

**SHELLFISH INVESTIGATION
INFORMATION REPORT NO. 74-5**

THE 1972 RAZOR CLAM FISHERY

**by
Terry Link**

**Fish Commission of Oregon
Management & Research Division**

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INTRODUCTION

Razor clam catches were sampled from March through September. The sport and commercial catches from Clatsop County beaches were sampled for number and age composition of the clams harvested and the distribution and number of diggers. Data from other beaches south of Clatsop beaches were collected as time permitted. The sampling program was reviewed and a trial release of tagged razor clams was made.

SPORT FISHERY

The 1972 season produced 636,000 clams dug on 69,215 clam digger trips to Clatsop beaches. Compared to the 1971 season (Figure 1), a 10.7% decrease in digger trips and a 34.3% decrease in the number of clams dug was noted. The 2-mile long Seaside Beach accounted for 38.2% of the digger trips and 53.9% of the sport harvest. Table 1 lists the harvest, catch rate, and number of digger trips by statistical area. Clam wastage was calculated by using the 1966-70 average of 18.0% and totaled 140,000 clams.

Age composition for 1972 varied little from that of the previous five years as seen in Fig. 3. Older clams were plentiful on outside bars. Areas 1, 2, and 5 had an early set, and 10.0% of the sport dug clams in July were of the 1972 brood year. The fall and early winter fishery was good with second and third year clams dominating the catch.

COMMERCIAL FISHERY

A record low of 12,550 pounds (49,000 clams) was dug by 76 commercial diggers in 1972. Seaside and Gearhart areas produced 85.8% of the total pounds of clams landed. The average number of pounds per landing declined from 20.8 in 1971 to 18.2. The number of diggers remained low in spite of increases in price up to 80¢ a pound in the shell. A contributing factor to the low number of diggers was the need of a shellfish harvester's permit from the Public Health Service at a cost of \$10.00.

A regulation change which reduced the minimum length from 4¼ to 3-¾ inches became effective October 1. Results of the change are not conclusive at this time.

CLAM SURVEY

Sixteen beaches south of Tillamook Head were checked as time permitted. Table 3 lists the beaches and pertinent catch data. The most productive areas were Indian Beach, Short Sand Beach, South Beach (Newport) and Bastendorff Beach (Coos Bay).

REVIEW OF THE RAZOR CLAM SAMPLING PROGRAM

Some phases of the sampling program were revised for the 1972 season. Car counters were set to count cars leaving the beach instead of counting cars entering the beach areas. The counters were set to sample from one hour before low water to two hours after instead of from two hours before low water to one hour after. Data were collected and summarized to give digger and catch data by statistical area (Figure 2).

RAZOR CLAM TAGGING

A new method of tagging was tested on 576 razor clams. Clams were tagged with Peterson discs and Sea-Goin putty. Wanted posters were made up and distributed to aid in the recovery of tags. State wide coverage of the poster and news release was obtained. The fall sport fishery recovered 38 tags by December. Results of this study will determine the reliability and retention of the tag. Major tagging effort will be undertaken in 1973 if this method proves to be satisfactory.

Table 1. Sport Harvest of Razor Clams and Number of Digger Trips by Area from Clatsop Beaches, March to September, 1972

