

INFORMATION REPORT

The 1967 Recreational Razor Clam Fishery

INTRODUCTION

Razor clam diggers were sampled, as in the past, on every other minus tide from April to September. The number of diggers and the number and age composition of the clams harvested were noted. Wastage was sampled on each tide series. Results of the first year of the July 15-August 31 closure are given in this report.

HARVEST

Good digging was the rule in 1967; nearly 74,000 sport diggers dug about 1.7 million clams, including wastage (Figure 1). Although 200,000 clams were wasted, this is far below the 434,000 of 1966 (Table 1). The harvest was near record in spite of a 6-week closure. Digging was excellent in February and March on the evening tides. A rough surf did not discourage several thousand diggers.

Seaside was again heavily dug and accounted for 42% of the diggers and 43% of the harvest. However, the 16-mile north beach (Table 1) supported a major part of the fishery. Area 3 between the Gearhart and Sunset roads provided excellent digging for both personal-use and commercial diggers. Area 2 between the Sunset and Peter Iredale roads, slow for many years, was one of the better places to dig in 1967. Clams north of the Peter Iredale were smaller than those to the south and most of the diggers stayed away from this area.

The age composition for 1963-67 is shown in Figure 2. Clams older than 2 years were scarce. The take of first-year clams (0's) was down, one result of the 6-week closure, but the harvest of age 1+ clams (4-5 inches in length) was the highest on record in recent years.

Table 1. Personal-use harvest of razor clams by area from Clatsop beach, April-September 1967.

Area	Miles of beach	No. of diggers	Mean no. clams/dig	No. clams dug	Wastage	Total clams
1-4 ^{1/}	16	42,678	19.7	840,757	68,101	908,858
5 ^{2/}	2	31,118	20.3	631,695	126,971	758,666
Total	18	73,796	20.0	1,472,452	195,072	1,667,524

1/ Necanicum River to Columbia River (North Beach).

2/ Tillamook Head to Necanicum River (Seaside).

The catch of first-year clams by series reached 40% on the north beach and 59% at Seaside.

RESULTS OF THE CLOSURE

The first year of the closure is considered a success by achieving a saving of small clams. Calculations indicate that had digging taken place from July 15-August 31, wastage would have increased by 39% or another 130,000 clams. The take-home catch of small clams would have increased by 51% or 366,000 clams (Figure 3). Allowing for natural mortality, I expect a possible carry over of up to 600,000 clams in 1968.

Without the closure the 1967 harvest would have been near 2.3 million clams, but nearly 50% would have been small or wasted.

Darrell Demory
Shellfish Investigations
Fish Commission of Oregon
Research Division
October 2, 1967

