

Nocturnal Mammals Hide in Netherlands: 1 night and 8 species

Atif Hashmi and Rebekah Thompson

The excellent reports by Sjef Öllers, Ingrid den Boer and Samuel Marlin have already done justice to the wonderful nocturnal mammals hide set up by Edo van Uchelen in the Netherlands.

This post is just to add a little guidance on how to get to the hide if you don't have your own transport and a few hints on how to book it if you don't understand any Dutch.

There are also some photos and a link to a short wildlife film at the end of this report to entice you into visiting this hide even more!

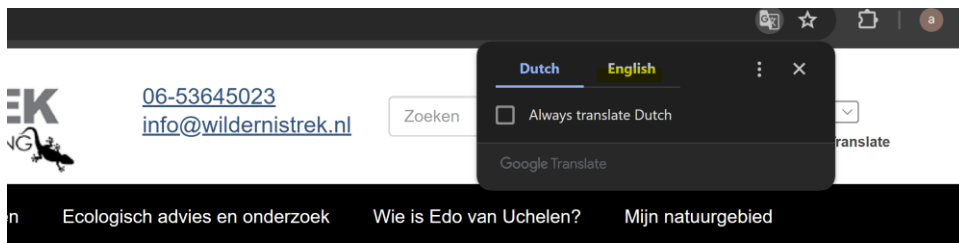
We live in the UK (not far from London) and when we first read these reports about Edo's hide it was something that we just had to go and check out for ourselves. We don't drive at all but it's quite straight forward to get the Eurostar from London St. Pancras to Amsterdam Centraal.

So, we planned to spend a day exploring Amsterdam and a morning exploring the nearby city of Utrecht and then went to Edo's hide for the night.

How to book the Hide:

The website is set-up in Dutch. <https://www.wildernistrek.nl/>

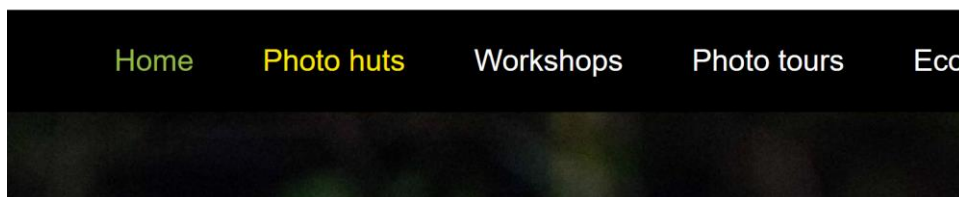
When you click on the link, please translate it into English (or your own language) using the Google translate tool.



Nachtdieren, marterhut ****

Marters zijn schuw, slim en achterdochtig. Lijken bijna onzichtbaar. Het was heel moeilijk om ze aan een

Then choose the 'Photo Huts' tab.



Then on the next page scroll down and find the 'Nocturnal animals, marten hut' tab and click on 'Go to this hut'.

Next, you will have to go to the 'Availability and Booking' tab

Location: Vledder (Drenthe, 30 minutes drive from Zwolle)

AVAILABILITY & BOOKING

Then on the next page you will see a calendar and the green slots are the ones that are available. There will also be a form next to it which you have to complete.

We were quite lucky as one night in the hide turned out to be very productive for us, but you can book for more than one night if you feel you need to do so.

As soon as you have booked it, you will need to make the payment through a portal and that is where we got stuck because all the payment options seem to be set-up if you have some payment apps like Revolut etc or if your bank is in some selected European countries.

I received the email confirmation after booking the hide anyway so that was a relief.

Then I emailed Edo directly about the issue with the payment and he said that we could pay when we arrive. He also said that we can get the train to Steenwijk and he can pick us up from the station. The hide is not too far from the station.

How to get to Steenwijk:

There are various trains from Amsterdam Centraal and Schiphol that connect directly to Steenwijk. Depending on the train you take and any connections it could take you about 1 hour and half to just less than 2 hours to get there.

Edo's phone number is on the website, and he uses WhatsApp as well, so I had just called him on WhatsApp to confirm the pick-up times, etc.

He is quick to respond via email as well, but I found it easier just to call/text him after our initial conversations via email.

Our Experience:

Edo was right on time to pick us up from Steenwijk train station on the 5th May 2024.

