ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DOMESTIC FISHERIES REPORT

Salmon

Preliminary 1985 Catches

The preliminary 1985 statewide salmon catch has been revised upward to 144.5 million fish, a new record. This is the sixth year in a row that statewide salmon harvests have exceeded the 100 million level. The estimated 1985 ex-vessel value was $370 million.

Southeast Troll Fishery

Since the October 1 opening of the Southeast winter troll fishery, 15,137 chinook have been landed. This level is higher than expected due to greater than average fishing effort.

Shellfish

Tanner Crab 1985/86 Season

Area	Opening Date	Harvest in Millions of Pounds preseason estimate	actual
Southeast	Feb. 10	0.75 - 2.5	-
Yakutat	Jan. 15	0.2 - 1.0	-
PWS	Jan. 5	0.5	-
Cook Inlet	Nov. 1	3.0 - 4.4	2.4
Kodiak	Jan. 15	10.0 - 12.0	-
S. Peninsula	Jan. 15	0.04	-
Chignik	Jan. 15	3.9	-
E. Aleutians	Jan. 15	0.17	-
W. Aleutians	Nov. 1	0.04	-
Bering Sea			
bairdi	Jan. 15	3.0	-
opilio	Oct. 9	57.0	0.3

King Crab 1985 Season

Area	Opening Date	Harvest in millions of pounds preseason estimate	actual
Southeast	*	-	-
Yakutat	Nov. 15	.04	-
PWS	*	-	-
Cook Inlet	*	-	-
Kodiak	*	-	-
Alaska Pen.	*	-	-
Dutch Harbor	Jan. 1 (brown crab only)	-	1.4
Adak	Nov. 1	0.5 - 2.0	1.1
Bristol Bay	Sept. 25	2.0 - 5.0	4.2
Pribilofs	Sept. 25	0.3 - 0.8	0.5
St. Matthew	Sept. 1	1.0 - 1.9	2.4
Norton Sound	Aug. 1	0.45	0.43
St. Lawrence	Aug. 1	-	-

* Fishery did not open in 1985

AGENDA ITEM B-2
FISH MANAGEMENT DIV.
NMFS, JUNEAU
DECEMBER 1985
December 11, 1985

1985 ALASKA GROUNDFISH CATCH
(ROUND WEIGHT IN METRIC TONS)

SPECIES	TYPE	INTERNAL WATERS	S.E./ E. YAKUT.	WEST YAKUT.	CENTRAL GULF	WESTERN GULF	TOTAL GULF	BERING SEA	ALEUTIAN ISLANDS	TOTAL BSA	1985 ALASKA	1984 ALASKA	% CHANGE
POLLOCK	DAP	.	.	.	2583	6497	9080	25907	45	39094	48174	4866	719.9%
	JVP	.	.	.	222345	11805	234150	368641	7281	375922	610072	441489	138.2%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	8668	18337	27005	698963	21756	720719	747724	951484	78.6%
SABLEFISH	DAP	1621	2594	2214	3686	2040	12155	2318	823	3141	15296	9713	157.5%
	JVP	.	.	.	95	91	186	42	63	105	291	868	33.5%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	20	17	37	187	14	201	238	2573	9.3%
PACIFIC COD	DAP	45	10	.	892	778	1728	47106	343	67478	69206	39727	123.8%
	JVP	.	.	.	1927	313	2240	35222	5619	40841	43061	35375	121.8%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	1785	7332	9117	46120	6	46126	55243	61761	89.4%
ALL FLOUNDERS	DAP	37	.	.	52	8	97	36	9	47	144	385	37.4%
	JVP	.	.	.	1867	337	2204	171494	324	171818	174022	53520	325.2%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	55	111	166	134046	31	134077	134243	167100	80.3%
P.O.P.	DAP	.	6	3	1	658	668	756	89	845	1513	1397	108.3%
	JVP	.	.	.	28	205	233	32	414	446	679	2309	29.4%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	2	5	7	62	0	62	69	3282	2.1%
ROCKFISH	DAP	249	480	13	30	75	847	132	52	184	1031	879	117.3%
	JVP	.	.	.	9	.	9	3	14	17	26	245	10.6%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	1	.	1	37	3	40	41	760	5.4%
ATKA MACKEREL	DAP	.	.	.	.	.	0	.	.	0	0	31	***
	JVP	.	.	.	1	3	4	3	37763	37766	37770	36528	103.4%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	0	.	0	1	.	1	1	595	0.2%
OTHER	DAP	12	50	.	12	169	243	466	.	466	709	99	716.2%
	JVP	.	.	.	1988	1	1989	4337	1977	6314	8303	4035	205.8%
	FOREIGN	.	.	.	22	64	86	5188	4	5192	5278	10025	52.6%
TOTAL	DAP	1967	3140	2230	7256	10225	24818	76723	1361	111255	136073	57097	180.2%
	JVP	0	0	0	228260	12755	241015	579774	53455	633229	874244	574369	152.2%
	FOREIGN	0	0	0	10553	25866	36419	894604	21814	916418	942537	1197577	78.7%

SOURCES: 1985 DAP-- ADF&G REPORT AS OF 12-5-85
1985 JVP AND FOREIGN--NMFS PRELIMINARY REPORTS FOR 11-23-85
1984 DATA-- PACFIN REPORT #209, JANUARY-NOVEMBER

BSA pollock and pacific cod totals are estimates of catch through the end of 1985.

REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

ON

BERING SEA TANNER CRAB AND RED KING CRAB,

BRISTOL BAY RED KING CRAB,

AND ST. MATTHEW BLUE KING CRAB

SEPTEMBER 1985

BY

KENNETH L. GRIFFIN
AREA SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST
BERING SEA/ALEUTIANS

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries
P.O. Box 308
Dutch Harbor, AK 99692

(907) 581-1239

BERING SEA DISTRICT TANNER CRAB

Introduction

The Bering Sea District of statistical Area "J" includes all waters of the Bering Sea north of the latitude of Cape Sarichef and east of the U.S. Russian Convention Line of 1867. The district has three sub-districts the Southeastern, the Pribilof and the Northern, and produces two species of the genus Chionoecetes, bairdi and opilio, that are commercially harvested.

With the decline in the C. bairdi stocks in the Bering Sea, which were primarily harvested from the Southeastern sub-district, industry and markets have turned to the smaller, more abundant, but less valuable C. opilio stocks to fill demands for tanner crab. The C. bairdi stocks declined drastically in 1978 and have continued to decline from a harvest of 29.7 million pounds taken during the 1981 fishery to only 1.2 million pounds taken during 1983. Although prices have remained high for C. bairdi, fishing effort has decreased as the stock abundance decreased.

The 1985 Bering Sea tanner crab season opened to fishing on January 15. With a projected harvest of 3.0 million pounds for C. bairdi, little effort concentrated on them. The C. bairdi fishery was closed by regulation on June 15 with a total harvest of 3.2 million pounds taken by 46 vessels. Crab averaged 12 per pot, four more than last year and weighed 2.4 pounds. Most vessel effort went to the C. opilio fishery in the Southeastern and Pribilof sub-districts between 167° and 169° W. longitude. National Marine Fisheries Service had projected a total harvest of 98 million pounds for the Bering Sea; Northern 30.0, Pribilof 25.0 and Southeastern 43.0 million pounds.

The C. opilio fishery harvest through September 22 was 57.4 million pounds; 24.2 from the Southeastern, 24.6 from the Pribilof and 8.6 from the Northern sub-districts. The Pribilof sub-district was closed May 8 when the harvest guideline was obtained. The Southeastern and Northern sub-districts remained open until September 22 when they were closed to allow an orderly opening of the king crab fisheries in the areas. On industry request, the C. opilio fishery was scheduled to reopen seven days after the closure of the Bristol Bay king crab season.

Upon the completion of the NMFS surveys, the 1986 harvest projections were established for the Bering Sea C. opilio stocks and with these new harvest guidelines in effort, the entire Bering Sea District west of 164° W. longitude was reopened from October 9 through December 31, 1985. Any harvest coming from the open areas prior to the scheduled January 15, 1986 opening, will be deducted from the 1986 harvest guidelines. The new projected harvest from the Southeastern, Pribilof and Northern sub-districts are 9.0, 28.0 and 20.0 million pounds, respectively, for a total projected 1986 harvest of 57.0 million pounds.

Due to poor market conditions, no increase in price and the uncertainty of the crab condition only a few major processors are purchasing C. opilio. To date, 28 vessels have registered for the fishery and have made landings.

