

Netherlands

Texel, North Holland, and Oostvaardersplassen

30th October 2021 – 6th November 2021

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OVERVIEW

The aim of this trip was some general late autumn birding in northern-ish Europe to see several species that I don't get to see at home. Therefore, this trip report will not be very useful to most birders from western/central/northern Europe for who most of my target species are practically everyday birds. I didn't really chase any rarities besides those which were nearby (not many interesting rarities of WP significance were reported during my stay anyway).

The trip was mostly successful. The itinerary consisted of 2 (and a half) days in Texel, 3 days in mainland North Holland, and 1 day at the Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve in Flevoland. I stayed at AirBnBs in De Koog on Texel and in Alkmaar on the mainland, and hired a small car from the airport. In total, 113 species were seen and fully identified. I saw the majority of the commoner species I wanted to see, but missed some scarcer targets such as red-breasted goose, rough-legged buzzard and Lapland bunting. The weather was not on my side throughout the trip, but especially on Texel with nearly constant rain as well as gale force winds on the second day which ruined any chances of finding any rare passerines. In addition, the day at the Oostvaardersplassen was nearly completely wasted due to a thick fog that did not dissipate at any point during the day. This was a huge disappointment since I had wanted to visit this reserve ever since reading the book 'Wilding' by Isabella Tree, and I also dipped on white-tailed eagle as a result.

The Dutch observations website [waarneming.nl](https://www.waarneming.nl) was very useful both for prior research as well as in real time during the trip. I would not have seen certain species without it. I also bought a subscription to the Dutch rare bird alert managed by Dutch Birding which was also useful for real time notifications but is only available in Dutch as expected.



A point worth noting for visitors is that most areas strongly favour the use of bicycles rather than cars. The roads in rural areas are narrow and usually with no formal parking places, so it is often difficult to access certain areas by car, or otherwise just to stop at the side of the road to scan the fields. For example, I did not manage to visit the excellent looking De Schorren area on Texel, since it is only accessible on foot or by bicycle and despite this, there is seemingly nowhere to park outside the site. This is obviously a good thing to preserve the quality of the area and for the environment in general, but it is worth pointing out nevertheless for the benefit of visiting birders. This is a challenge since cycling is not highly feasible for visiting birders who need to be time-efficient and usually carry heavy equipment and supplies to spend a full day out; and also bearing in mind the weather was not exactly conducive to cycling. Fuel is also very expensive in NL.



