

The Oostvaardersplassen, a large marshland with reed beds, rough grasslands, ponds, surrounded by forests: a true bird paradise of international value.

In this bird-rich wetland (Natura 2000, Ramsar and European Diploma area), man and nature work together in a special way. Heck cattle, konik horses and red deer are helping to keep the grasslands open in a natural way.

We have been reducing the number of large grazers in recent years to a total of approximately 1100 animals. 500 red deer and 600 heck cattle and konik horses. The aim of reducing the grazing pressure is to create more varied vegetation in large parts of the area, thus enhancing biodiversity and bird life.

Within this framework, we are looking for nature reserves in the Netherlands and Europe where we could take our surplus of konik horses. In recent years, we have found several areas in Europe where the horses were welcome and could contribute to the nature objectives of these areas. These are nature reserves in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Denmark and Belarus.

Through this channel, we want to investigate whether there is interest in konik horses. We are looking for areas where a semi-wild life is guaranteed, allowing them to spend the rest of their lives in natural conditions, in social herds within a nature reserve. The receiving areas should have some scale so that there is also room for herd growth in the coming years. The horses will only be allowed to be used for nature management.

If you are interested or can put us in touch with organizations and parties that might be interested, we would be happy to get in touch with you.

Hans-Erik Kuypers
Oostvaardersplassen (National Park Nieuw Land)
he.kuypers@staatsbosbeheer.nl