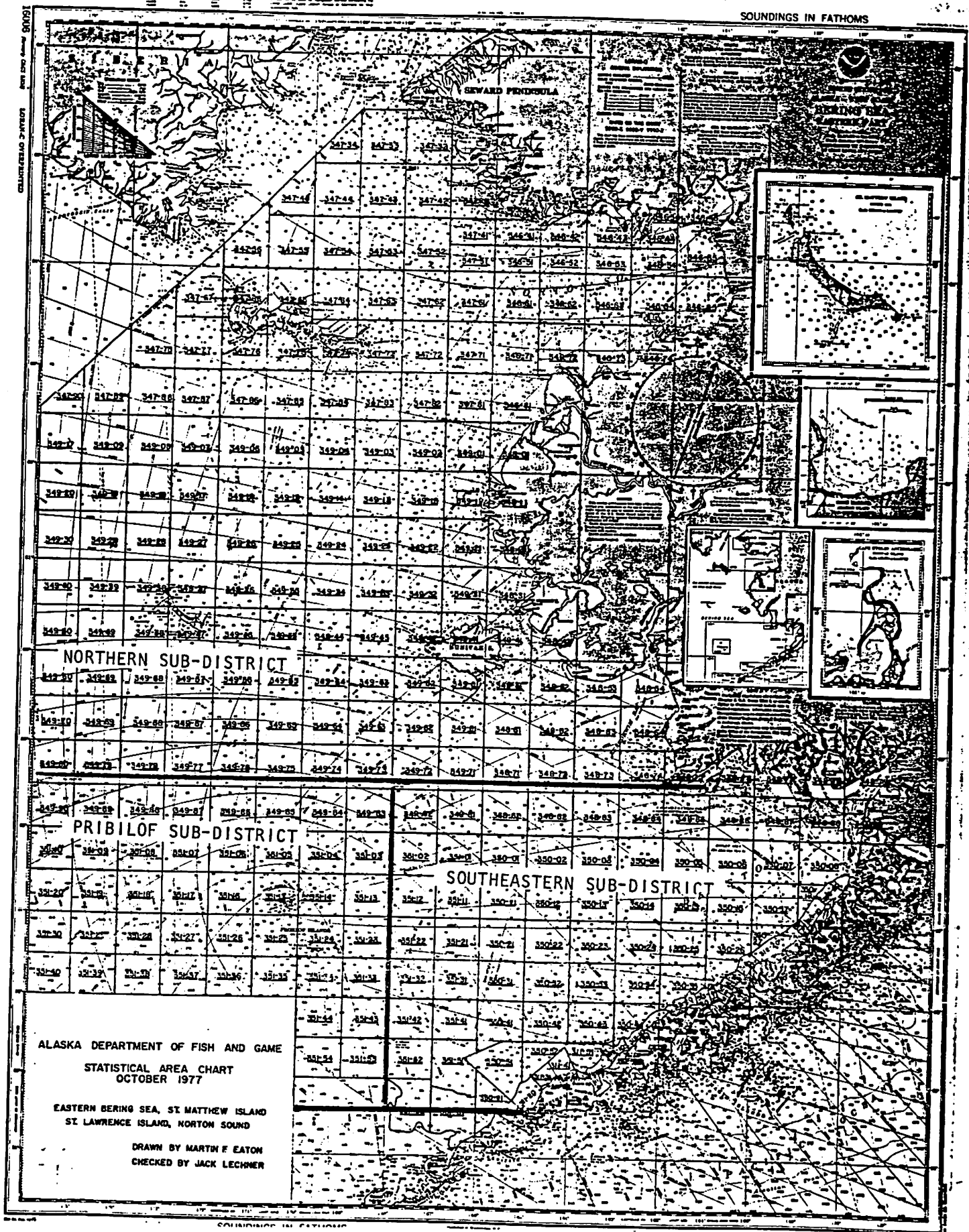

Figure 1. Bering Sea District of Area "J".

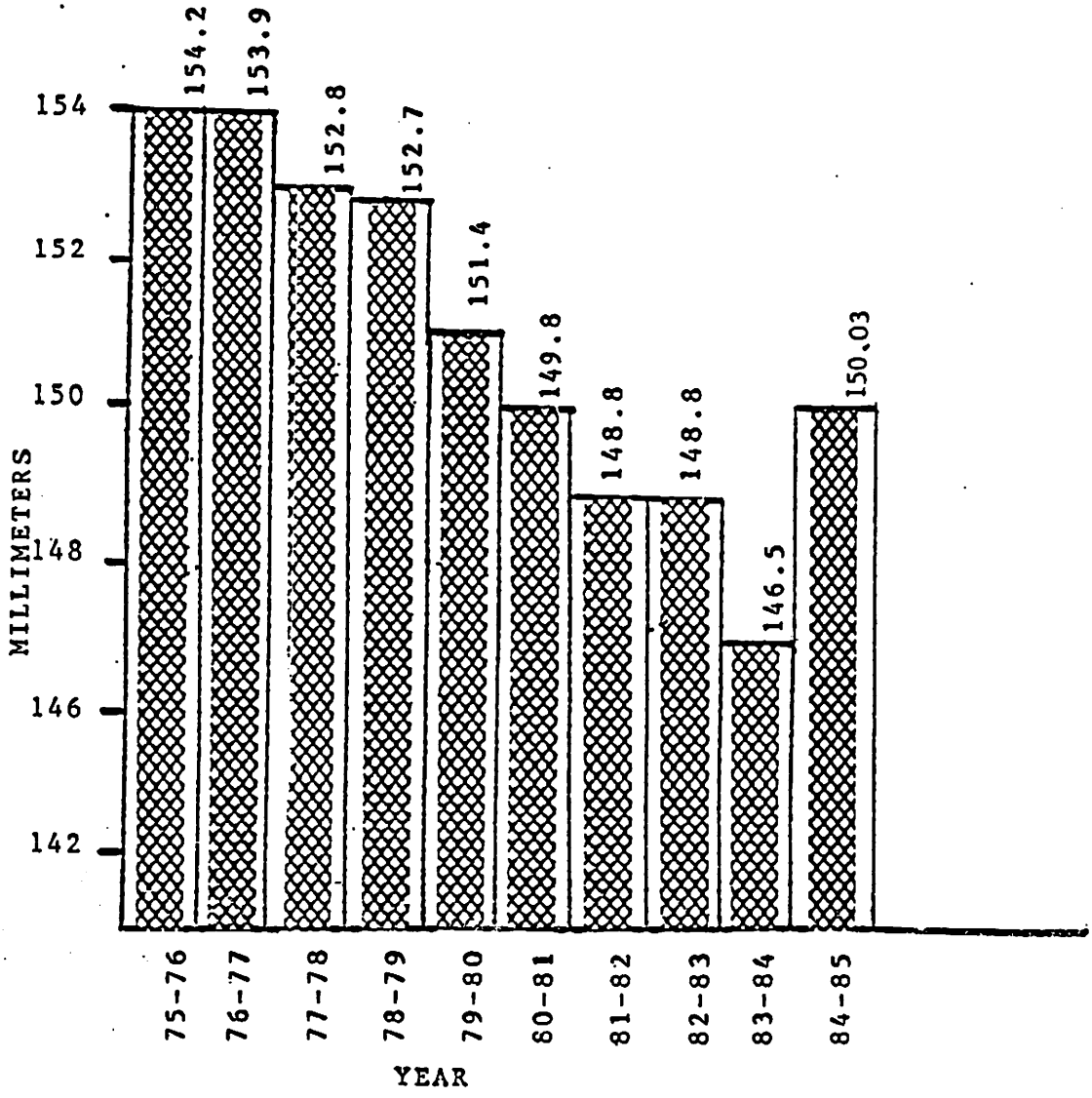

Figure 2. Historic C. bairdi Average Width Frequencies for the Bering Sea District.

