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SHELLFISH INVESTIGATION
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THE 1968 PERSONAL-USE RAZOR CLAM FISHERY

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INTRODUCTION

Personal-use razor clam diggers were sampled on alternate minus tides from April to September. The number of diggers and the number and age composition of clams dug were noted. Wastage was sampled each tide series.

HARVEST

Digging on Clatsop beaches was slightly better in 1968 than the 10-year average (1958-67) as 64,000 diggers dug approximately 995,000 clams including wastage (Table 1, Figure 1). The number of diggers and clams dug decreased by 14 and 30%, respectively, as compared to 1967. Wastage increased percentage wise during 1968, however, numerically the number of clams wasted decreased from 195,000 to 163,000.

Distribution of digging effort in 1968 varied considerably from that of 1967. The midbeach produced best in 1967 but shifted to low beach and bar digging in 1968. Also, the area north of the *Peter Iredale* sustained heavy digging all summer with only minor digging south of the ship.

This shift probably influenced age composition as the low beach and bars produced large clams. The midbeach produced medium and small clams.

Figure 2 compares the age composition for the years 1964-68. Fewer 1st-year clams (0's) and a definite increase in 2+ clams in 1968 are noteworthy. The July 15-August 31 closure is believed to be responsible for this.

Table 1. Personal-Use Harvest of Razor Clams by Area from Clatsop Beach, April-September 1968

Area	Miles of Beach	No. of Diggers	Mean No. Clams/Digger	No. Clams Dug	Wastage	Total Clams
1-4 <u>1/</u>	16	37,776	11.3	424,616	95,192	519,808
5 <u>2/</u>	2	26,253	15.5	406,859	67,956	474,815
Total	18	64,029	13.0	831,475	163,148	994,623

1/ Necanicum River to Columbia River.

2/ Tillamook Head to Necanicum River.

DISCUSSION

The 1968 razor clam harvest, from a management standpoint, was successful in spite of a sharp decline in harvest. Fewer small clams and a definite increase in larger clams suggest that the July 15-August 31 closure is having the desired effect. However, the clams were in poor body condition all summer. The reason for this is unknown.