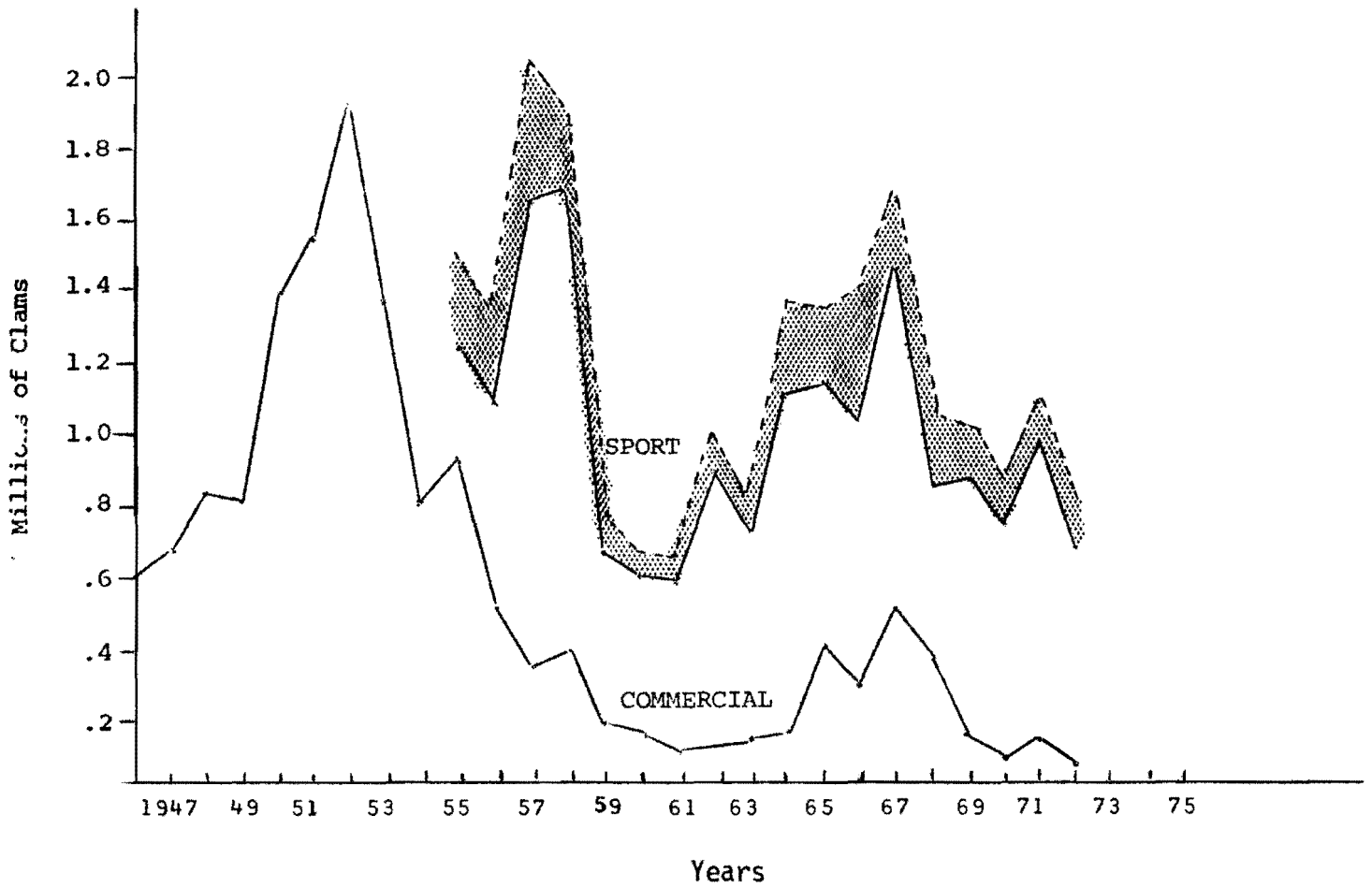
Area	Miles of Beach	Number of Digger Trips	Clams/Digger	Number of Clams Dug	Number of Clams Wasted	Total Harvest
<u>1</u> / ₁	3.6	8,885	4.7	41,000	9,000	50,000
<u>2</u> / ₂	6.2	13,740	4.7	64,000	14,000	78,000
<u>3</u> / ₃	5.0	13,172	6.7	89,000	20,000	109,000
<u>4</u> / ₄	1.2	6,955	14.2	99,000	22,000	120,000
<u>5</u> / ₅	2.0	26,463	13.0	343,000	75,000	418,000
Total	18.0	69,215	9.2	636,000	140,000	776,000

- 1/ Columbia River to Fort Stevens Park Beach Approach.
- 2/ Fort Stevens Park Beach Approach to Sunset Beach Road.
- 3/ Sunset Beach Road to Gearhart Beach Road.
- 4/ Gearhart Beach Road to Necanicum River.
- 5/ Necanicum River to Tillamook Head.

Table 2. Razor Clam Catch Data from Southern Oregon Beaches, 1972.

Area Sampled	No. of Diggers	No. of Clams	Clams/ Digger	Age Composition in Percentage						
				0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Indian Beach	31	345	11.1	10.9	15.8	30.1	15.8	14.4	5.5	7.5
Crescent Beach	0	0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Hatten Pt. Beach	17	32	1.9	---	---	---	85.7	14.3	---	---
Cannon Beach	17	25	1.5	20.0	40.0	36.0	4.0	---	---	---
Arch Cape Beach	9	20	2.2	5.0	10.0	55.0	30.0	---	---	---
Cove Beach	9	3	0.3	---	---	100.0	---	---	---	---
Short Sand Beach	3	48	16.0	8.3	50.0	37.5	4.2	---	---	---
South Beach	28	269	9.5	1.5	67.5	28.0	1.9	1.1	---	---
Seal Rock Beach	1	25	25.0	---	---	4.0	24.0	60.0	12.0	---
Beaver Creek Beach	---	61	---	9.8	1.6	57.4	27.9	3.3	---	---
China Creek Beach	15	41	2.7	30.0	---	10.0	6.7	50.0	3.3	---
Bastendorff Beach	2	26	13.0	23.1	23.1	26.9	26.9	---	---	---
Bandon Beach	3	4	1.3	50.0	25.0	---	---	25.0	---	---
Sixes River Beach	1	24	24.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Bailey Beach	15	46	3.1	2.2	23.9	63.1	4.3	4.3	2.2	---
Myers Creek Beach	8	51	6.4	67.9	24.5	7.6	---	---	---	---

Figure 1. Annual Number of Clams Dug from 1946 to Present, Shaded Areas Indicate Number of Clams Wasted.



