

Two Violas Write Books On Birds, Flowers

By MARGARET KOCH
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Vi Washburn and Vi Anderson have been friends for years with many interests in common — history, volunteer service, and mainly wild birds and flowers.

Vi Washburn, wife of the late Henry Washburn who headed the University of California's Agricultural Extension Service in Santa Cruz County for many years, still lives here.

Vi Anderson, longtime county bird watcher, Santa Cruz Bird Club booster and conservationist, now makes her home in Los Gatos.

The women have just published a book apiece: Vi Washburn has compiled and written her second book on BIRDS OF MONTEREY BAY AND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA COASTAL REGIONS. Vi Anderson has finally put into print something she worked on for years — FLOWERS AND THEIR ANCESTORS.

What makes their projects more interesting is the fact that the women have created many of the illustrations themselves.

Vi Anderson has drawn each plant

she tells about (there are more than 150) and has linked each with an animal, doing the work in pen and ink. Throughout the book there runs the thread of story telling how plants evolved down through the Proterozoic Age of the blue-green algae, and the Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras to the Cenozoic period which includes us.

Vi Washburn has included many photographs taken by herself and her late husband, in her bird book, as well as photos by local contributors.

The bird book also includes 40 new birds which were not included in Mrs. Washburn's first bird book which appeared several years ago. All photographs are in color.

New contributors to her book are John Macon and Dorothy Lilly. Macon works at Sears Roebuck and does freelance photography in his spare time. Dorothy is a past president of Santa Cruz Bird Club.

Other local and area contributors of bird photos in the book are Stanley Mythaler, a retired professor; Howell Rommel, well-known for his photos and a longtime local Camera Club member; C.D. Thompson, a state park ranger; and families of the late Emory Bacon, John Cruze and Mrs. Billy Lloyd.

The bird book contains a map of California with specific birding areas, a list of good observation points, a foreword and a diagram of a bird with all its "topography" spelled out, from toes to crown.

A few years ago Vi and her husband Henry produced eight 10-minute nature films for schools on the theme of "Let's Take a Walk..." Their film titled "Let's Take a Walk Along the Brook" won a film award in New York; another about the woods won a prize in Columbus, Ohio. The films are now handled by University of Arizona.

Vi and Henry's hobby of photographing birds often took them out to the middle of swamps and meadows

where they crouched under a beach umbrella draped with cloth curtains — their "blind" from which they made many of their fine pictures.

Once near Soda Springs in the Sierra, Vi was lured by an unfamiliar bird call to climb a hillside where she discovered the rare and beautiful ONLY peony which grows wild in North America. The bird was a Pine Grosbeak, she recalls. She found it, too.

"We went back for three years in order to photograph the peony," she says. "The first year it was just coming out of the snow on a wet hillside — too early to photograph it. The second year we missed the flower — they bloom from May to July. The third year we finally got the picture."

Birds and flowers have been the lifelong interests of both the Violas who have been active in the Bird and Garden clubs for years. Both were early members of the local Bird Club which was organized by Elaine Reinelt.

Once not long ago, the two Violas decided they wanted to go out together to find and see the Black Swift in its nest — a bird which is rare in Santa Cruz and which nests along the cliffs and in caves. Being knowledgeable birders, they knew where to go.

"I took a six-foot ladder and Vi (Anderson) took a yardstick with a mirror attached to it," Vi Washburn recalls. "We found the nest high inside a cave up the coast but there were no eggs or birds in it. We didn't know it but the beach was starting to be a nudist colony." She laughed.

The late Albert Vrooman of Santa Cruz actually discovered the Black Swift here — a discovery which made birding history at the time. Vi once took a visiting professor to see the nest but so much sand had washed into the cave that they couldn't enter it.

