	(Eurasian) Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Ekster	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Kauw	(Eurasian) Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Zwarte kraai	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Vink	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Putter	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Rietgors	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
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46	3	49
Soorten waargenomen / Species observed	(H) = Alleen gehoord / Heard only	Total

Remarkable: Smew, but only females.

Weather: Leaving Amsterdam under a blue sky, we hit fog just before we reach the polder. Temperature never climbs above 10°C and the fog only disappears when we leave the polder. Such bad luck, wind, understandably was minimal.

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.

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. We can just see for about 100 meters. So the damage to the vegetation can still be seen. But very few birds, so we quickly move on.

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 number of wildfowl. Whooper Swan, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Mallard, Teal and Wigeon. A Roe Deer quietly escapes into the fog.

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. A fair number of people are waiting here, for an excursion with the warden. So we quickly walk on. After crossing the second bridge we hit a group of Tits, Willow-, Blue-, Long-tailed- and Great Tit are foraging in the trees. These birds are acrobatic, and search the whole tree. Further on a few Chaffinches are spotted. Then a Great Spotted Woodpecker flies over de area where most trees have been killed by the grazers. We continue to the small pond, where we find some Tufted Ducks. It is cold and a good idea to return to the visitor's centre, for coffee. Close to the centre we

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hear Water Rail calling. Squealing piglet. Apparently you can make them call by clapping your hands, but other visitors would probably be a bit annoyed, so we don't.

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. We find Goldeneye, and see Tufted Ducks and Common Pochard on Bovenwater.

Grote Zilverreiger (14): Park on the west side on the dead end road, be careful crossing the road. A hide inside the park boundary, at the end of a three minute walk. The walk itself can be very rewarding and then costs you more than 3 minutes. Reedling, Reed Bunting and many warblers. Listen for Savi's, Reed-, Garden- and the rare Great Reed Warbler. Blue-, Great- and Willow Tit, Bluethroat. Inside the hide are many nests of Barn Swallows. You'll notice soon enough where not to stand. Look on the floor. The birds settle easily enough once you stop moving around. In winter it is clearly more quiet. Actually not a single bird. Even the Cetti's Warbler, that can often be heard here, is not present. Frustrating to read on the internet, that it has been seen that late afternoon. When we had arrived back in Amsterdam.

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. There are hardly any birds within view here. We can only see 3% of the distance to the nest of the White-tailed Eagle.

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 wrecksite. 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. We pass here, the views are not good enough, but find Smew closer to the locks and pumping station Block van Kuffelaer. Not a single male Smew in sight, (not even the day after, as well), is there any explanation?

Trekvogellandje (18): Opposite the oldest building in this polder. The plot is next to the Lepelaarplassen and has been landscaped from agriculture to nature. In spring the area is largely flooded, giving feeding possibilities to waders and ducks. During summer it dries out, but autumn sees it going green again. Geese love it that way. We take a look here close to the marina; a Moorhen on the jetty, as well as some Cormorants, is now almost a bonus. Black-headed Gulls, Coot, Great Crested Grebes are here as well, but these are omnipresent.

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. We try to listen, but in vain, for Reedlings. It would be such a nice species for UK birders. Some days it just does not work out. And then the skies turn blue, when we near Amsterdam again, adding insult to injury.

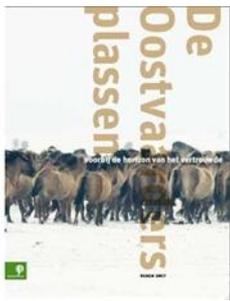
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If you want to read more or see more pictures? Books about the " Oostvaardersplassen":