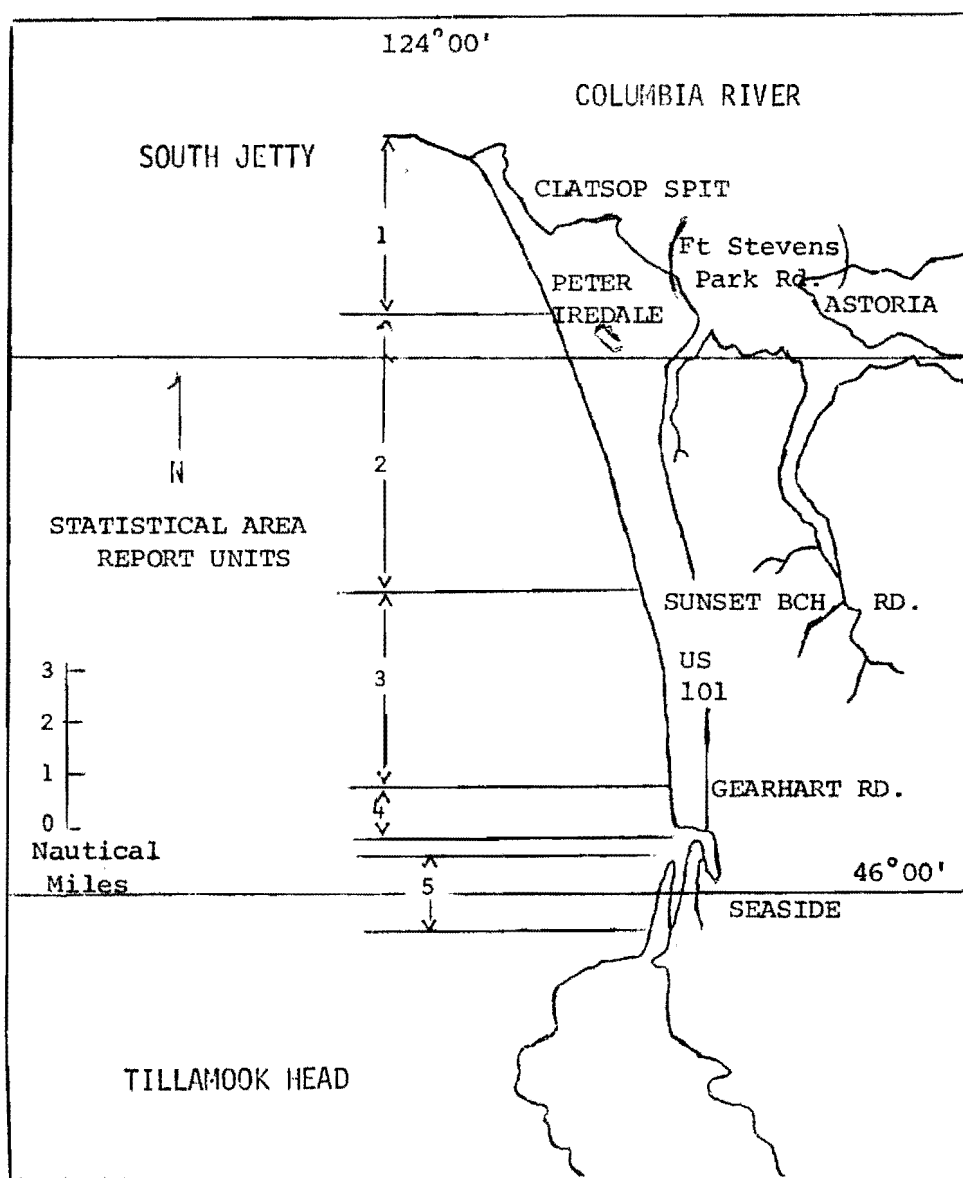


Figure 2. A Map of Clatsop Beaches, Oregon, Showing Location of Statistical Area Report Units.

Figure 3. Percentage Age Composition of Personal Use Razor Clams From Clatsop Beach, 1967-72.

