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**SHELLFISH SURVEY OF CASTLEMAINE
HARBOUR (CROMANE).**

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SHELLFISH SURVEY OF CASTLEMAINE HARBOUR AND

THE INNER PART OF DINGLE BAY.

Castlemaine Harbour has the oldest mussel fishery in Ireland and the only mussel purification tank to date (capacity 360 tons per month built in 1941) is operated in that area. The monthly landings and their values since 1966 are given in Table 1. Recently Castlemaine Harbour has shown a sustained annual growth in mussel landings. In September 1972 a survey was carried out in Castlemaine Harbour and the inner part of Dingle Bay to estimate the total quantity of available commercial shellfish (See Fig. 1).

There are about 6,840 acres in Castlemaine Harbour inside a straight line drawn from Inch Point to the old Coastguard Station at Cromane. About 2,000 of these are sub-littoral and the rest consist of about 1,800 acres of sand (which is less suitable for shellfish farming). A further 2,240 acres of mud and sandy mud at Banc Fluic are suitable for shellfish cultivation. There are a further 880 acres suitable for cockle cultivation outside these boundaries in Glenbeigh Strand known locally as the Cockle Strand.

RESULTS:

In the Castlemaine Harbour intertidal zone there are about 1,200 tons of mussels at an average density of 84 tons to the acre. These mussels are to be found at six different locations indicated in Fig. 1. Table 1 gives details of the approximate quantity available and the area covered, the separate and total tonnage available and their densities.

The length distribution of these mussels is shown in Table 11 which indicates that a number of year classes from 0 group upwards are present in most areas, Capín na Badgear and Crow Point being the exception with no juvenile mussels. It will be seen that Banc Fluic has the largest quantity of mussels and that 79% of these mussels are below the acceptable commercial length (50 mm.).

Table 111 shows that if these mussels are culled, the meat yield of these culled mussels over 50 mm. would be acceptable. The shell weight indicates however that they are old mussels.