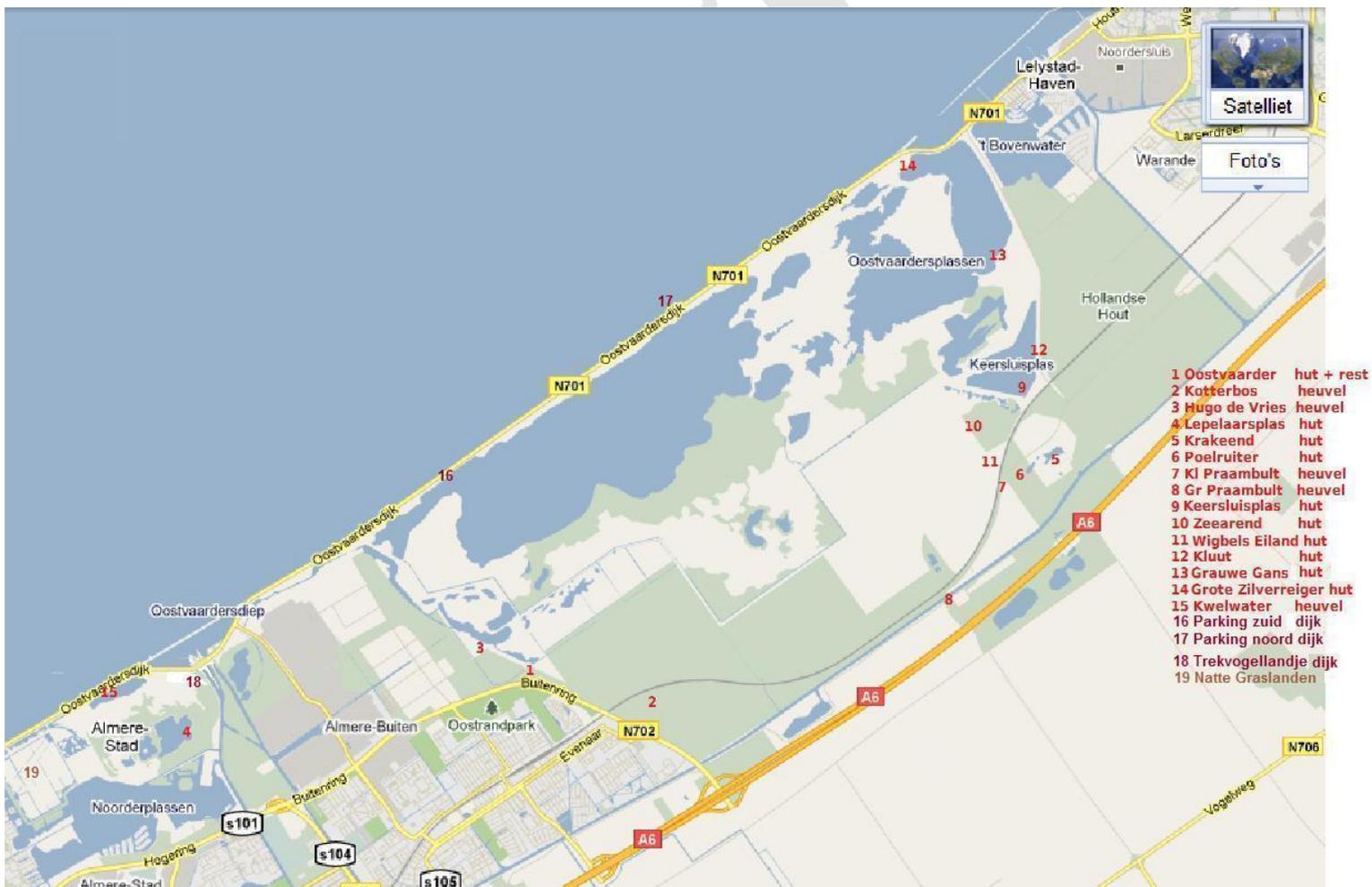
Title: De Oostvaardersplassen, voorbij de grenzen van het vertrouwde. Photography: Ruben Smit.
Text: Rinske Hillen and Jan Daan Hillen, in samenwerking met Frans Vera. ISBN 978-90-816300-1-6.

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. Première in september 2013

Observation points in Flevoland, near the Oostvaardersplassen area.



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