ANNOTATED BIRD LIST

	Species/Subspecies	Scientific name	Notes
1	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Frequent. Highest numbers 50+ seen at Gouwzee on 5/11.
2	Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	Around 12 at Westerkolk, Texel on 1/11.
3	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	2 at Westerkolk, Texel on 1/11.
4	Tundra Bean Goose	<i>Anser serrirostris</i>	Only seen on Texel, with around 50 in a field near De Slufter on 31/10.
5	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Very common practically everywhere.
6	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	20+ in the harbour at Enkuizen on 5/11.
7	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Common. Highest numbers of 200+ in the Polder Zeevang area on 5/11.
8	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Common. Highest numbers of 200+ in the Polder Zeevang area on 5/11.
9	Dark-bellied Brant Goose	<i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>	300+ on Texel. Few on the mainland.
10	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	Common practically everywhere.
11	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Very common on Texel.
12	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	Around 15 at Gouwzee on 5/11.
13	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Common in most places. Highest numbers of 500+ at Gouwzee on 5/11.
14	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Common. 2000+ at Gouwzee on 5/11.
15	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	Several hundreds in the SW corner of the IJsselmeer off Enkhuizen on 5/11.
16	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	15+ on the sea off Westerslag, Texel on 30/10. 2 on the sea and 5+ migrating off IJmuiden on 4/11.
17	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	25+ migrating off IJmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
18	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	5+ at Gouwzee and 1 in the Enhuizen harbour on 5/11.
19	Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	1 at Infiltratiegebied Castricum on 4/11 and 3 in the Enhuizen harbour on 5/11.
20	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	Not as abundant as other ducks. Highest numbers 10+ at Zwanenwater.
21	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	Very common and seemed to be extremely abundant everywhere. Huge numbers 5000+ at Gouwzee.
22	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	Not as abundant as other ducks but still frequent in most areas.
23	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Common everywhere.
24	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Not many seen. 20+ on Texel.
25	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Not many seen. 100+ at Dijkmanshuizen, Texel and at the Oostvaardersplassen.
26	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	A few noted in a few scattered locations.
27	Red-throated Loon	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Seemed to be fairly frequent along the coast. 5+ at IJmuiden on 4/11.
28	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Only seen 1-2 off Westerlag, Texel on 30/10.
29	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Very common practically everywhere.
30	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Frequent but in low numbers in various locations. Not more than 4 seen on any given day.
31	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Common practically everywhere.
32	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	A rarity in NL. A long staying bird was seen at Mokbaai, Texel on 31/10.
33	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Around 15 at Utopia, Texel on 31/10 and 1/11, and 2 at De Putten on 2/11
34	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Not common. 3 at Grafelijkheidsduinen on 2/11 and 2 at Infiltratiegebied Castricum on 4/11.
35	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Common practically everywhere.
36	Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	A distant bird at Gouwzee on 5/11 found while scanning for Scaups among thousands of Tufted Ducks.
37	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1 at Gouwzee on 5/11 and another or possibly the same bird later at Polder Zeevang.
38	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Frequent. 1-2 seen nearly everyday.
39	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Frequent. 2-3 seen nearly everyday.

40	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Frequent. 2-3 seen nearly everyday.
41	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 flew over Infiltratiegebied Castricum on 4/11.
42	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Heard calling in practically all wetlands.
43	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	50+ at Polder Zeevang on 5/11.
44	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Very common in all suitable locations. 5000+ at Gouwzee on 5/11.
45	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Common in all coastal areas.
46	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	20+ at Mokbaai, Texel on 31/10 and 5+ at the Oosvardesplassen on 3/11.
47	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Around 5 at De Volharding, Texel on 1/11.
48	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	10+ on Texel on 1/11 and 200+ at Polder Zeevang on 5/11.
49	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	5+ at De Slufter and De Volharding, Texel on 31/10 and 1/11.
50	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Common with several hundreds especially on Texel.
51	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Around 20 at De Volharding, Texel on 1/11 and 1 at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
52	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Fairly common along the coast. 100+ at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
53	Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	10+ at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
54	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Fairly common along the coast. 500+ at Mokbaai, Texel on 31/10.
55	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	50+ at Westerkolk, Texel on 1/11.
56	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Probably much more common than those seen. Highest count 5+ at Polder Zeevang on 5/11.
57	Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	Flushed one unexpectedly from the dunes near Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
58	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	3 at De Slufter and 5 at De Volharding, Texel on 31/10 and 1/11 respectively.
59	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Very common on Texel. 300+ on 31/10.
60	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Fairly common on Texel.
61	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Fairly common on the coast. 100+ at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
62	Red Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Twitted a bird which had been present for a few days at De Bol, Texel on 31/10.
63	Common Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Very common nearly everywhere.
64	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	2 off Westerslag, Texel on 30/10.
65	Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Frequent nearly everywhere.
66	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Very common nearly everywhere.
67	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Frequent on the coast.
68	Atlantic Murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Seemed to be fairly frequent along the coast. 10+ at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
69	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	At least 2 off Westerslag, Texel on 30/10. Most auks seen in flight at sea could not be identified between Common Guillemot and Razorbill.
70	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Probably commoner than noted. 1 and 2 on Texel on 31/10 and 1/11 respectively.
71	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Frequent nearly everywhere.
72	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Only noticed a few birds in random villages.
73	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	4 at a known roost spot (exact site withheld) on 2/11.
74	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Heard calling in most wooded areas.
75	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Didn't seem to be common. Maximum seen in one day was 2.
76	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Common practically everywhere.
77	Western Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Very common practically everywhere.
78	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Very common practically everywhere.
79	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Most crests were heard only but at least 2 of each species were seen at Grafelijkheidsduinen on 2/11.
80	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	Most crests were heard only but at least 2 of each species were seen at Grafelijkheidsduinen on 2/11.
81	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Common practically everywhere.