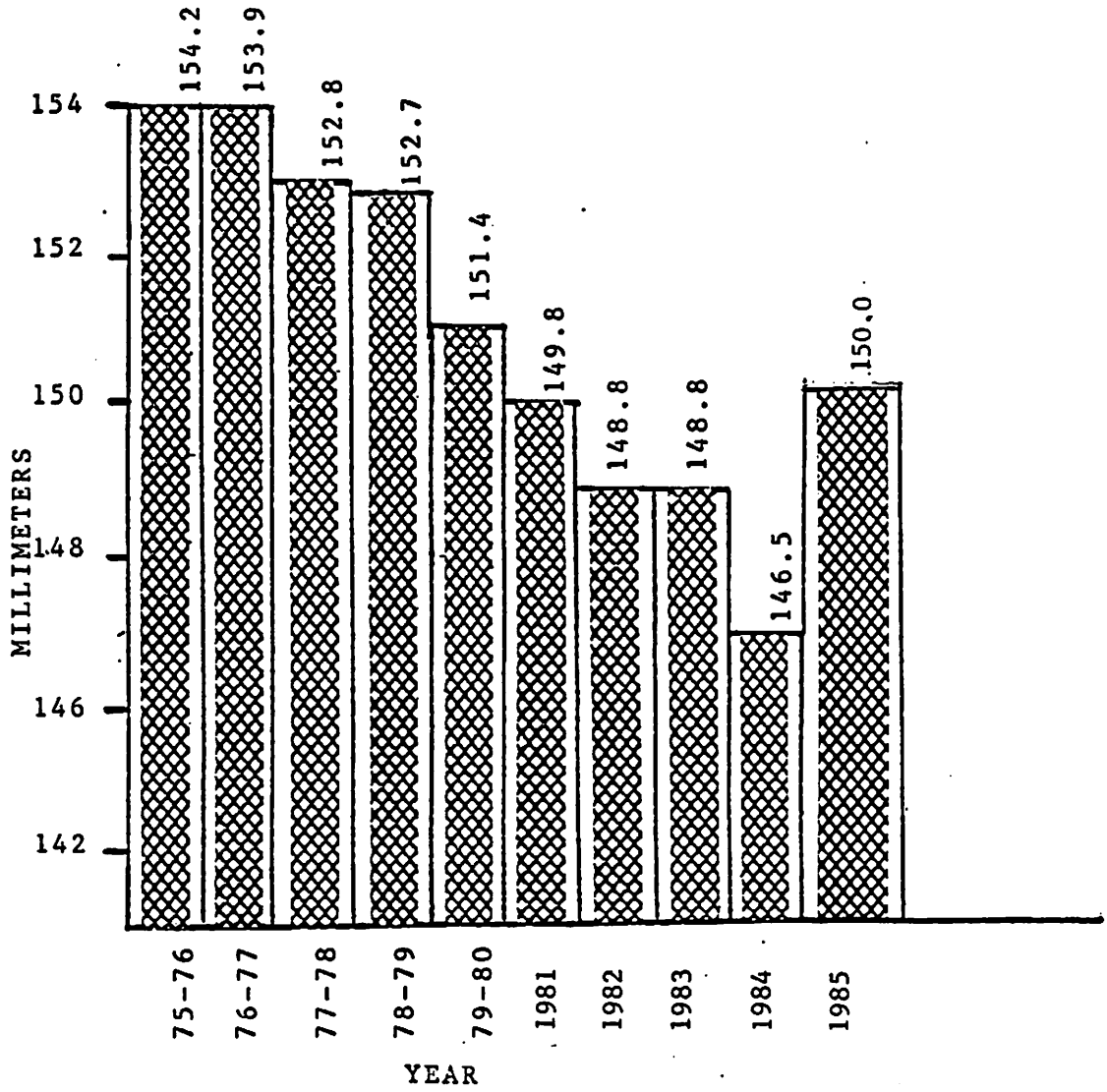

Figure 3. Historic C. bairdi average width frequencies for the Bering Sea District.

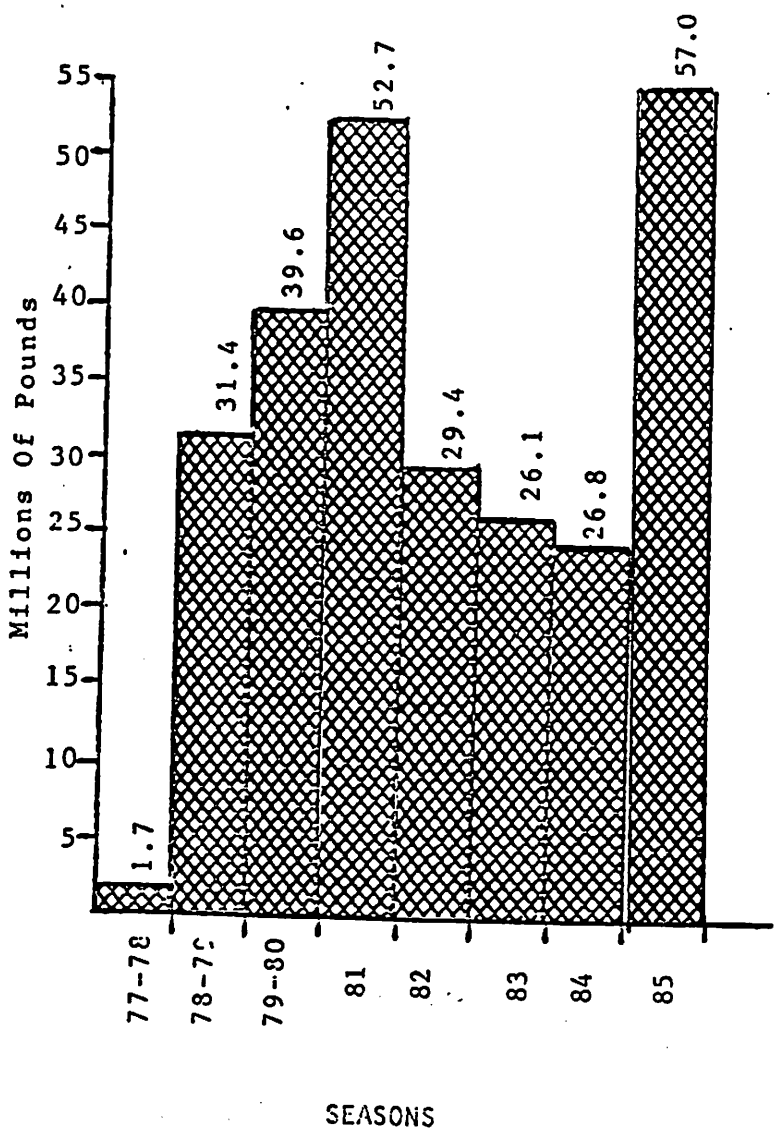

Figure 4. Historic Bering Sea C. opilio catch, by season.

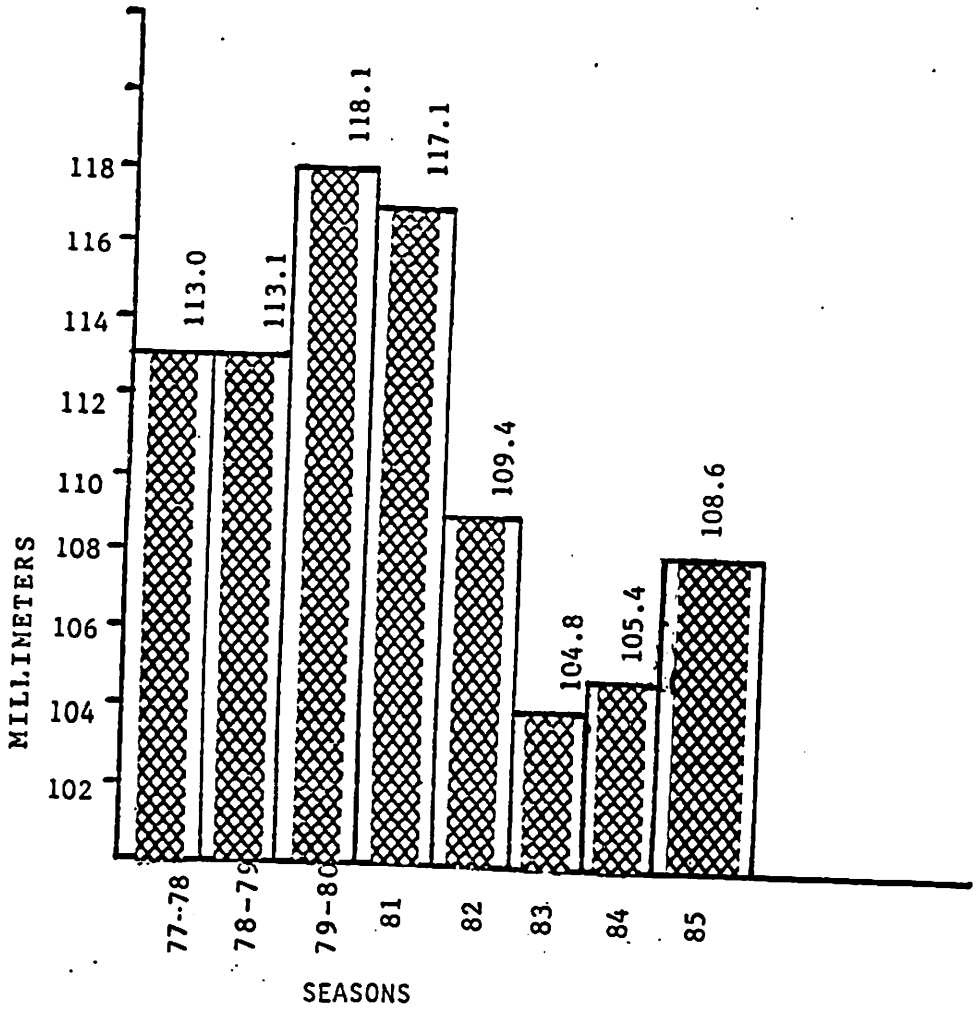

Figure 5. Historic Average Width Frequencies for the Bering Sea District, C. opilio.