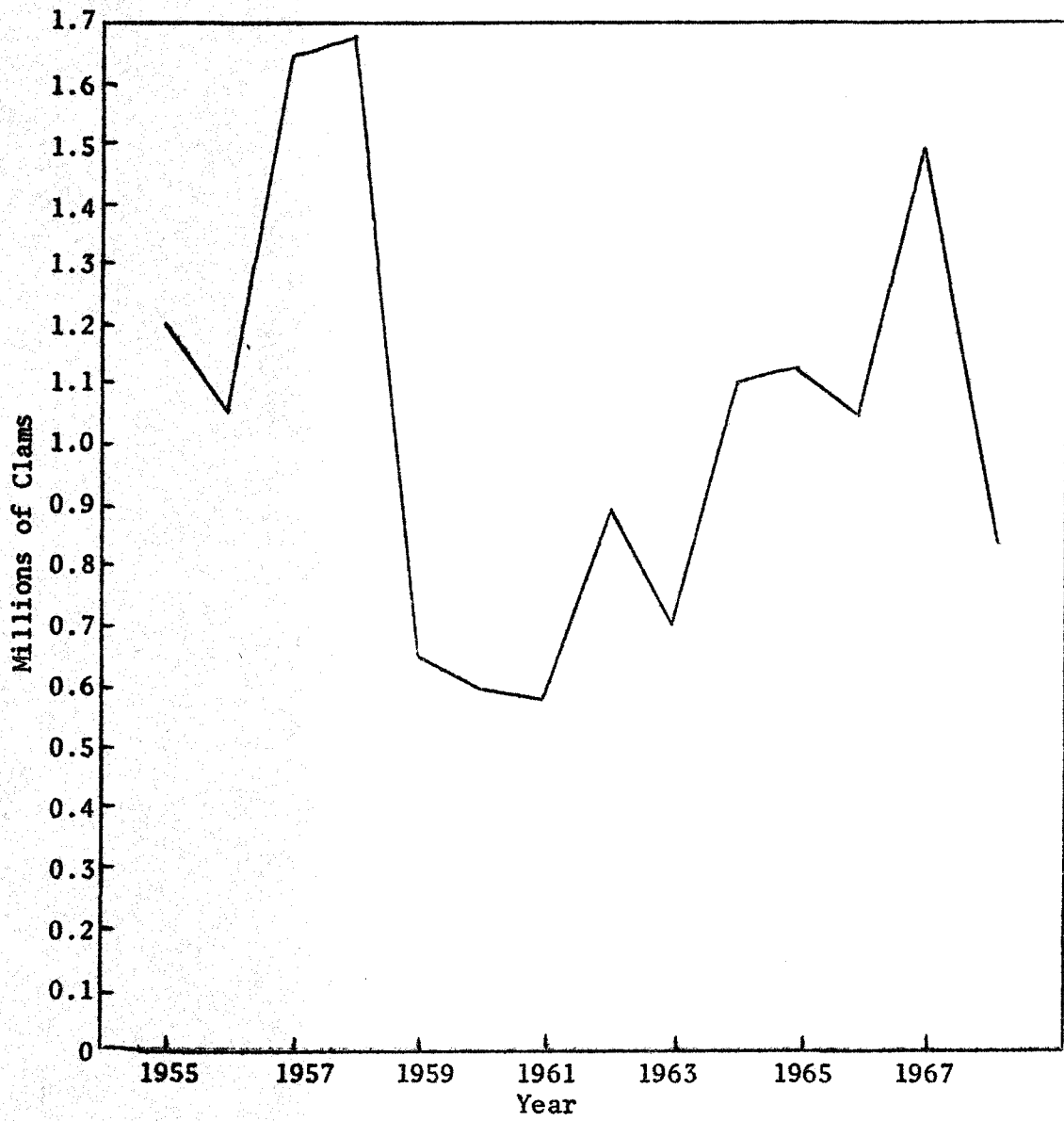


Figure 1. Personal-Use Harvest of Razor Clams, 1955-68

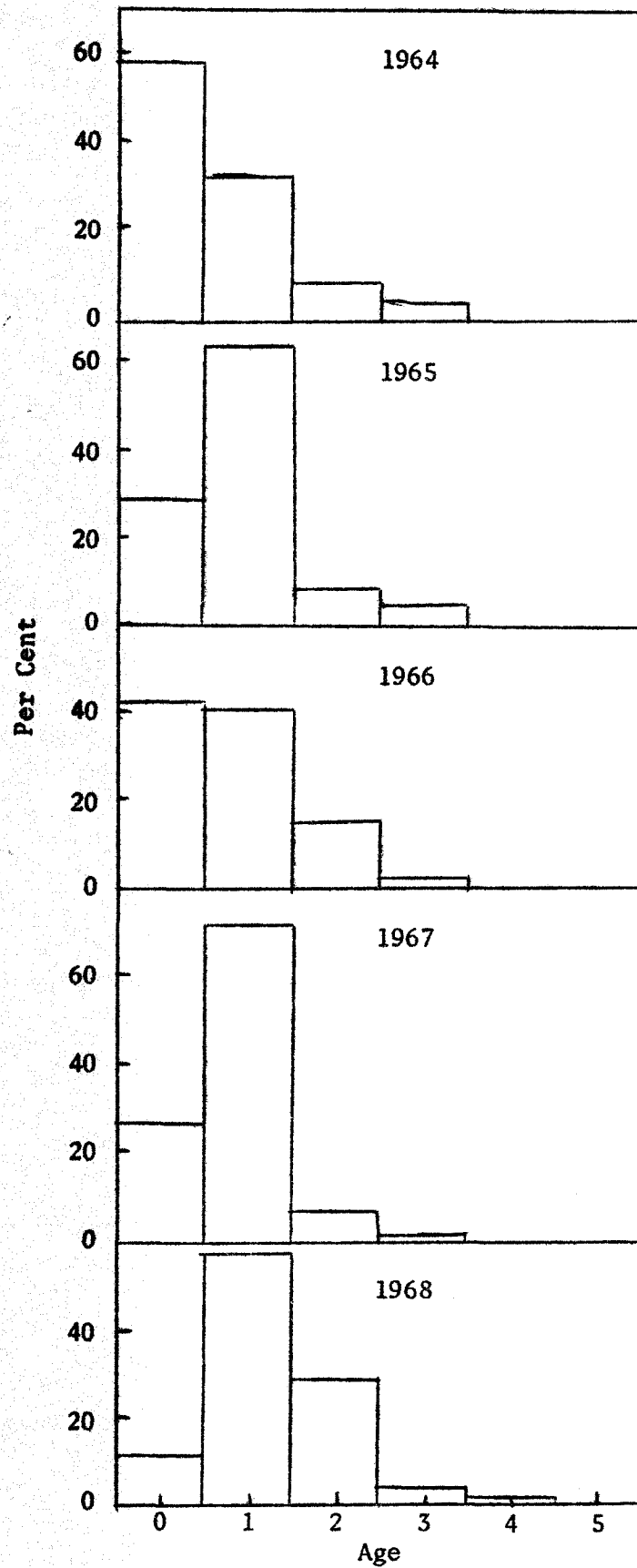


Figure 2. Per Cent Age Composition of Personal-Use Razor Clams, 1964-68