82	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Common practically everywhere.
83	Bearded Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	I thought I would only see this species at Mokbaai, Texel, but besides seeing 6+ here on 31/10, I had much better views of 12+ at Zwanenwater on 2/11, 3+ at the western end of the Oostvaardersplassen on 3/11 and 5+ at Gouwzee on 5/11.
84	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	3 at Infiltratiegebied Castricum on 4/11.
85	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Relatively frequent in most agricultural areas.
86	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	3 in flight near De Slufter, Texel on 31/10.
87	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	3 in flight at Infiltratiegebied Castricum on 4/11.
88	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Heard calling in most wetlands except on Texel.
89	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Around 3 birds in woodland near the western end of the Oostvaardersplassen on 3/11.
90	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	5+ in Grafelijkheidsduinen on 2/11 and a few in other random locations.
91	Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>	I unintentionally bumped into the 17th for NL, which had been present since 29/10, in the dunes near De Putten on 2/11 after dipping on a Desert Wheatear which should have been in the area.
92	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Frequent practically everywhere.
93	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Very common practically everywhere.
94	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Common practically everywhere.
95	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Common practically everywhere.
96	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Heard migrating overhead nearly everyday. 400+ migrating over Infiltratiegebied Castricum on 4/11.
97	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	1 definite at Infiltratiegebied Castricum on 4/11. A few other large thrush spp. with white underwing coverts were seen in flight on at least 2 occasions but could also have been fieldfares.
98	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Common practically everywhere.
99	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	4 at Grafelijkheidsduinen and 1 at De Putten on 2/11.
100	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Seemed to be fairly frequent in most suitable habitats.
101	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Fairly common in most villages.
102	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	1 over Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11 and 2 at Gouwzee on 5/11.
103	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Common in all suitable habitats (mostly sand dunes).
104	European Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	2-3 at De Volharding, Texel on 1/11 and 15+ at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
105	Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	At least 1 at Zwanenwater on 2/11 and 2 at Gouwzee on 5/11.
106	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Common in most places, most migrating over.
107	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Fairly common migrating overhead. Only 1 seen on the ground at Texel on 1/11 and another found dead at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
108	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Probably commoner than noted. 1 at Grafelijkheidsduinen on 2/11 and 5+ at Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.
109	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	10+ at Oostvaardersplassen on 3/11.
110	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Common. Flocks of 20+ noted a few times.
111	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Relatively frequent in most suitable areas.
	Redpoll sp.	<i>Acanthis</i> sp.	At least 2 flyovers were seen and heard but not identified to species (assuming they aren't lumped)
112	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Around 5 birds in woodland near the western end of the Oostvaardersplassen on 3/11.
113	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Frequently heard in reedy areas e.g. Mokbaai (Texel), and Oostvaardersplassen .

I also heard a probable Ring Ouzel and saw a probable distant Goshawk both at Zwanenwater on 2/11, and saw a possible Velvet Scoter off Ijmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11 which I didn't manage to get in the scope.



MAMMALS

No specific efforts were made for mammals, except for a Walrus, which was present in the harbour at Den Helder for several days. I tried to see it on 2/11, which was apparently the last day it was seen, but did not manage since the area is a restricted military area...so not sure how other people were getting close up views of it. I saw 1 seal in the sea off De Volharding, Texel on 1/11 and another 1-2 in the sea off IJmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11 which were presumably either Grey Seals or Harbour Seals. A few European Hares were seen in different places, but mostly in the sand dunes of Texel while driving before sunrise, and I'm fairly sure I saw some European Rabbits as well. In addition, I literally bumped into a Red Fox in a carpark at IJmuiden Zuidpier on 4/11.