BERING SEA KING CRAB

Pribilof District

The Pribilof District blue king crab fishery opened simultaneously with the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery on September 25 for a harvest guideline of 0.3 to 0.8 million pounds. Only two vessels received initial tank inspections and were the only vessels to fish the area until the closure of the Bristol Bay area on October 2.

After the Bristol Bay closure, 24 vessels including three catcher/processors and three floating processors moved into the area. With the arrival of processors, approximately 195,000 pounds was delivered by two vessels. A total of 26 vessels received tank inspections and registrations, 10 more than the previous season; but due to the low catch of three to five crab per pot and the large vessel effort, vessels began to leave the fishery within a week of registering.

On October 16, 318,000 pounds of crab had been delivered by 16 vessels with an average catch of two to five crab per pot. Having achieved the lower harvest guideline and considering the effort level and fishery performance, the decision to close the fishery on October 21 was made. The season harvest of 533,000 pounds was caught by 26 vessels. The average weight of 6.90 pounds per crab was seven-tenths of a pound less than the 1984-85 season, but the average catch of three crab per pot was identical to the past two seasons.

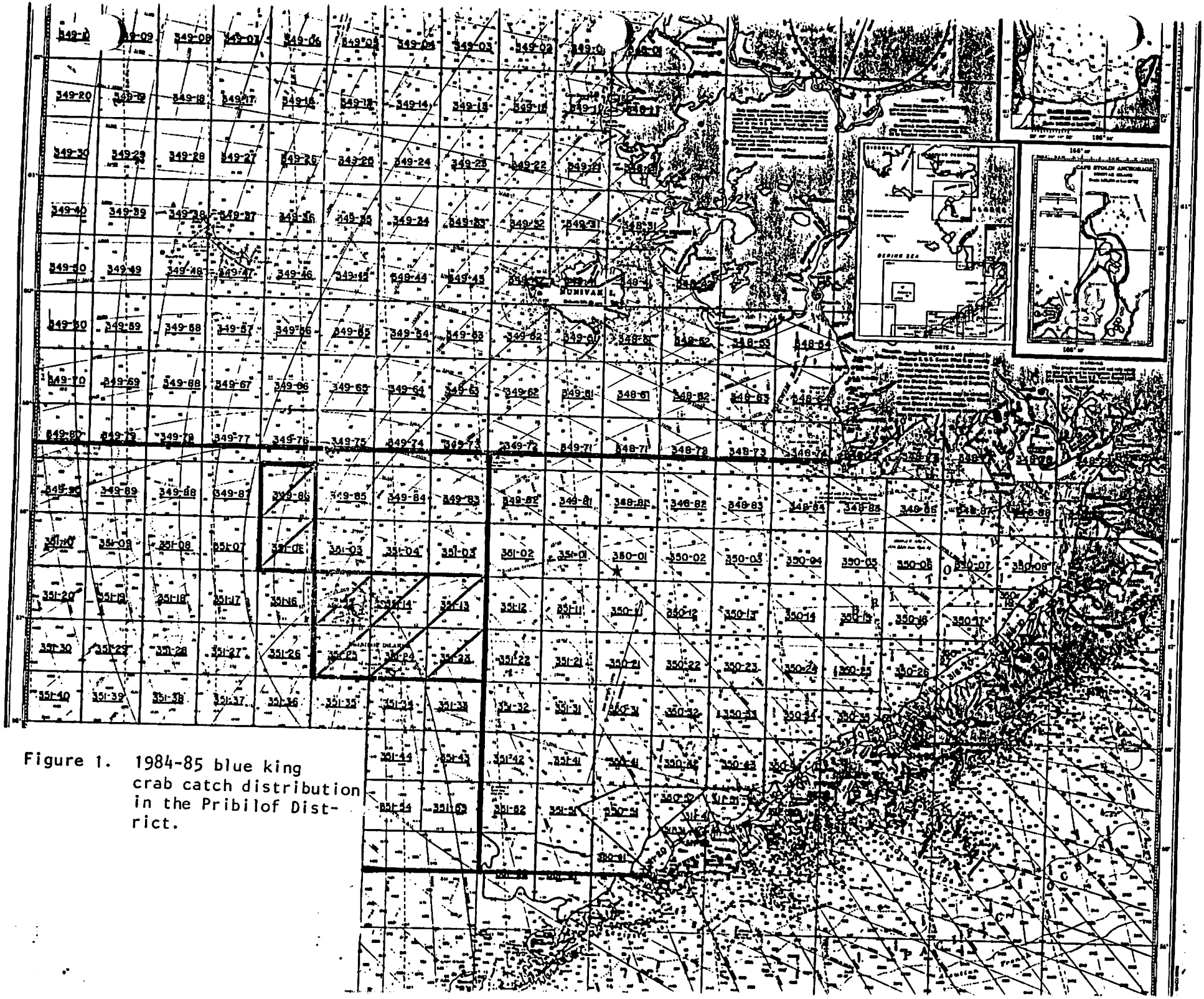

Figure 1. 1984-85 blue king crab catch distribution in the Pribilof District.

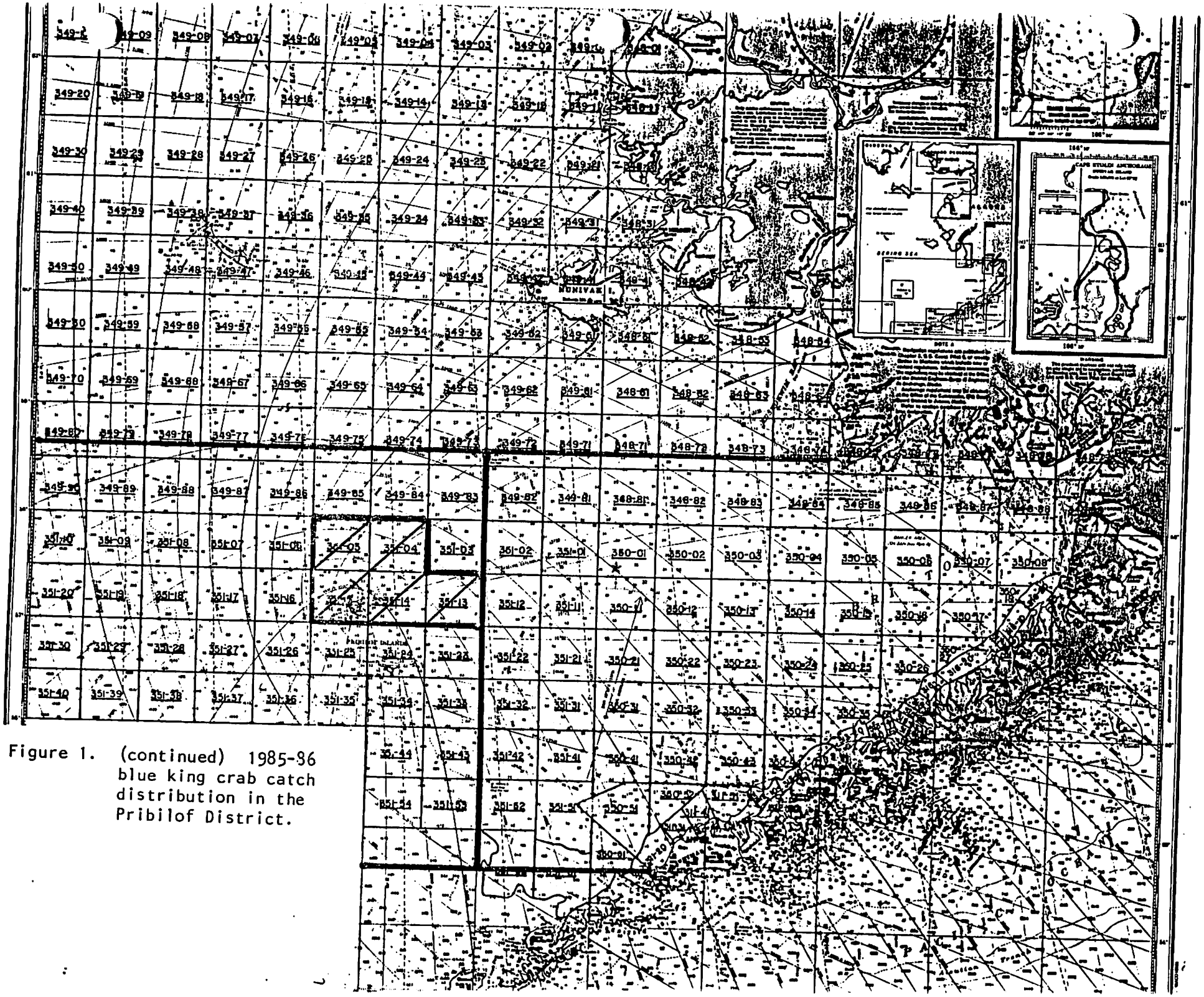

Figure 1. (continued) 1985-86 blue king crab catch distribution in the Pribilof District.

