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**SHELLFISH INVESTIGATION
Information Report 72-1**

The 1970 Razor Clam Fishery

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INTRODUCTION

Clams dug by razor clam diggers were sampled from March through September. The sampling day and area were selected randomly according to a method suggested by our statistician. The number of clam digger trips and the number and age of the clams were noted for the personal use and commercial fisheries. Several razor clam beaches south of Tillamook Head, Clatsop County, were checked for clams periodically.

PERSONAL USE HARVEST

Table 1 shows the personal use harvest of razor clams and the number of clam digger trips by area for Clatsop Beach. Rough surf and poor weather conditions contributed to a continued decline of the catch. Compared to 1969 the number of digger trips declined 5.4% while the number of clams dug declined 16%. Digging pressure on the popular Seaside Beach declined 32.4%.

Table 1. Personal Use Harvest of Razor Clams by Area

Area	Miles of Beach	No. of Diggers	Clams/Diggers	No. Clams Dug	No. Wasted	Total
1-3 <u>1/</u>	14	36,700	13.1	481,000	80,000	561,000
4 <u>2/</u>	2	3,500	12.9	45,000	8,000	53,000
5 <u>3/</u>	2	15,900	11.9	189,000	37,000	226,000
TOTAL	18	56,100	12.7	715,000	125,000	840,000

1/ Columbia River to Gearhart Road. (North Beach)

2/ Gearhart Road to Necanicum River. (Gearhart)

3/ Necanicum River to Tillamook Head. (Seaside)

The percentage age composition for 1965-70 is shown in Figure 1. One-year-old clams are still the mainstay of the fishery. The relatively high percentage of 0's in the catch indicate the presence of a strong year class. However, the catch of 0's combined with 125,000 wasted clams, indicates that a utilization problem still exists in spite of the July 15-August 31 closure. However, without the closure, the utilization problem would have been much worse.

COMMERCIAL FISHERY

The 1970 commercial catch of 61,000 clams was the lowest in the past 27 years. The average number of pounds per landing declined by only 2.5 pounds, but the number of licenses issued dropped from 185 to 79. The price of clams to the digger remained high; up to \$2.20/lb for cleaned clams and \$0.65/lb in the shell.

CLAM SURVEYS

Six beaches south of Tillamook Head were checked as time permitted. Table 2 lists the beaches and pertinent catch data. Myers Creek Beach, 8 miles south of Gold Beach, was the most productive of the southern beaches.

Table 2. Razor Clam Catch Data from Southern Beaches, 1970

Area Sampled	No. of Diggers	No. of Clams	Clams/Digger	Age Composition in Percentage					
				0	1	2	3	4	5
Indian Beach	60	424	7.1	42.0	17.5	16.0	24.5		
Cannon Beach	24	256	10.7	51.7	38.9	9.4			
Cove Beach	55	497	9.0	39.6	30.7	25.3	3.4	1.0	
Agate Beach	24	57	2.4			NO DATA			
South Beach	2	15	7.5	9.9	10.3	20.3	45.2	13.9	0.4
Myers Creek	24	382	15.9	1.0	22.8	23.6	23.3	22.3	7.0

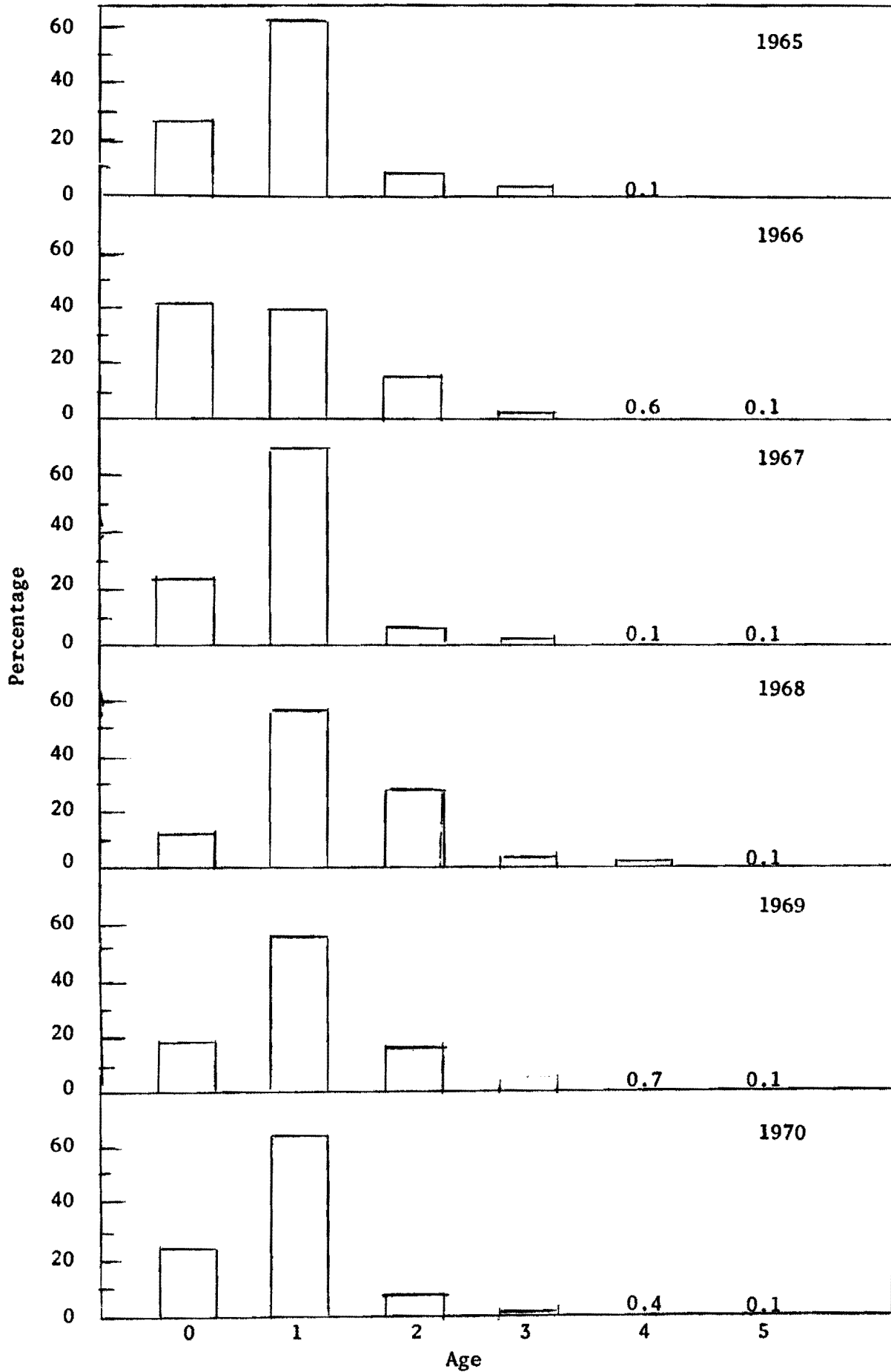


Figure 1. Percentage Age Composition of Personal Use Razor Clams From Clatsop Beach, 1965-70