

Flevo Birdwatching

Tour date:	June 27 th , 2015
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>
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>
Grote Canadese gans	Greater Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Indische Gans	Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>
Brandgans	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
Bergeend	(Common) Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Nijlgans	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</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>
Zomertaling	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</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>
Zeearend	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Meerkoet	(Common) Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Scholekster	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Kluut	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Kleine plevier	Little ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Kievit	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Wulp	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Grutto	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
Tureluur	(Common) Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Groenpootruiter	(Common) Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Kokmeeuw	Black headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Zilvermeeuw	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Kleine mantelmeeuw	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Visdief	(Common) Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Houtduif	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>

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	Holenduif	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
(H)	Koekoek	(Common) Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
	Gierzwaluw	(Common) Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
(H)	Grote bonte specht	Great spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
	Oeverzwaluw	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
	Boerenzwaluw	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
	Huiszwaluw	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
	Witte kwikstaart	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
(H)	Winterkoning	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
	Heggemus	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
	Blauwborst	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
	Gekraagde roodstaart	(Common) Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
	Merel	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
	Zanglijster	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
(H)	Rietzanger	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
	Bosrietzanger	Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
(H)	Kleine karekiet	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
	Grasmus	(Common) Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
	Fitis	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
	Tjiftjaf	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
	Koolmees	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</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>
	Raaf	(Common) Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
	Zwarte kraai	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
	Huismus	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>
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	65	5	70
	Soorten waargenomen / Species observed	(H) = Alleen gehoord / Heard only	Total

Remarkable: White-tailed Eagle at 300 meters on the ground.

Weather: It started by being overcast, but quite quickly the sun appeared, never to leave. Temperatures went up in to 20's. Wind picked up to 3 Beaufort from West.

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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 (off the map on the left) A wide open area with windgenerators, wheatfields and some floating houses in a sheltered bay. We scan the horizon first, from the dike opposite Amsterdam. The town is partially hidden in a haze. The first bird is a Great Crested Grebe, swimming close by. Near the floating houses we see more. Grey Heron, Egyptian Goose, some Tufted Duck and more grebes. The camera clicks happily. In front of a tree line, a Common Buzzard soars on the updraft, effortlessly holding its position. We drive on, towards the next point.

Natte Graslanden (19): Reclaimed agricultural land. The area is kept open using cattle. But these are just for grazing. The open, treeless, area offers opportunities for waterfowl, waders and herons. The White-tailed Eagle uses this area for hunting, as well as do Goshawk, Marsh Harrier and, in winter, Peregrine. Water level drop slightly during summer, exposing mudflats and freshwater mussels. A number of observation screens is available, one is covered with a roof. The bushes around the area are good for warblers, Cuckoo, finches. The walk starts first towards the dike. There is Chiffchaff, but only vocally recognisable. The Willow Warbler, that looks so much like it, we see later. In the two ponds next to the bicycle path we see nothing much more than Coot and Great Crested Grebe. They all have young. Cormorants fly overhead, as does a Spoonbill. We then take the path leading to the hides next to the grasslands. Several Greenfinches on that path and in the nearby trees. They pose obligingly in front of the camera. At the first screen the weeds have been cut next to the path, but not in front of it. A futile exercise that did not give us good views. A Blackbird next to the screen was better seen. So, we walked to the next hide, mind your head. From here we saw much more. Several Garganey, already having started to moult. Still the white eyebrow was well visible. Lapwing and Redshank search the edge of the wetland. Shoveler and Gadwall swim nearby, the former having the enormous beak and the latter recognisable because of the white speculum on the wing. Further afield many Greylag Geese are foraging, accompanied by many young goslings. The first of these are now able to fly and will be relatively safe. From a photographers' point of view, the third hide is best, sun in the back and many birds in front. A Black-tailed Godwit walks nearby, and further away on the mud we see Tufted Duck, Redshank, Greenshank and more Shovelers and Garganey. Suddenly we notice a White-tailed Eagle, quite close by. A young bird, most likely from the nearby nest, on one of its first days of flight. While we try to



change lenses to the telescope it disappears. Shortly afterwards we see it just a hundred meters more to the right. It sits on something light coloured. Again a quick change of lenses and again it disappears, never to be seen again from this place. We did not see it eat, but the light-grey thing on the ground was a dead goose or gosling. We then walk back to the car, quite pleased with what we have seen so far. Near the corner of the bicycle path a Bittern flies off, unfortunately it is not seen by the client. Maybe it is the same bird that has recently been seen here by another guide of Flevo Bird Watching.

