

The Netherlands in winter

“When the concept for these short winter tours was first mentioned I remember thinking that Red-breasted Goose, Smew and Black Woodpecker would be three of the main target species....and having seen all three by the end of day one I did wonder for a second what we might do the following four days.....I need not have worried as we filled our time with some first class birding.

Geese are always high on the birding agenda and we managed to see 12 species, including no less than 4 Red-breasted Geese (with 3 seen on one day!), both Tundra and Taiga Bean Goose, the former showing alongside Pink-footed Geese while the latter was an unexpected first day find. We had great opportunities to see the species of Brent Geese, with a vagrant Black Brant among hundreds of Dark-bellied Brents and a handful of Pale-bellieds. The Brent Goose complex is already split by several authorities and it won't be long before the rest of the world catches up! On our final afternoon we even managed to locate a group of Lesser White-fronted Geese among thousands of Eurasian White-fronts.

Although not rare, the lasting goose memories will no doubt include the sheer numbers of Barnacle Geese, with over 30,000 being seen on a couple of days, the sight and sound of them taking to the air was simply amazing.

We were lucky enough to see both Whooper and Bewick's Swans in the same 'scope view, while other wildfowl included lots of Smew, Greater Scaup, Red-crested Pochard, Goosander and large numbers of Northern Pintail.

Numbers of shorebirds had also built up from the previous weeks with thousands of Northern Lapwing sharing the wet fields with Black-tailed Godwits, European Golden Plovers and Ruff.

It was also the best tour for the total number of raptor species from White-tailed Eagle, Rough-legged Buzzard, Hen and Marsh Harriers to Northern Goshawks, Peregrine, a motorway Merlin and, perhaps best of all, a Red Kite which we found on day two.

In between all this there were other highlights including large numbers of Great Egrets, Common Cranes, White Storks, Long-eared Owls, Avocets, Spotted Redshanks, Great Grey Shrike (now split from Northern Shrike in North America), Hooded Crow, Hawfinches, Brambling, Siskin and Corn Buntings.

Despite seeing all this we still managed to have a relaxing tour, with it not becoming light until 8.00am and dark at 5.30pm that left ample time for enjoying a good breakfast before heading into the field, with local breads, cheeses and pastries and then time in the evening to eat what I'm fairly sure were the best meals I have ever had on tour! Somewhere in the daytime we also managed to sample the apple cake, and hot chocolate and whipped cream was recorded on multiple days....all in all a great recipe for a great tour.” – *James Lidster*

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Bird List:

Column A = Number of tours on which this species has been recorded.

Column B = Number of days this species was seen on the last tour.

Column C = Maximum daily count for this species on the last tour

Species marked * are subject to debate over their taxonomic status. In The Netherlands they are afforded specific status but not all authorities follow that line

A		B	C	
4	Mute Swan	5	300	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
4	Bewick's Swan	2	20	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>
4	Whooper Swan	4	300	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
4	White-fronted Goose	5	2000	<i>Anser albifrons</i>
3	Lesser White-fronted Goose	1	20	<i>Anser erythropus</i>
4	Greylag Goose	5	500	<i>Anser anser</i>
4	Pink-footed Goose	2	5	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>
4	'Tundra' Bean Goose *	2	2	<i>Anser serrirostris rossicus</i>
1	Taiga Bean Goose	1	2	<i>Anser serrirostris fabalis</i>
4	Canada Goose	2	20	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
4	Barnacle Goose	5	30000	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
4	Dark-bellied Brent Goose *	4	300	<i>Branta bernicla</i>
4	Pale-bellied Brent Goose *	2	7	<i>Branta hrota</i>
3	Black Brant *	1	1	<i>Branta nigricans</i>
4	Red-breasted Goose	3	3	<i>Branta ruficollis</i>
4	Common Shelduck	5	200	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
4	Mallard	5	200	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
4	Gadwall	5	100	<i>Anas strepera</i>
4	Northern Pintail	4	300	<i>Anas acuta</i>
4	Northern Shoveler	3	6	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
4	Eurasian Wigeon	5	1000	<i>Anas penelope</i>
4	Common Teal	5	100	<i>Anas crecca</i>
4	Common Pochard	4	30	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
2	Red-crested Pochard	2	3	<i>Netta rufina</i>
4	Greater Scaup	1	5	<i>Aythya marila</i>
4	Tufted Duck	5	500	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
4	Common Eider	2	5	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>
2	Common Scoter			<i>Melanitta nigra</i>
4	Common Goldeneye	3	6	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
4	Smew	4	30	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>
2	Red-breasted Merganser			<i>Mergus serrator</i>
4	Goosander	2	6	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
2	Red-throated Diver	1	2	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
4	Little Grebe	1	3	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
4	Great Crested Grebe	5	50	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
2	Northern Gannet	1	1	<i>Morus bassanus</i>
4	Great Cormorant	5	30	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>
4	Great White Egret	4	25	<i>Egretta alba</i>
4	Grey Heron	5	5	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
3	White Stork	1	2	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>

