

Santiam Valley Ranch OBA Trip By Dominic Valenti

On Sunday, September 8, Shane Pruett, Joy Jensen, and I (Dominic Valenti) were joined by 9 OBA birders for a wonderful day of exploring the wetlands at Santiam Valley Ranch. We started the day by birding the area surrounding the Santiam Valley Farm Retreat. There were several shorebirds out on the mudflats, including Wilson's Snipe, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, and both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. We saw a nice assortment of raptors as well (Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, and both Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawk). Other good finds here were Yellow Warbler, Brown Creeper, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Here is the Ebird checklist for this section, which includes several nice photos taken by Francene Grewe (thanks!): <https://ebird.org/checklist/S194465400>

Our next stop was the wetlands on the north side of Hunsaker Rd, where we encountered a new species for the property: a juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron! Not only did we get to see it well enough to make a positive ID, but, after initially flushing upon our approach, it landed a short distance away from us in a small tree, allowing us to both admire it for several minutes and snap a few pics. There were also a bunch of Great Egrets around, and we had a Peregrine Falcon making passes at shorebirds and stirring them up. Another highlight was when we had not one, but two American Bitterns take flight right in front of us.

Here's the Ebird checklist for this portion of the field trip: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S194466991>



Santiam Valley Ranch trip attendees (missing Joy)



Santiam Valley Ranch trip attendees (missing me)



And here's that young Black-crowned Night Heron

Overall, it was a mighty fine day, and we look forward to having more OBA field trips at this location in the future!