Arriving at the car, the coffee is very welcome. We then head for the next stop, but are halted while leaving the neighbourhood. Two Hawfinches cross the road. It takes less than 2 seconds. Unfortunately, these are missed by the client. We leave the car, but do not find the birds again. The forest here is quite dense. Then a Golden Oriole does the same trick. It disappears into a cherry tree, never to be seen again. Things like this might make a client suspicious, this was already the third bird not seen by him. A Song Thrush does another one second show. The only birds we do find back in the cherry trees are Blackbirds.

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 partially in summer. Avocets, Black-tailed Godwits, ducks make good use of it at those times. It is quiet here, apart from a breeze that powerfully stirs the reed

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stalks. Some Shelduck on the mud, the waterlevel has dropped to expose this mud. A Reed Bunting can be heard, but it does not come into view.

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. Before we reach this spot we stop at a parking near the harbour entrance. A group of some twenty Great Crested Grebes begs for photographic attention. This they get. One bird is on a nest, half hidden in between the reeds. We then continue towards the parking. There, we can clearly see the nesting Cormorants. A Marsh Harrier flies nearby, Common Terns fly past at the other side of the road. Another Reed Bunting stays out of sight.

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. Yes, a White-tailed Eagle is still on the nest, flapping wings. But at ten times the distance of the previous bird, the view is far less than before. Still this might be a sibling of the earlier bird. Eagles immediately start to incubate once an egg is laid. So the young hatch at intervals as well, and this bird might make its first flight only now or one of the coming days. Reed Bunting mocks our efforts again. The Common Terns on the jetty are more cooperative, Black, grey and white with red on the bill, they are design examples. One can, of course, discuss their song qualities. Black-headed Gulls are here as well, we check most to try for Mediterranean, but do not see any of this species. Driving on for a few kilometres we spot a small group of Bar-headed Geese, flying. They are also called Indian Goose; a homage to today's client?

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. Egyptian Goose with young, Mute Swans, GC Grebes and Coots. But also a male Common Pochard. Nice warm-brown head, grey body and black behind. Swifts over the lake and the dike, doing part of the 1000 kilometre flight they make each day.

Zeearend (10): The big hut, named after the White-tailed Eagle. From here, one can 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 fox has built a den underneath the concrete foundation. A stop at the Visitors' Centre and then into the part of the park, open to the public. It takes a while to spot the Chaffinch that we hear, but the brilliant male bird finally shows its reddish breast well. A young Common Redstart comes into view, but again too short for the client. Later on, we see one better, and also one of its parents. A Reed Bunting lands in a tree not ten meters away from us. It stays long enough to make a dozen pictures, sitting there in the sun and in full view. Further on, a fox crosses our path. It has a sizable gosling in its mouth and walks purposefully to the east. From the hide, which has nobody inside when we arrive, we can cast views over a wide stretch of grassland. Greylag Geese, Red Deer, some Heck Cattle and the nest of the White-tailed Eagle. Some other visitors enter the hut and appreciate the view through the telescope. But then the gates open and some 20 people enter, we decide to leave. On the way back we see Konik horses and also

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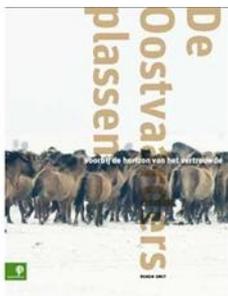


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another ring of tree trunks, stacked two metres high, protecting newly planted trees. This should be the beginning of the new forest, the previous one having been eaten by 2600 deer, 1600 horses and 1600 cattle.

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, a Polish breed reminiscent of the Tarpan, the horse of yesteryears. The third big grazer is Red Deer. Their numbers swelled to about 2600 in this area. The big grazers prevent the grassland from becoming a mix of vegetations. We look at the big herd of Horses, several hundred. Also, it is evident here what kind of destruction they cause. The field full of trunks and branches compares badly with the thicket of Alderberry and Willow on the east side of the railway. Two Raven fly in the distance and several Great Egrets and some Spoonbills show as white dots in the landscape. But it is also time to head back to Amsterdam, which we reach quickly and safely.

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



Title: De Oostvaardersplassen, van het vertrouwde. Photography: Text: Rinske Hillen and Jan Daan met Frans Vera. ISBN 978-90-



voorbij de grenzen Ruben Smit. Hillen, in samenwerking 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

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Observation points in Flevoland, near the Oostvaardersplassen area.



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