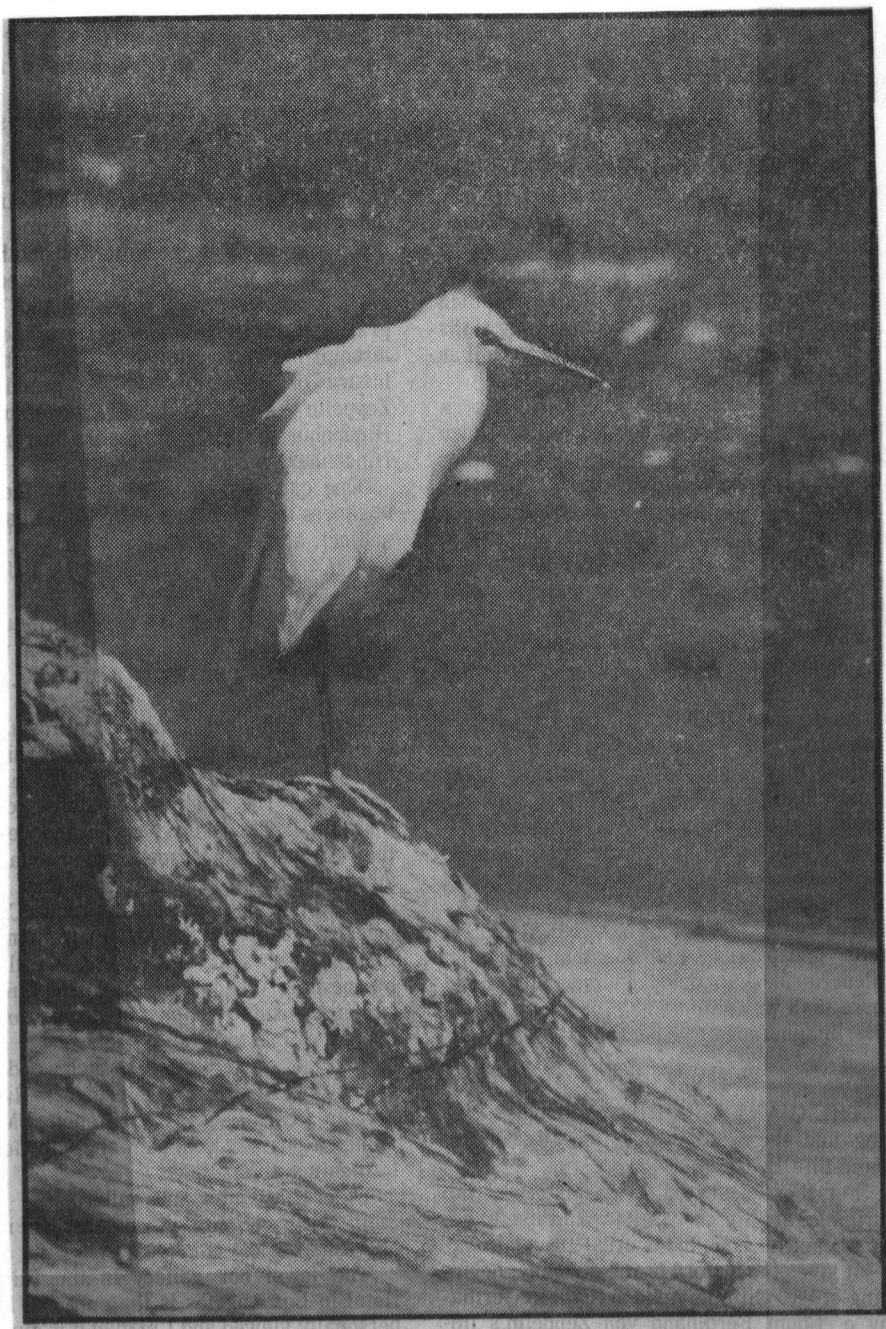
She explains that the Black Swift,



At right, the Lesser Scaup, as photographed by John Macon.

REFERENCE

Illustration, at left, from Viola Anderson's book on plants and their "ancestors."



Upper right photo, also by Macon, is the Golden Slipper Bird.

while rare here, nests in numbers near Burney Falls and may be seen there with ease. The photo in her book was taken by a ranger in that area.

John Macon's photo of the Great Blue Heron, included in the 117 pictures in the book, won an award for him.

Mythaler, 92 years old, is the contributor with most photos in the book.

Vi also has had 12 bird photos made into postcards.

"One of them — the two Black Brant Geese — are standing in front of the Natural Bridge which collapsed recently — that card is a collectors' item now," she remarked.

Vi Anderson continues with her work on flowers and birds at her Los Gatos home. She had an article published in Pacific Discovery, the magazine of California Academy of Sciences, recently. Vi Anderson's plant and flower book is not yet available to the public. There will be an announcement when it is.

Vi Washburn's book is \$4.25 at The Encounter in Boulder Creek, the A-Frame in Scotts Valley, Ford's in Watsonville, The Bookworks in Aptos, B. Dalton at Capitola Mall, the Book Cafe at 41st Avenue, Santa Cruz City Museum and County Museum (Octagon), Ebert's Garden Shop, and Plaza Books and Bookshop Santa Cruz, both on the Pacific Garden Mall.

"It's a book for beginners as well as experienced birders who want to know what they are looking at," Vi explains.

The cover photo, a mother bird feeding her baby, was taken by Henry Washburn as were most of the bird pictures in the book.

"I had all these pictures hanging around the house and — well — what else do you do with them?"

She has done something very worthwhile, indeed.