

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2022

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: The Netherlands

Name of the area: Oostvaardersplassen

Annual report for the year: 2022

Number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

The European Diploma was renewed in 2021.

Name: Staatsbosbeheer :

Address: P.O. Box 2,
3800 AA Amersfoort NL

Tel: +31 (0)30 6926111

Fax: +31 (0)30 6922978

e-mail: w.wubben@staatsbosbeheer.nl

www: www.staatsbosbeheer.nl

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Staatsbosbeheer Oostvaardersplassen

Address: Kitsweg 1, 8218 Lelystad, NL

Tel: +31 (320)254585

Fax:

e-mail: w.wubben@staatsbosbeheer.nl

he.kuypers@staatsbosbeheer.nl

www: www.oostvaardersplassen.nl

¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

the development and use of Lelystad Airport should not jeopardise any of the Natura 2000 targets or the quality of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;

As reported in the last up-date the planned flying-routes have been established respecting the Natura 2000 requirements. This means that airplanes fly only at high altitudes over the Oostvaardersplassen and that the upward and downward movements occur outside the nature reserve
In the summer, it was announced that the airport will not get a nature permit based on the old PAS scheme. Last June, the cabinet announced it would not make a final decision on the future of the airport until 2024.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. closely monitor the effect of increasing flight activity at Lelystad Airport on birds, the achievement of the Natura 2000 goals, and the recreational interest and general tranquillity of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve core area and buffer zones;

There is no increased activity from Lelystad Airport. The airport is still not open to larger aircraft. So there is no monitoring data in this area. In addition it remains true that as reported in the last up-date the planned flying-routes have been established respecting the Natura 2000 requirements. This means that airplanes fly only at high altitudes over the Oostvaardersplassen and that the upward and downward movements occur outside the nature reserve.

2. preserve the European interest and exemplary management of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve by ensuring appropriate management of the water dynamics, large herbivore dynamics and the grazing regime in order to achieve the Natura 2000 management goals;

As described in the previous report, we continued to develop the area in 2022 as we agreed with Flevoland Province in 2018.

The marsh reset is on track. The second year of low water has now started and the vegetation in the Great Lake is starting to develop. The aim is to have the reed vegetation expand by 1,000 ha in the next few years. When this is achieved (expected in 2 years' time), the water level will be gradually raised again. A dynamic water level will then be followed, mimicking the most natural dynamics possible in a delta.

The shading task in the core area has been realised except for two planting areas. The trees and shrubs planted in the exclosures over the past two years have done well and the landscape change with shrub development is well visible.

Work on the fish migration route also continued in 2022. We will continue this in 2023. The start of construction of a fish passage in the Kitstocht is still on the agenda for 2022. Construction will be completed in 2023.

In the mild winter of 2021-2022, 'only' 157 red deer were removed from the area by means of shooting. This was due to a combination of the absence of a cold period, ample food supply, insufficient shelter for the fauna managers and the presence of bird flu. With this, the task of reducing the total number of large grazers to 1,100 animals remains a big one. In the run-up to the coming winter, additional measures have been taken to improve the shooting of red deer. We can already see that these additional measures, such as more sheltering opportunities for the fauna managers in the field, are effective.

The number of heck cattle will be brought back to the target stock of 300 in 2022. The number of horses is just above 300 and is therefore also in order. We expect to have to remove horses from the core area again in 2023, preferably to nature reserves elsewhere.

3. envisage further extension of the reserve by creating a wide corridor to the Horsterwold, which would contribute to natural population dynamics and ecosystem management;

Extending the area to the Horsterwold is not on the political agenda. However, 'wet' connections are being made to the Lage Vaart and work is underway on the Oostvaardersoever project. The project is currently in

the plan execution phase. In that project, water connections and fish migration routes between the Markermeer and the Oostvaardersplassen are being realised, among other things.

4. maintain and further strengthen co-operation between the management authorities, the surrounding municipalities and the province in order to limit any impact on the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve when reviewing urbanisation and zoning plans, and ensure sufficient buffer zones around the core area of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;

In the past reporting year, close cooperation with Flevoland Province and the municipalities of Lelystad and Almere continued. As part of the development of National Park Nieuw Land, a lot of work is being done to create a number of buffer zones around the core area. With so-called gateway areas for the national park, the recreational pressure on the core area of Oostvaardersplassen will be absorbed in the immediate vicinity. This allows the number of excursions through the Natura2000 to be limited. The gateway areas form a natural buffer between the urban development in Almere and the neighbourhood expansion of De Warande in Lelystad. Cooperation with the various authorities has taken shape in separate project groups for the gate areas and the national park as a whole. Frequent coordination takes place at administrative, official and implementation levels.