Distribution:
Schoning & Weberg
Newport
Research
Astoria
Library

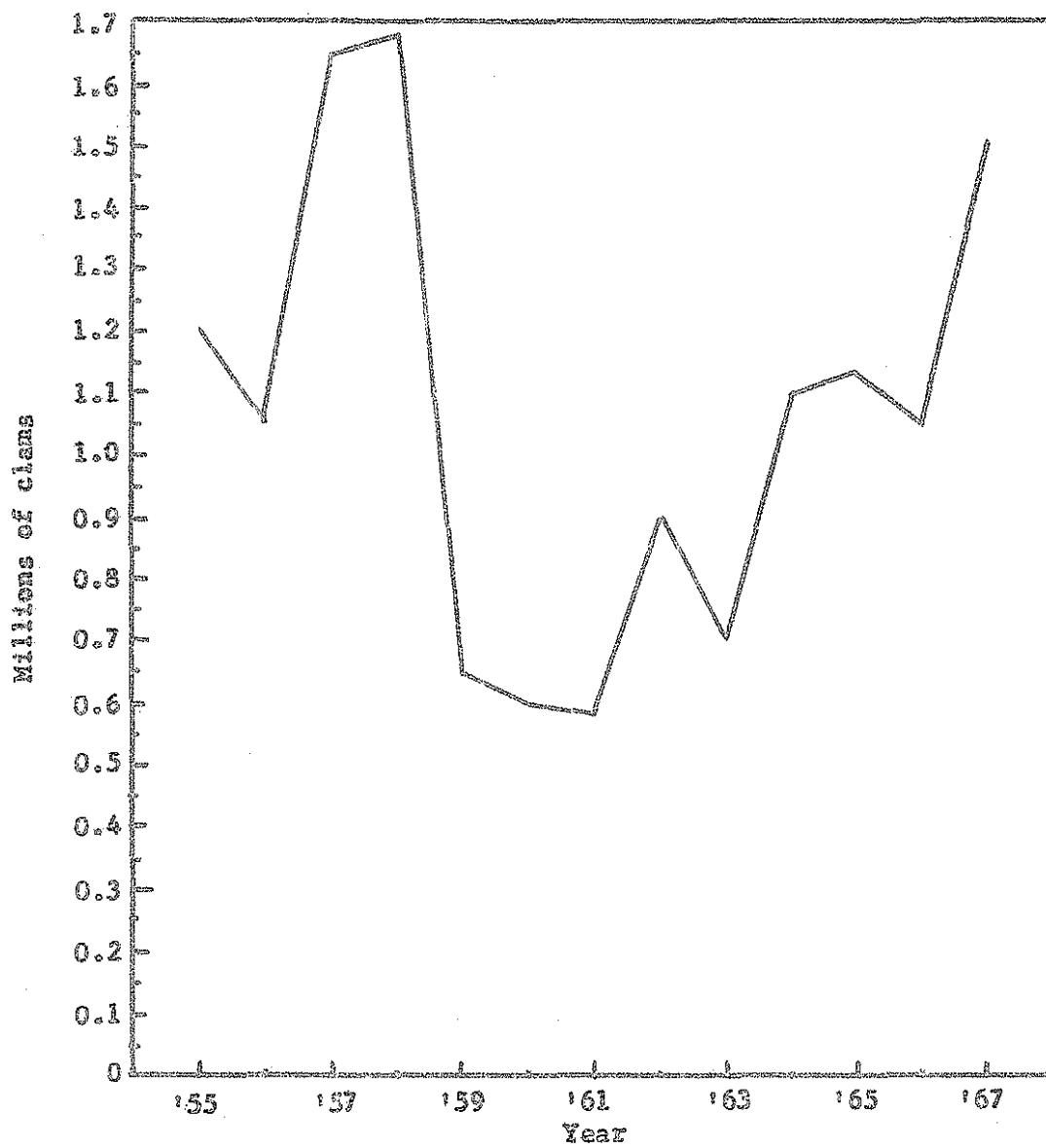


Figure 1. Personal-use harvest of razor clams, 1955-67.

