

We are a bit late with this trip report, but I finally found some time to write a few words about our visit to the Netherlands in July 2023. After reading some intriguing reports and since Holland is easy to reach from France, we decided to spend a few days there during a long French weekend for some mammal watching and especially at the wonderful private hide run by biologist Edo van Uchelen. A lot has already been written about this hide in the reports from Ingrid den Boer or Sjef Öllers and I can only concur with what was said. Edo's hide is very well made, overlooking a set in the forest: dead wood and water making it great for photography of both mammals and birds visiting the hide nights and days. This hide is also probably the most luxurious hide we have ever used with comfortable bunk beds, toilet, inside heating and even a small kitchen and fridge containing some snacks and drinks. Last but not least, it is conveniently located only about 2-hours' drive from Schiphol airport. If you understand Dutch a little, more information can be found on Edo's website: <https://www.wildernistrek.nl/fotohutten/hut/marterhut>. Otherwise, you can contact him directly and exchange in English at info@wildernistrek.nl. Edo is a very nice guy who can give you prior to the visit all the information you need about which photo gear to take to take full benefit of the hide.

We initially booked the hide in May 2020 but this was cancelled due to the COVID situation and thus, we booked it again in July 2023 for 3 nights. Be aware that Edo's hide has become very popular and is booked very quickly as soon as Edo opens it for reservation, so don't wait for too long to make your decision to avoid disappointment...

Wildlife sightings at the hide at night were pretty much non-stop during our visit. The first mammal even already showed up when Edo was still explaining us how everything works in the hide. We were lucky to see all the mammals that are supposed to come to the hide. Every night, we saw **polecats** (both adult and juvenile, actually the most common species observed there!), a couple of **pine martens**, one **badger** and **hedgehogs**. Surprisingly, the species that was supposed to be the easiest to see: **stone marten**, was observed only one night and briefly. In addition, there were always a few **brown rats**, **wood mice** and **common voles** present when the carnivores weren't around. Watching these little creatures interact with each other was fun. Since the activity was always high, we only stayed up until about 1:30 am and got up again around 6 am. In July, peak activity was from dusk until about midnight. During the day, activity was only dominated by birds. We did not see any red Fox that sometimes can show up at the hide according to Edo.

In addition to the hide and thanks to the indications given in the excellent report from Sjef Öllers, we also visited a few other places nearby when the hide was booked by other people during the day. This was also the opportunity to enjoy some lunch/dinner in real restaurants 😊. We visited the Weerribben peat bog area to try for the otters, but we had no luck with this species. On the other hand, we saw **European hares**, one **stoat**, and also one **pine marten** running alongside a road in full day light! There are several hides and viewing towers in the area and we could observe several nice birds from them. The towers we found particularly good were Twitterhut and Meentebrug. There was an excellent place near Scheerwolde town called Geertien with a great outside restaurant we enjoyed for lunch during the warm July days. We also found the small town of Blokzijl in the area very nice to visit and have a drink on tiny city harbor. We also went to Dwingelder Veld national park where we hiked along one of the main trails. It is a nice nature reserve with some scenic areas. It is said to be a good place to see common crane, golden oriole or various woodpeckers but in July we saw almost nothing and nothing of real interest in terms of mammal and bird species anyway.

Below is the list of all the mammals we could observe during these 3 days in Holland:

Mammals with photos or well seen (lifers in green)				
Species	Espèces	Latin Name	Where seen	Pic
Wood mouse	Mulot sylvestre	Apodemus sylvaticus	1 or 2 observed some nights at the hide	X
Common vole	Campagnol	Microtus arvalis	One individual observed at the hide both during the day and night	X
Brown rat	Surmulot	Rattus norvegicus	One observed some nights at the hide	X
European Hare	Lièvre d'Europe	Lepus europaeus	A few observed in the fields of Weerribben	X
Common hedgehog	Hérisson commun	Erinaceus europaeus	1 or 2 individuals seen every night at the hide	X
Stone marten	Fouine	Martes foina	Only one observed briefly one night at the hide	X
European pine marten	Marte des pins	Martes martes	1 or 2 individuals seen every night at the hide + one guy observed in full day light running alongside a road in the Weerribben area	X
European badger	Blaireau européen	Meles meles	One individual, certainly the same one, seen every night at the hide	X
Stoat	Hermine	Mustela erminea	One seen running along the track near the Twitterhut observation tower	
European polecat	Putois d'Europe	Mustela putorius	Several observed every night at the hide, both adults and a juvenile	X
Total Species Recorded = 10				

I'm adding to this report pictures of some of the species we observed during that trip, especially those new to me.



Wood mouse



Common vole



Brown rat



Common hedgehog



Stone marten



Pine marten



European badger



European badger



European polecat



European polecat (young)



European polecat



European polecat