5. in co-operation with stakeholders at all levels (representatives of the local and regional authorities, managing authorities, scientists, non-governmental organisations and civil society associations), design a transparent and widely acceptable mechanism to control the populations of large herbivore mammals; continue to raise awareness and inform the public at large about the objectives of such a mechanism, its direct effect on animal welfare and its long-term effect on the biodiversity of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve ;

The provincial policy framework for Oostvaardersplassen as in force from 2018 has been translated into a management plan with accompanying practical implementation protocols. Although not everyone has embraced the 'new' policy on the active management of the large grazers, there are still parties who would like to see the 'old' policy reinstated and take legal action for it, active management has generally been accepted. The public has been consistently, frequently and transparently informed of the changed course in recent years. The relationship between reducing the number of large grazers (to a total of 1,100) and a positive development with regard to the number of bird species (and biodiversity) in the area is hereby consistently established and the first tentative results are noted.

6. following the integration of the peripheral zones – Hollandse Hout, Oostvaardersveld, Kotterbos and Oostvaardersbos – into the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve, finalise their management plans and ensure that they are consistent with the management of the core area of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;

Plans have been made or are under development at various levels, with the alignment between core area and the surrounding 'shell' forming the basis. A zoning plan has been made for the entire Oostvaardersplassen area. This specifically describes which recreational opportunities are allowed to take place in which parts of the area. A separate management plan has been developed for the Trekweg area (the area between the A6 and the Lage Vaart). A management plan for the Oostvaardersveld is currently being written. These plan developments explicitly address the spatial relationship with the core area.

7. monitor the increase in numbers and the impact of visitors to avoid any negative effects either on the quality of the recreational experience or on the natural treasures of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve; take remedial measures if the results indicate negative effects on the intrinsic value of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;

The number of visitors in the core area taking part in guided excursions is monitored. This is accounted for under the Natura 2000 permits in an annual report. The number of excursions in the core area is and remains limited in accordance with the permit, To reduce disturbance of excursions in the core area on fauna, shelters are currently being constructed along parts of the management road (the excursion route).

8. continue to reflect on the creation of the Nieuw Land National Park, encompassing the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve, and consider applying for the European Diploma for this national park;

There is energy from various partners on the further development of Nationaal Park Nieuw Land, of which Oostvaardersplassen, Markerwadden, Lepelaarplassen and Markermeer are the most important parts. There are no new developments on applying for the European Diploma for the whole national park.

9. give more visibility to the European Diploma logo and raise awareness about its aims and objectives on the website of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve, through social media, flyers, brochures and information panels in visitors' centres and in the field.

The logo is used on various information panels. Brochures were recently published under the name of National Park Nieuw Land. Due to the large number of partners and the fact that the European Diploma only applies to Oostvaardersplassen, the logo was not applied there.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Last year was marked by continuation of implementation of work from the 2018 provincial policy framework:

1. Shelter task. Completed by 2023.
2. Marsh reset. Second year of low water levels. Reed vegetation recovers as expected.
3. Water in the grassy area; Work in the Wetlands (deeper pools in wet grasslands) has been completed. More water in the EZ plots; work is ongoing. Inundation grasslands and pools in the Spoorzone and the Beemderlanden has been stopped as a result of legal proceedings instituted by two parties who are concerned about the reduction of the grazable area available for large herbivores and are of the opinion that Staatsbosbeheer is carrying out the inundation in the service of recreation. This is not the case. Its aim is higher biodiversity and richer bird life. That this ultimately leads to recreational added value may be the case, but it is not an end in itself. The Council of State will rule on the matter in proceedings on the merits.
4. Poortgebied Oostvaardersplassen Almere. The plans are now going through permit procedures. However, preparatory work is being done, such as archaeological research. Planning for the second phase is now complete. Depending on the granting of permits, we expect to realise project goals in the gate area in 2023.
5. Gate area Oostvaardersplassen Lelystad. A Realisation Agreement will be signed by the Municipality of Lelystad and the Forestry Commission in early 2023. This will guarantee the financing for the implementation of the plans and in 2023 a start can be made with, among other things, the construction of a ditch (a water feature) connecting the Buizerdweg with the Buitencentrum. We also expect to realise additional recreational facilities including improvement and expansion of cycling and walking paths in 2023.
6. Recreation in the Core Area: In a few places, earthen walls have been raised along the management road. This is to minimise disturbance to wildlife and thus also enhance the experience of nature. (The path to the wetlands has now been provided with an earthen embankment on one side). In the triangle, the lookout cabin The Sea Eagle has been made wheelchair-accessible and equipped with a telescope that allows wheelchair users to get closer to nature.
7. The showcase area for National Park Nieuw Land (between the A6 and Lage Vaart). The layout of the area has been completed. In August, the konik horses left the area and most of the animals were transferred to a nature reserve in Germany (Thüringerwald). Seasonal grazing with cattle is planned to start in 2023. With this management method, it is expected that we will better achieve the nature goals and create more optimally suitable hunting and habitat for harriers.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes in boundaries.

In 2022, we purchased a 15.5-hectare plot of agricultural land next to the Knarsluis lock and between the Lage Vaart and the A6. In 2023, we want to be clear about how we want to develop this parcel, the basis being that it must enhance the Oostvaardersplassen area ecologically. After layout, the plot can be added within the boundaries of the European Diploma.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

--