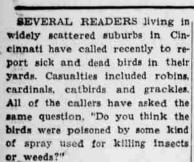
## NATURALIST AFIELD

by Karl H. Maslowski



There is no way of answering that question without performing a very detailed examination of the birds and, frankly, I am not detailed examination of the equipped to do that. Indeed, there are only a few laboratories in the country which could satisfactorily conduct such a post-mortem. How ever, there is a possibility that the birds might have died as a result of some spraying operation, for some of the newer insecticides have proved to be highly toxic to many kinds of vertebrates. It seems ironic that so many

the more recent discoveries and inventions in the field of science have been like two-edged swords. Atomic power is an outstanding example, and the wonder drugs sulfa and penicillin have also demonstrated that even the best things

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The new insecticide, DDT, has proved to be particularly toxic to amphibians such as this bullfrog. When carefully applied, however, indications are that it has a minimum effect on wildlife such as birds and mammals.

can do harm, particularly if not skillfully applied. One of the most disturbing of these scientific "two-edged swords," insofar as natural-edged swords," insofar as natural-edged is the new insecticide, DDT (dichloro-diphenylcontrolled to stop the spread merous experiments in about 12 No one can answer the effective-ness of DDT for household use in blossion blossion

blessing. But when the preparation amphibians seem to be poisoned all for insect pests over vast areas most easily by DDT. A 117-acre of forests, rivers, fields or crop-tract sprayed with a DDT-oil solulands, the danger to all forms of tion at the rate of two pounds an wildlife raises a question of DDT's acre in June included about one real value. This insecticide, in mile of the Patuxtent River in common with other organic and Maryland. Nine and a half hours mineral poisons, is selective or later 95 dead fish were removed specific; it does not strike all animal species with equal effective-small stream at the lower end of ness. If it did, its advantages in the sprayed section, Dead fish concontrolling undesirable species tinued to drift into the net for four sturally would be lost. days after the spraying, but most

of the mortality occurred within 48 THE UNITED STATES FISH hours. and Wildlife Service early recog-The loss of bluegills that were nized the potential dangers of kept in experimental boxes in the the indiscriminate use of DDT and sprayed area were particularly

heavy. All of the golden shiners pumpkin-seed sunfish in a small gravel pit 150 feet from the sprayed area were killed by drifting spray. In a shallow experimental pond sprayed with one pound of DDT to an acre, 80 per cent of the bluegill sunfish, 93 per cent of the red-bellied sunfish and 78 per cent of the yellow perch were killed. Another pond sprayed with onetenth of a pound of DDT an acre resulted in a 43 per cent loss among all species.

Wood frog tadpoles died in short order when subjected to a fivepound an acre treatment. The same treatment resulted in the death of several frogs and a young water snake.

Certain crustaceans seem highly susceptible to DDT. Thus, nearly all the crayfish in a 4,000-acre plot in Carrol County, Illinois, were



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readily killed by a solution of one-half a pound of DDT to the acre. Coastal areas treated with DDT spray have in some instances suffered severe losses in fiddler and edible crabs.

MORTALITY TO adult mammals and birds was not apparent where solution in 1945. Before solutions ranging up to three white-footed mice revealed that solutions its destruction might be small redents can withstand of these and other areas, a few adult birds killed by DDT were lethal to cottontails. Raccoons that bird population. In adjacent terribates were fed on crayfish killed by DDT was applied in concentrations and birds was not apparent where acre solution there was no notice and birds was not apparent where acre solution there was no notice and birds was not apparent where acre solution there was no notice and birds was not apparent where acre solution there was no notice and birds was not apparent where acre solution in 1945. Before white-footed mice revealed that because it shes small redents can withstand of these small redents can withstand double these small redents can withstand these small redents can withstand these small redents can withstand of these and other areas, a few adult birds killed by DDT were fed on crayfish killed by concentrations of spray at one or more very experimental plot.

The adult cottontail rabbits subjected to a five-to-seven-and-a-half-in his battle with injurious insects. If the poison is carefully applied out the revealed that acre. Howeve

fed in a laboratory with insects ing bird populations have been somewhat similar experiment con- on wild life. But if this insecticide killed with a one-pound-an-acre noted in areas sprayed with DDT ducted with meadow mice and is used carelessly and in strong concentration of DDT applied as An area in Lackawanna County,

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