

WILDLIFE

Flood Tides Destroy 90% of Marsh Hen Hatch

► HUNTERS along the Atlantic coast will be getting fewer marsh hens this year. Unusually high tides took a heavy toll of the nesting clapper rail, or marsh hen, population this year, making it necessary to shorten the season and slice the bag limit on this game bird along the Atlantic flyway.

An estimated 90% of the first hatch of clapper rails were destroyed by flood tides along the Virginia and New Jersey coasts, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reported. A successful second hatch later was not enough to make up the great loss.

Along the Atlantic flyway, the 1955-56 hunting season for rails has been cut from 70 to 60 days and the daily bag limit pared from 15 to 10 birds. Last year's regulations still stand for the other flyways.

This ruling holds for all species of rails and gallinules, except the sora, or rail bird. All four flyways will have a daily bag limit of 25 of these birds.

The clapper rail builds its nest on high spots within salt marshes. Its nine to 12 eggs are at the mercy of spring tides which may flood over the nesting areas, as they did this spring. Although they can swim for a short time, adult clappers will soon drown in flood water unless they can reach high ground.

Hunters usually set out for "marsh hens" during fall flood tides, when the high water flushes the birds from their hiding places in the marsh.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1955

ENTOMOLOGY

Granular Insecticides Cut Harmful Residues

► DANGER OF FOODS being poisoned with insecticide residues can be cut drastically by using the chemicals in granular instead of semi-liquid spray form, research by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station indicates.

Testing effects of insecticides on the destructive European corn borer, experts found that granular forms left 100 to 200 times less residue on corn leaves than did emulsion sprays, while doing as good or better a job in controlling the pest.

Toxic insecticide residues can accumulate in the body fat of livestock or be found in the milk of dairy cows feeding on treated plants.

The insecticides DDT, EPN, heptachlor and malathion have been tested in granular forms, which are made by "fastening" the chemicals to a clay-like material, attapul-gite, or to tobacco particles. Unlike sprayed droplets that stay where they fall, the granular insecticides do not cling to the leaf surfaces but tend to slide down into the leaf whorls and junctures of leaf and stalk, where young corn borers do most of their feeding.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1955

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