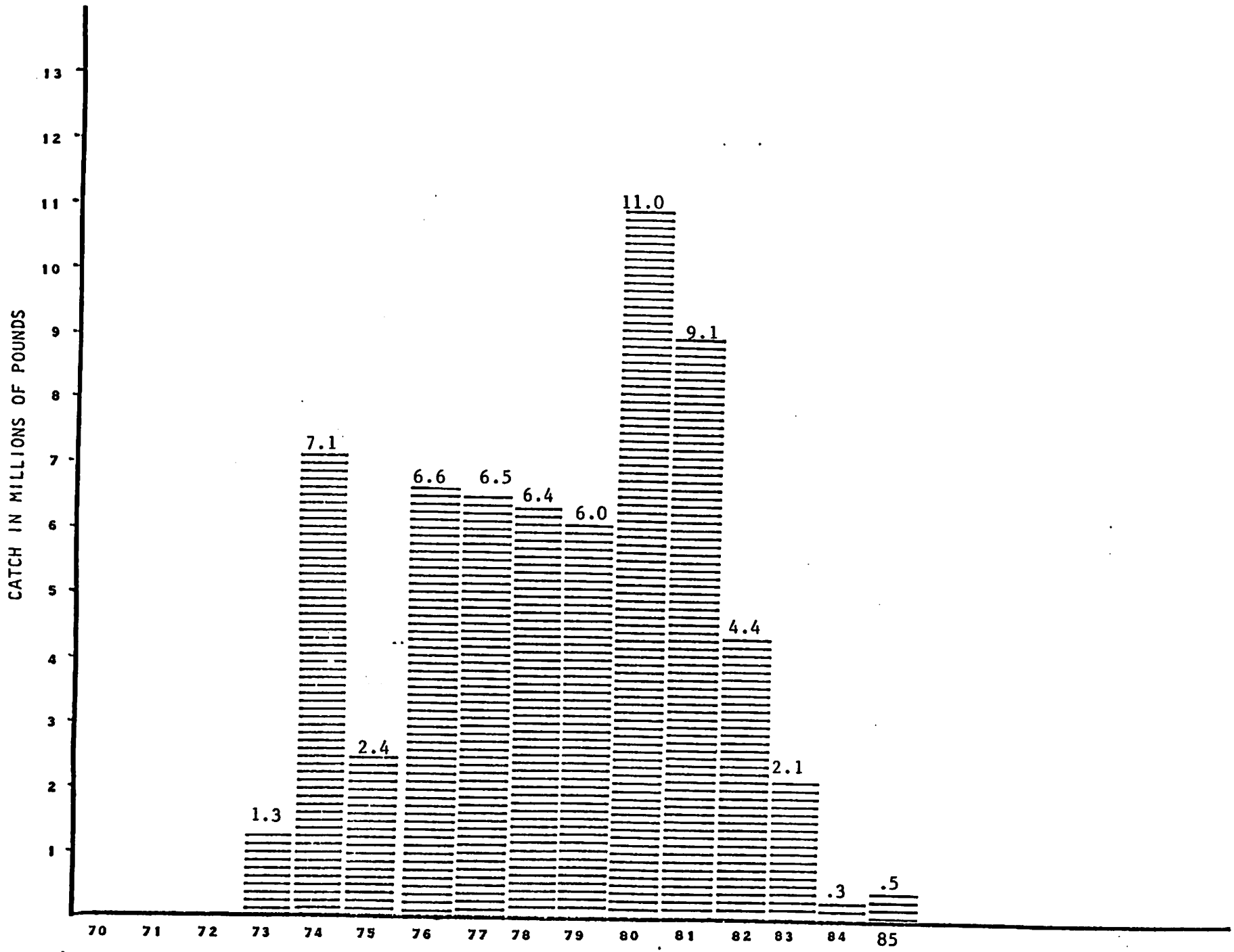

Figure 2. Historic blue king crab catch in Registration Area [illegible]

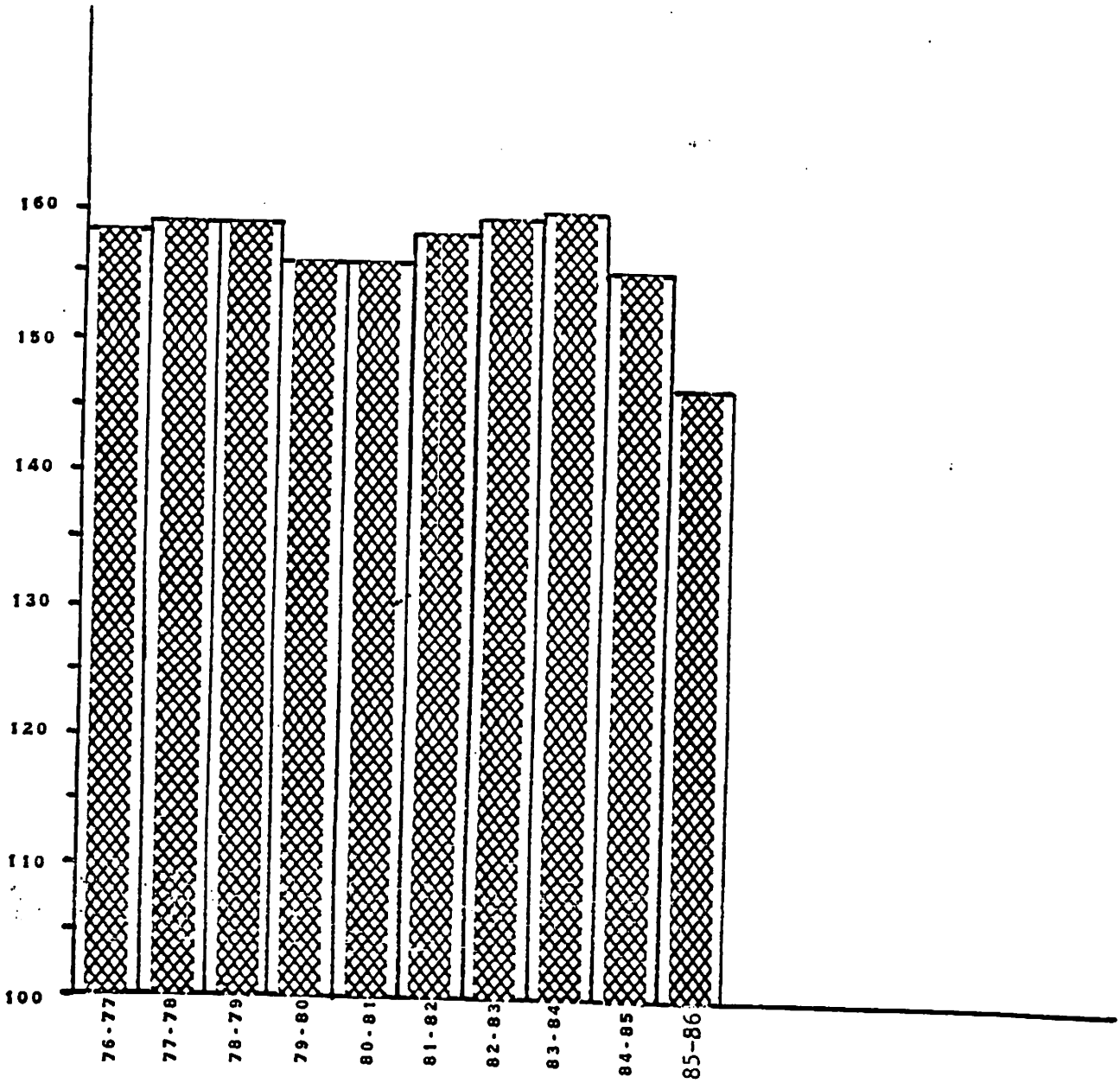

Figure 3. Historic Pribilof District blue king crab average length frequencies.