He is a really lovely guy and while driving us to the hide we had a little chat about the different mammals we would be able to see. He dropped us off near the nature reserve where the hide is and gave us the instructions on how to access the hide. (These instructions are all in the email that you will receive after the booking the hide as well)

We were a little early to the hide (around 5pm ish in the evening). A Common vole was already quite active when we got there and several beautiful birds like Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Hawfinches, Yellowhammers, Treecreepers and Nuthatches kept us busy until the night. A couple of Brown rats were busy transporting the food from A to B and Wood Mice also appeared several times during the evening.

The hide really is fantastic. It is well stocked with snacks and beverages and the bunk beds are very comfortable. There is a toilet and little wash basin to keep yourself refreshed.

In terms of photography, the hide cannot get any better. Edo has constructed it in such a way that you are always at the eye level of the mammals that approach the hide. The little pond casts a beautiful reflection, and he came over later that evening to top up the pond and to re-fill the food for the animals.

The Stars of the night!

As soon as darkness fell, European Hedgehogs appeared on the scene. It was a delight to see them because in the U.K they have undergone a serious decline. They were followed by a beautiful European Badger, another magnificent mammal that is highly persecuted in the UK. Despite searching for Badgers for several years in the UK we had never seen one in the wild. It was a joyful sight to see the Badger searching for food and posing for photographs against the reflection in the little pond. A Polecat kept going in for the food multiple times, always moving at supersonic speed! The Polecat has a near mythical status in the UK so it was hard for us to believe that we were actually seeing one live! (Edo told us next morning that there actually two different Polecats but we thought it was only one specimen that made several visits that night)

The Stone Marten then appeared suddenly; we were both a little shocked by its size because we were not expecting it to be so big. It did not stay for long but long enough for me to get some videos and for Rebekah to get some photographs.

Then it was followed by a Pine Marten that stayed long enough and that was our final new star mammal for the night.

It was now around mid-night and the Stone marten reappeared, again not staying for very long. The Polecat made a couple of more appearances through the night.

Edo had told us that the action starts to subside around mid-night, so we started to pack up for the night.

Rebekah was translating some of the Dutch instructions on her phone when she suddenly turned around and let off a suppressed scream 'Tawny Owl!!!!'

Although not a mammal, the Tawny Owl has long been our bogey owl species when it comes to finding and photographing it in the wild.

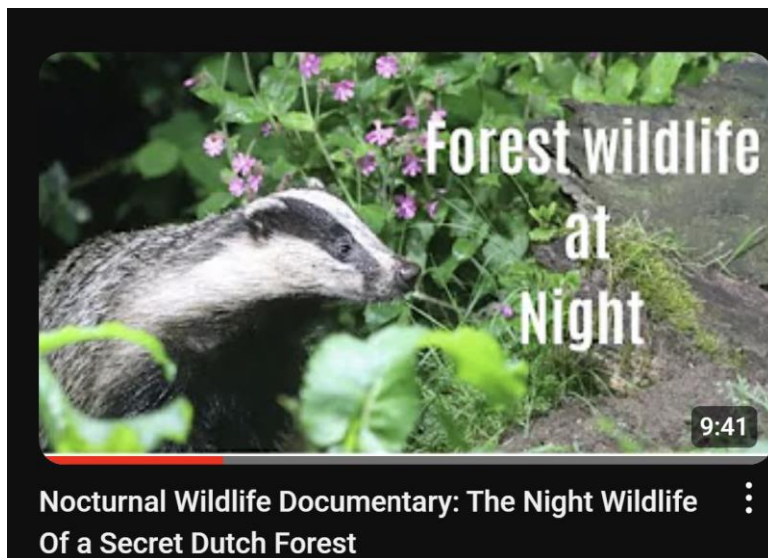
The Tawny owl then proceeded to stay at the hide for nearly one hour! We spend every minute admiring its wonderful plumage. It was trying to hunt for the mice around the hide but it was so terrible at it that we both started to get a little stressed for the poor owl. Anyways, it flew away into the forest and that was curtains for us!

Thanks for reading the report. If you live close to the Netherlands or if you are just visiting Amsterdam or another city nearby, then we would highly recommend this hide.

Edo is quite keen for more visitors, and he is really passionate about the Martens and the other species that live there.

Here is a little film we made if you want to see the moving animals. There is also a little behind the scenes section at the end of the video that gives a little idea about the hide and the surroundings. Please do check it out by clicking the link below if you want to know more about these mammals.

[Nocturnal animals in a Dutch Forest short film](#)





Stone Marten/Beech Marten (above and below)





European Badger (above and below)





European Hedgehog (above) and Pine Marten (below)





Common vole (above) and Woodmouse (below)





Tawny owl (above) and Polecat (below)