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4	White-tailed Eagle	2	3	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
1	Red Kite	1	1	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
3	Marsh Harrier	1	1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
4	Hen Harrier	3	3	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
4	Common Buzzard	5	44	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
4	Rough-legged Buzzard	2	1	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>
4	Goshawk	3	3	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
4	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	2	2	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
4	Kestrel	4	7	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
3	Merlin	1	1	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
4	Peregrine	1	1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
3	Moorhen	3	5	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
4	Common Coot	5	200	<i>Fulica atra</i>
2	Common Crane	1	2	<i>Grus grus</i>
4	Oystercatcher	4	20	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
4	Avocet	1	2	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
3	European Golden Plover	4	250	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>
1	Grey Plover			<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
4	Northern Lapwing	5	4000	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
2	Red Knot			<i>Calidris canutus</i>
1	Sanderling	1	30	<i>Calidris alba</i>
4	Dunlin	4	100	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
4	Ruddy Turnstone	2	8	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
4	Common Redshank	3	52	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
2	Spotted Redshank	1	2	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>
1	Common Greenshank			<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
2	Black-tailed Godwit	2	30	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
1	Bar-tailed Godwit	1	1	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
4	Eurasian Curlew	4	500	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
2	Ruff	2	22	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
4	Black-headed Gull	5	50	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
4	Common Gull	5	2000	<i>Larus canus</i>
4	European Herring Gull	5	40	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
1	Yellow-legged Gull			<i>Larus michahellis</i>
2	Caspian Gull	1	3	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>
2	Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	1	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
4	Great Black-backed Gull	4	5	<i>Larus marinus</i>
4	Stock Dove	5	150	<i>Columba oenas</i>
4	Wood Pigeon	5	80	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
4	Collared Dove	4	10	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
4	Long-eared Owl	1	6	<i>Asio otus</i>
1	Black Woodpecker	1	1	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
3	Green Woodpecker			<i>Picus viridis</i>
4	Great spotted Woodpecker	1	5	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
2	Lesser spotted Woodpecker			<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>
2	Skylark	1	10	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
3	Horned Lark			<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
1	Meadow Pipit			<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
1	Water Pipit			<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>

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1	Rock Pipit			<i>Anthus petrosus</i>
3	Bohemian Waxwing			<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>
4	Dunnock	1	2	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
4	Robin	2	2	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
4	Blackbird	5	10	<i>Turdus merula</i>
4	Fieldfare	2	100	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
2	Mistle Thrush	1	3	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
3	Goldcrest	1	1	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
3	Wren	1	2	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
1	Coal Tit			<i>Parus ater</i>
4	Blue Tit	5	10	<i>parus caeruleus</i>
4	Great Tit	5	20	<i>Parus major</i>
3	Crested Tit	1	2	<i>Parus cristatus</i>
2	Willow Tit			<i>Poecile montanus</i>
4	Long-tailed Tit	1	4	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
4	European Nuthatch	1	5	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
4	Short-toed Treecreeper	2	5	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
4	Great Grey Shrike	1	1	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>
4	Eurasian Jay	5	10	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
4	Magpie	5	50	<i>Pica pica</i>
4	Eurasian Jackdaw	5	100	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
3	Rook	3	5	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
4	Hooded Crow	1	2	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
4	Carrion Crow	5	30	<i>Corvus corone</i>
1	Common Raven	2	2	<i>Corvus corax</i>
4	Common Starling	5	1000	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
4	House Sparrow	4	30	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
4	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	3	10	<i>Passer montanus</i>
4	Chaffinch	5	30	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
4	Brambling	1	3	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>
1	Linnet	1	5	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
2	Goldfinch	2	3	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
4	Greenfinch	3	20	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>
3	Siskin	2	30	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>
1	Common Bullfinch			<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
3	Hawfinch	1	10	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
1	Common Crossbill			<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
2	Reed Bunting	1	5	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
3	Snow Bunting			<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>
4	Yellowhammer	2	2	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
2	Corn Bunting	1	1	<i>Emberiza calandrella</i>