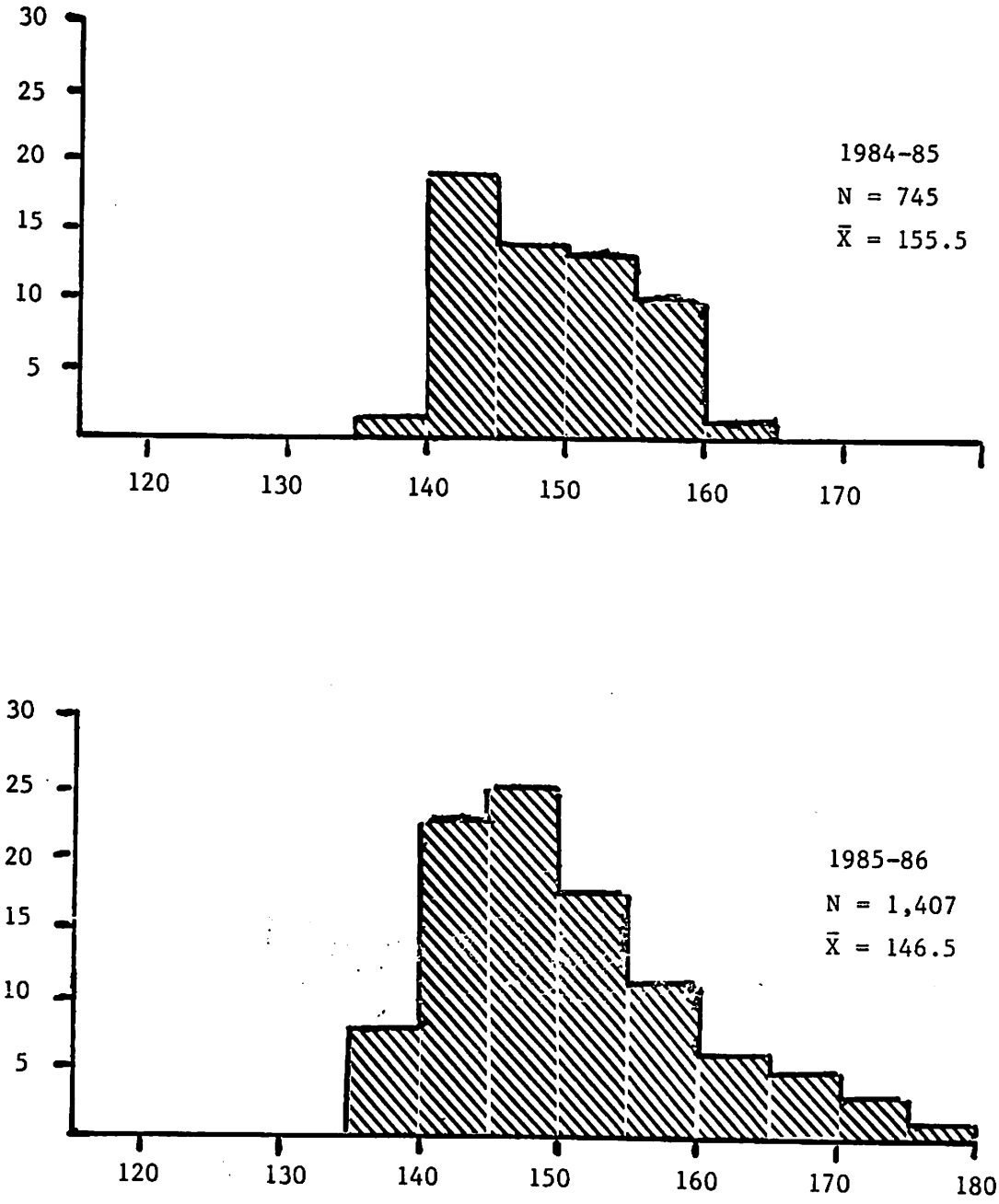

Figure 4. Pribilof Blue King Crab Length Frequency Distribution.

BRISTOL BAY KING CRAB
REGISTRATION AREA "T"

The Bristol Bay king crab registration area encompasses all waters of the Bering Sea north of Cape Sarichef, east of 168° W. longitude and south of the latitude of Cape Newenham.

The red king crab catch in the Bristol Bay area, formerly known as the Southeastern District of the Bering Sea until 1980, experienced a steady increase in catch through the 1980-81 season with an all-time historic harvest of 129.9 million pounds. Due to the failure of prerecruit and recruit crab entering into the fishery and a loss of legal size males and fertile females, the fishery decreased to a harvest of 33.5 and 3.0 million pounds for the 1981-82 and 1982-83 seasons and was not opened to fishing in 1983. Since 1984, prerecruits and legal size males have shown a slight increase, and the area produced over 4.2 million pounds for both the 1984-85 and 1985-86 seasons.

The 1985-86 season opened by regulation on September 25 with a harvest guideline of 3.0 to 5.0 million pounds. Tank inspections were given to 128 vessels. Alaska Department of Fish and Game personnel were placed on floater processors at Port Moller to collect biological samples and assist with inseason catch information. A total of nine floater processors, 12 catcher/processors and shore based processors at Dutch Harbor, Akutan, King Cove and Kodiak processed the area's crab. Due to the expected short season, catcher/processors were required to report daily. At no time during the seven day season did all 12 catcher/processors report the same day. Catcher vessels also expected a short season and only two deliveries totaling 55,000 pounds were made prior to the announced closure on September 30 for October 2.

Based on catcher/processor daily reports, ADF&G estimated that over six million pounds would be taken by the closure. The catcher/processor tickets proved to average 58 percent, or nearly 40,000 pounds more than the average catch of the catcher vessels and the projected season harvest fell two million pounds short but well within the season harvest guideline (Table 1).

A total of 4.2 million pounds was harvested by 128 vessels, 39 more than the previous year. Average catch per pot was nine, two more than the 1984-85 season and the crab averaged 5.2 pounds, identical to last year.

Table 1. Comparative average catches of catcher/processors vs catcher vessels.

BRISTOL BAY RED KING CRAB

COMPARATIVE AVERAGE CATCHES OF CATCHER/PROCESSOR VS. CATCHER VESSELS

SEASON	1985-86	1984-85	1983-84	1982-83	6½" ONLY 1981-82	1980-81
NUMBER OF C/P'S.	12	10		8	10	11
NUMBER CATCHER'S	116	79		83	167	225
LBS. OF C/P CATCH	820,013	686,302		533,563	2,937,490	9,101,202
% C/P CATCH [1]	19.6	16.4		18.0	9.2	7.0
AVG. C/P CATCH	68,334	68,630		66,695	293,749	827,381
AVG. CATCHER CATCH [2]	28,922	44,254		29,730	174,114	537,381
AVG. CPUE C/P'S	14.2	7.7	FISHERY CLOSED	6	12	41
AVG. CPUE CATCHER'S	9	7		4	11	36
TOTAL CATCH	4,174,983	4,182,406		3,001,210	32,014,579	129,948,436
AVG. # POTS PULLED C/P'S	898	1,613.5		2010.2	4,007.5	3,036.5
AVG. # POTS PULLED CATCHER	640	1,220.5		1,512.9	2,607.7	2,372.8
C/P RANGE CATCH	19,865-120,924	10,219-168,346		N/A	152,008-527,497	403,405-1,355,232
					7"= 1,576,789	
					7 INCH SEASON AFTER 6½ INCH SEASON	

