| **Name(s)** | **Project Number** |
|---|---|
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**Project Title**

## Matilda's Many Returns: How Many Babies Can Be Produced by One Praying Mantis?

**Abstract**

**Objectives/Goals**
This study follows the egg laying of a praying mantis (Iris oratoria). Over the course of 212 days she laid eggs 18 times. Last year (and completed this year) I studied how food intake effected egg laying. The literature and entomologists I talked to suggested that babies would hatch from the first 7 egg cases. Was Matilda just laying eggs for fun? This year I followed the hatchings from 18 layings and my hypothesis was that babies would hatch from egg cases 1 through 7.

**Methods/Materials**
Materials- 18 layings from one wild caught praying mantis, in separate hatching cups (if possible)
- kept in a 10 gallon fish tank.
Methods- record feedings to complete food intake data: record observations, laying dates and daily hatchings: recount hatching apertures, candle for un-hatched embryos.
Use computer to make tables and graph.

**Results**
Surprisingly babies hatched from egg cases 1 through 16. The average hatching from egg cases 1 through 15 was 92.3%. Egg case #15 which was laid at 180 days (almost one month beyond expected time limits) hatched to 87%. Over 5 monthes an estimated 1216 babies hatched from a food intake equivalent to 1252 flies.

**Conclusions/Discussion**
The number of hatchings far exceeded expectations. My hypothesis was short by 9 egg cases. This mantis was not just laying eggs for fun and is an example of why this species, Iris oratoria, has been so successful in spreading through California.

**Summary Statement**

This project follows the hatching of babies from 18 layings by one praying mantis.

**Help Received**