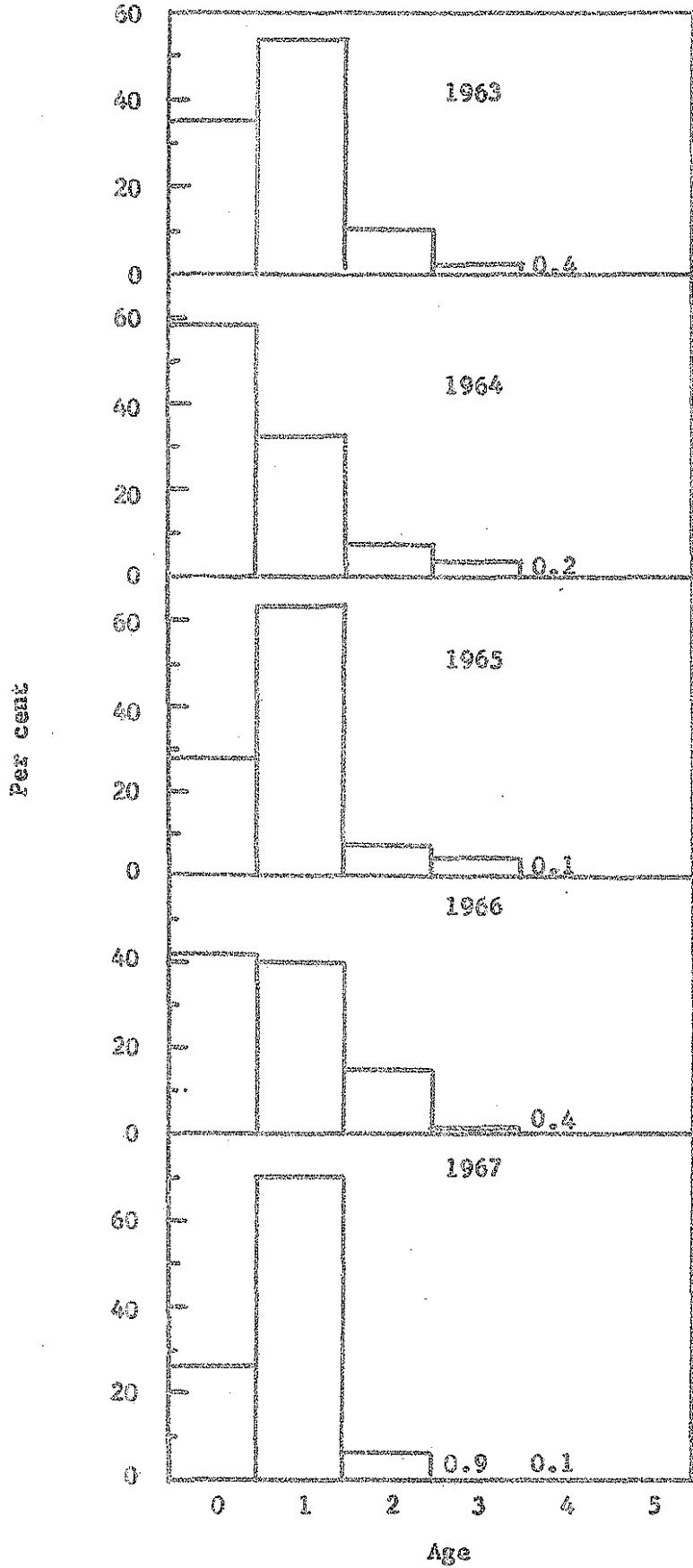


Figure 2. Per cent age composition of personal-use razor clams, 1963-67.

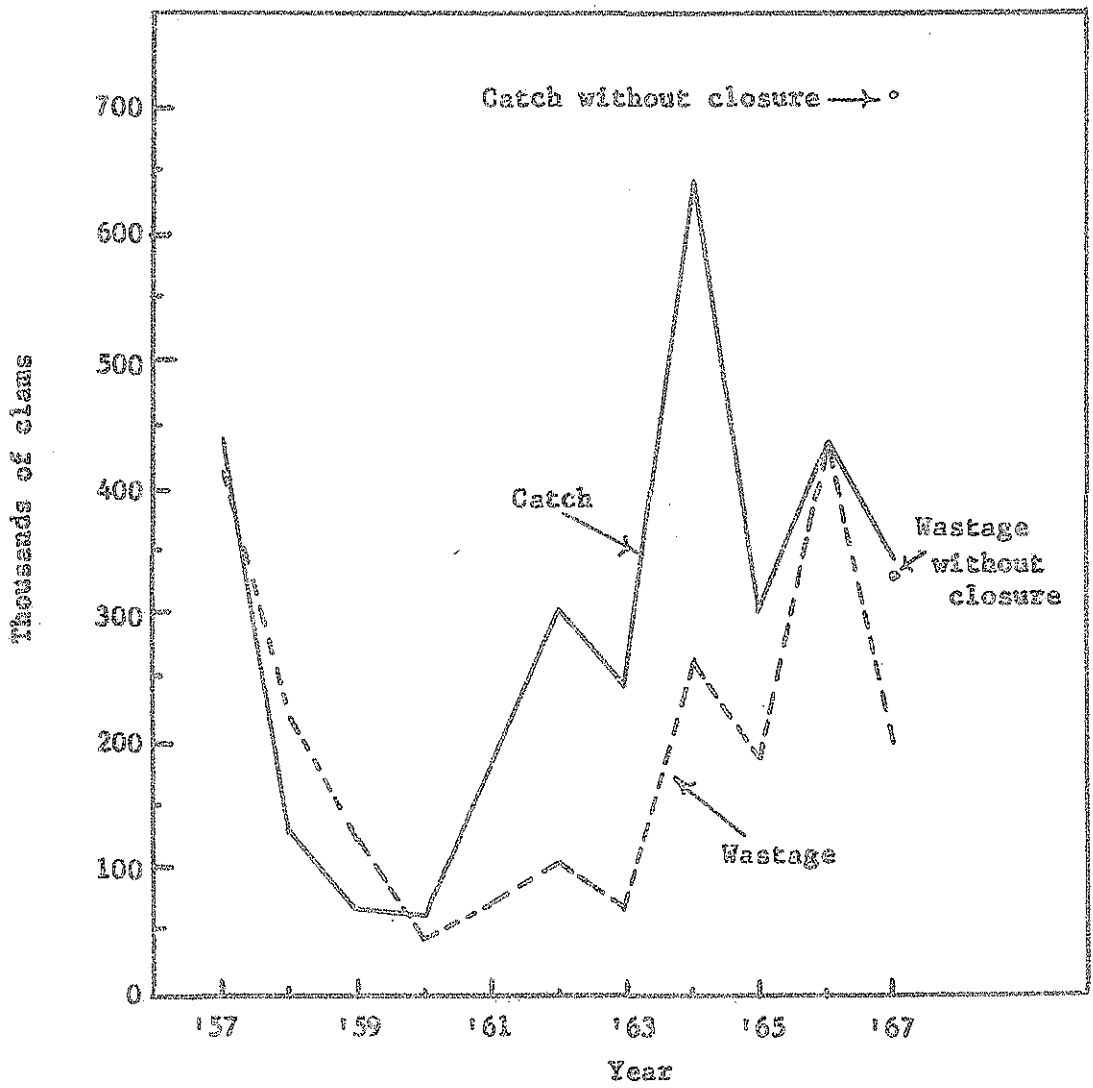


Figure 3. Personal-use harvest and wastage of first year razor clams from Clatsop beaches, 1957-67.