[1] TOTAL CATCH DIVIDED BY C/P TOTAL CATCH

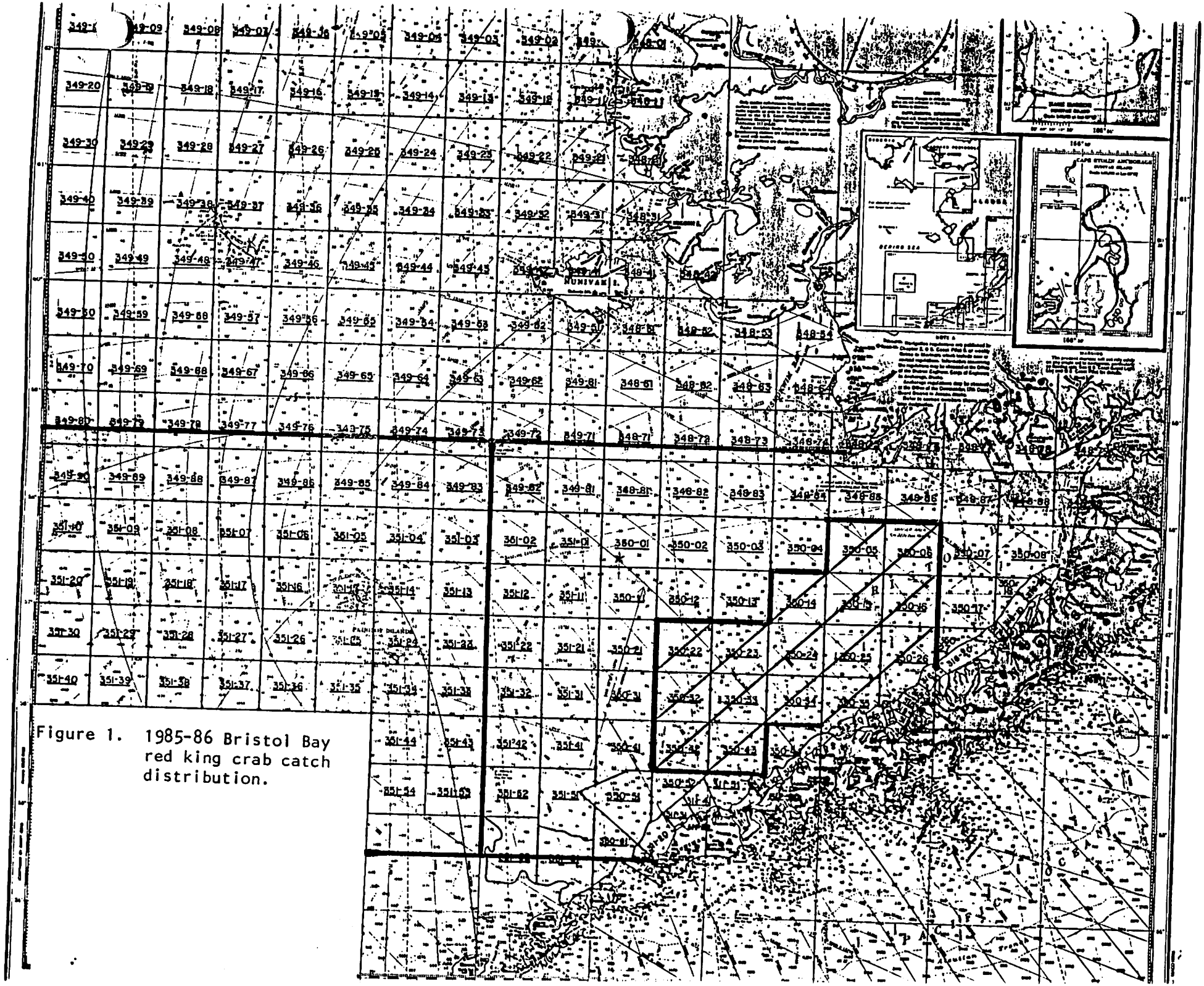

Figure 1. 1985-86 Bristol Bay red king crab catch distribution.

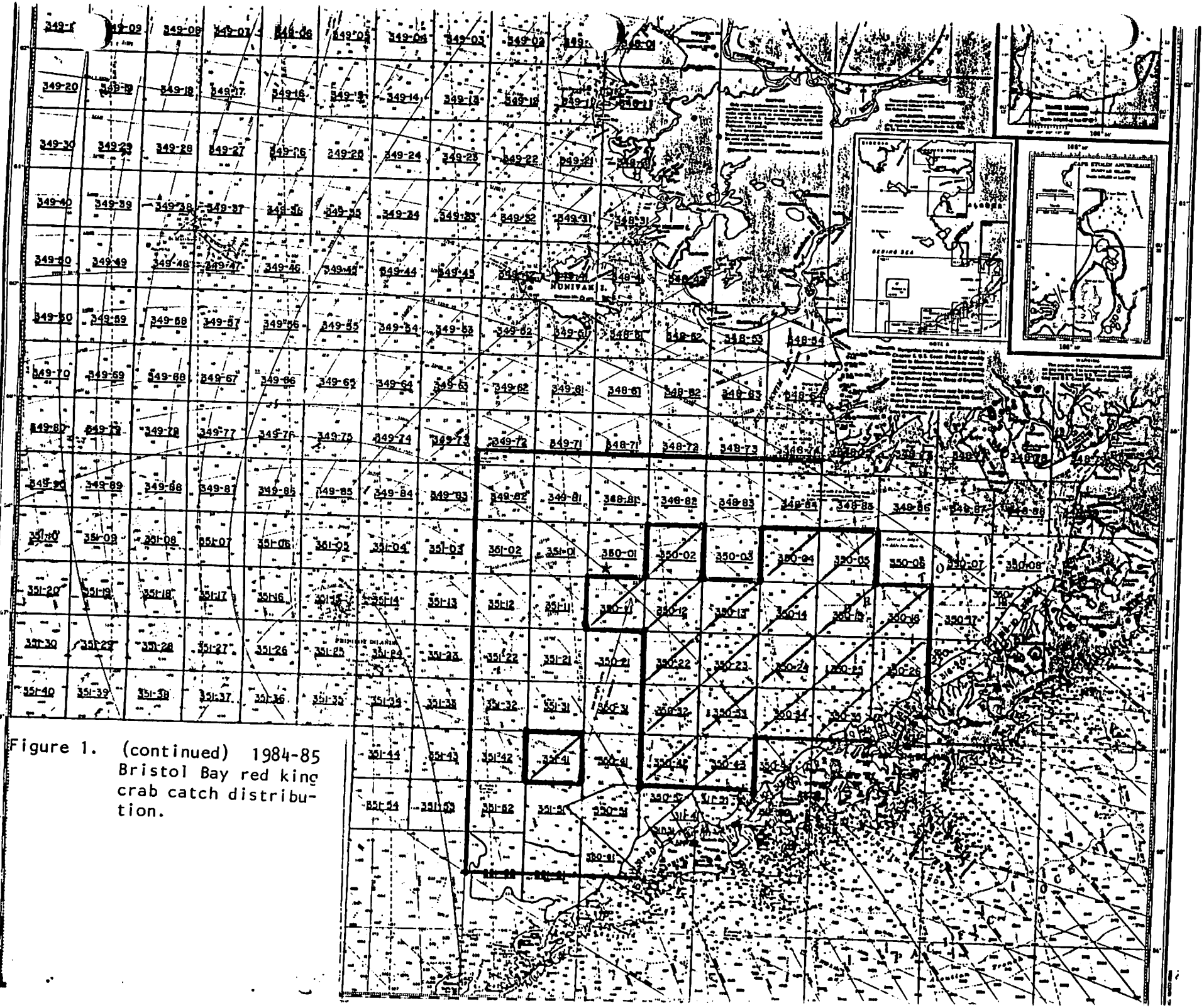

Figure 1. (continued) 1984-85 Bristol Bay red king crab catch distribution.

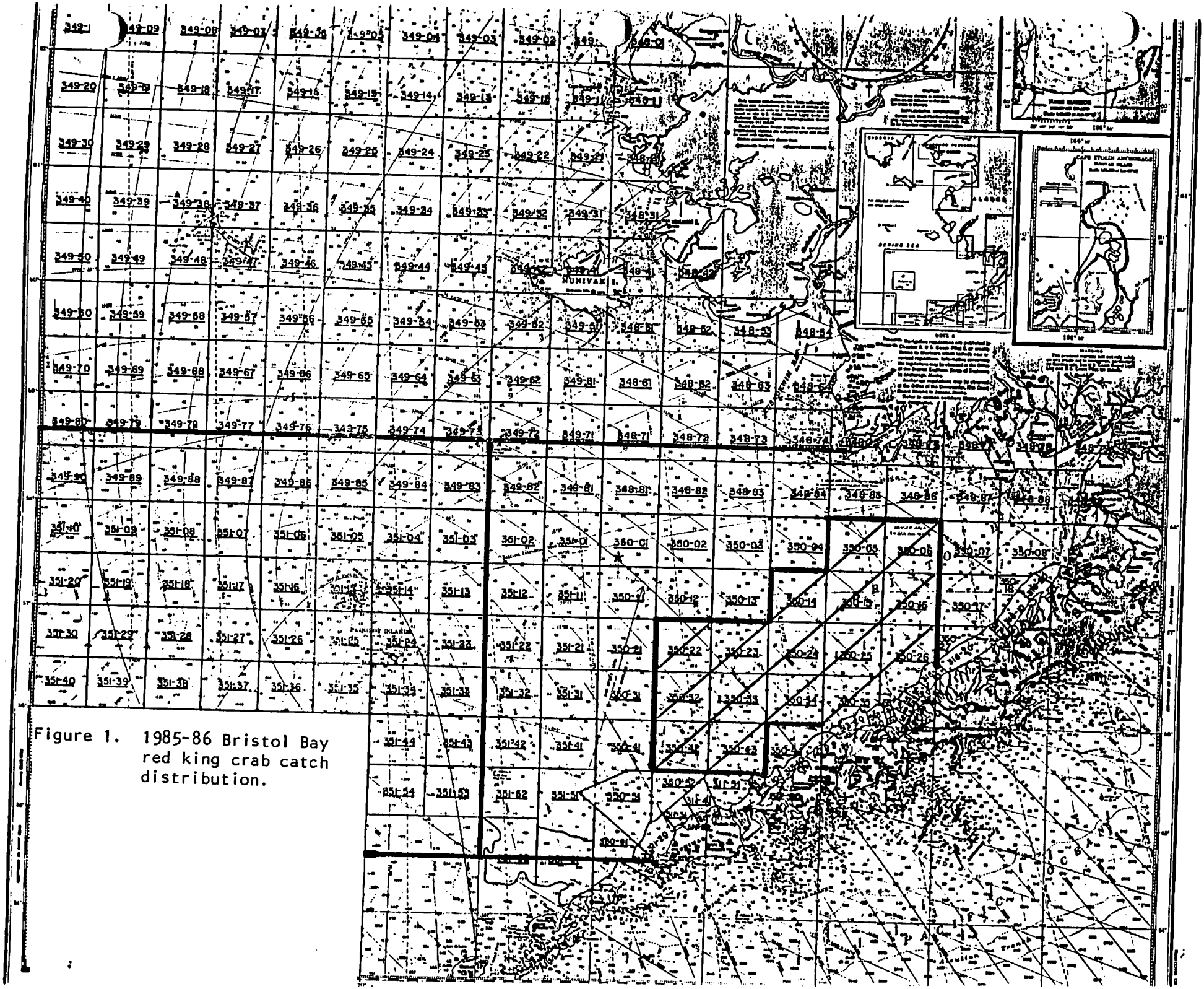

Figure 1. 1985-86 Bristol Bay red king crab catch distribution.

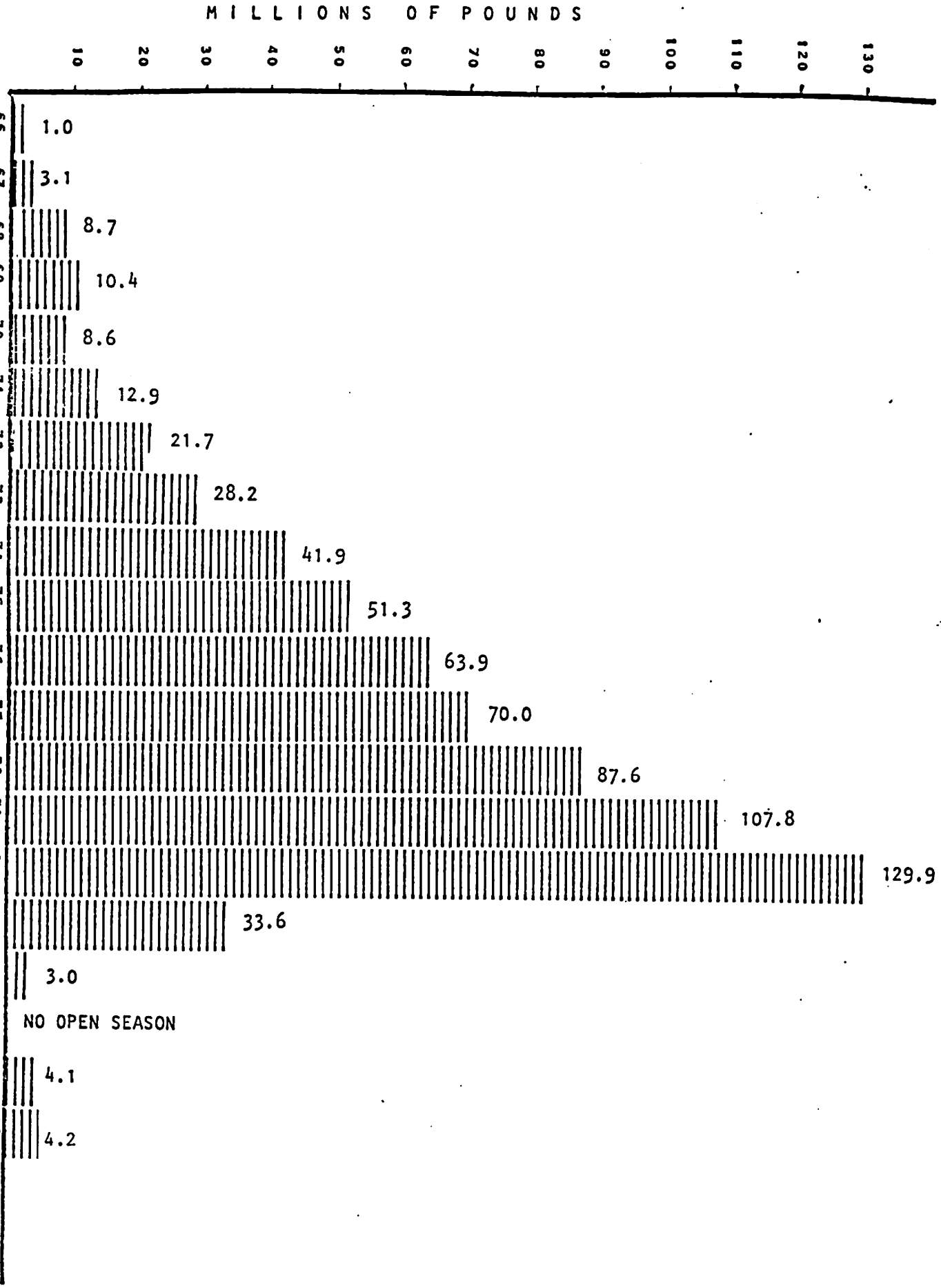

Figure 2. Historic U.S. red king crab catch in the Bristol Bay Registration Area "T" of the Bering Sea.

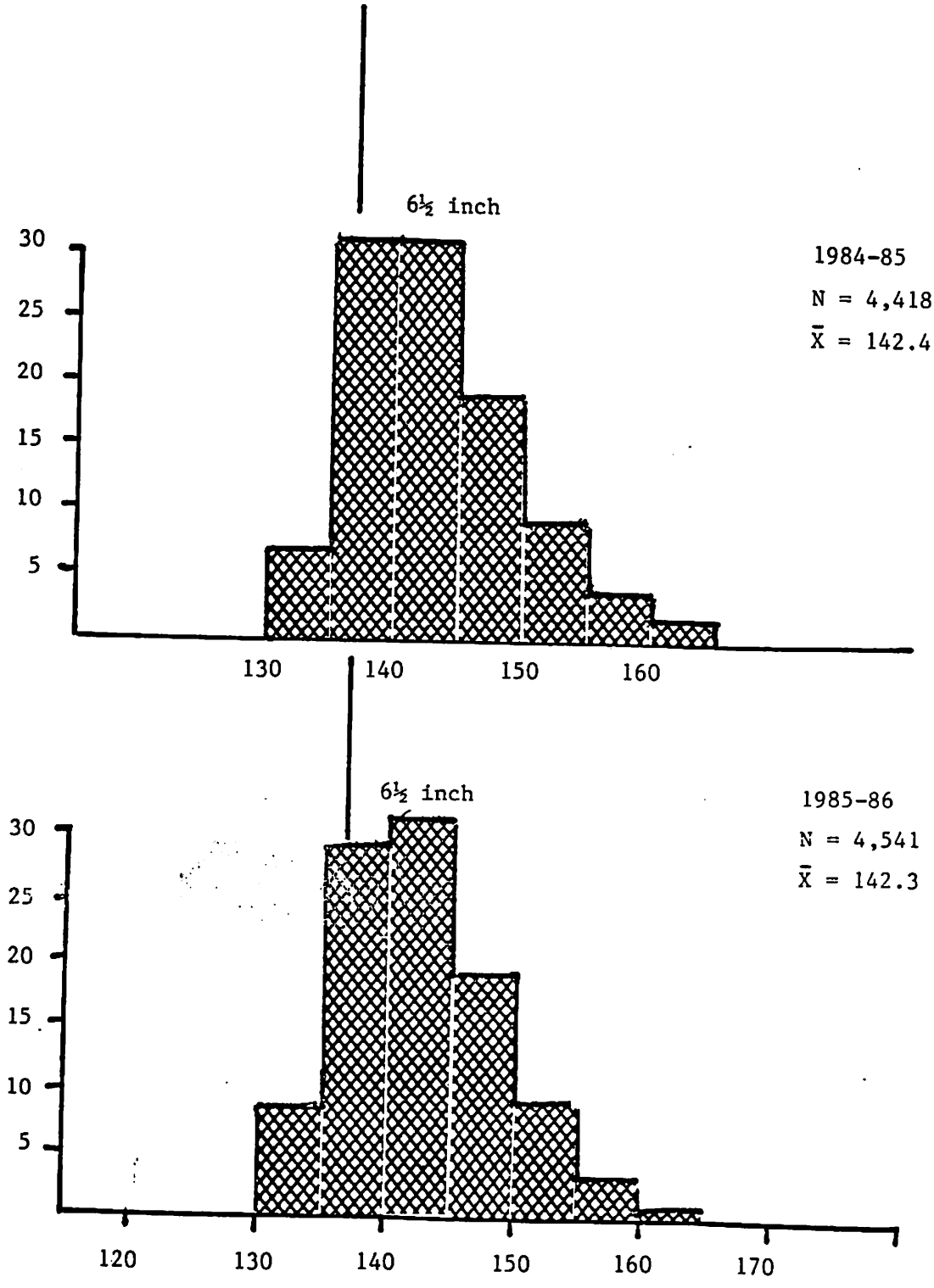

Figure 3. Red King Crab Length Frequency Distribution from the Bristol Bay area.

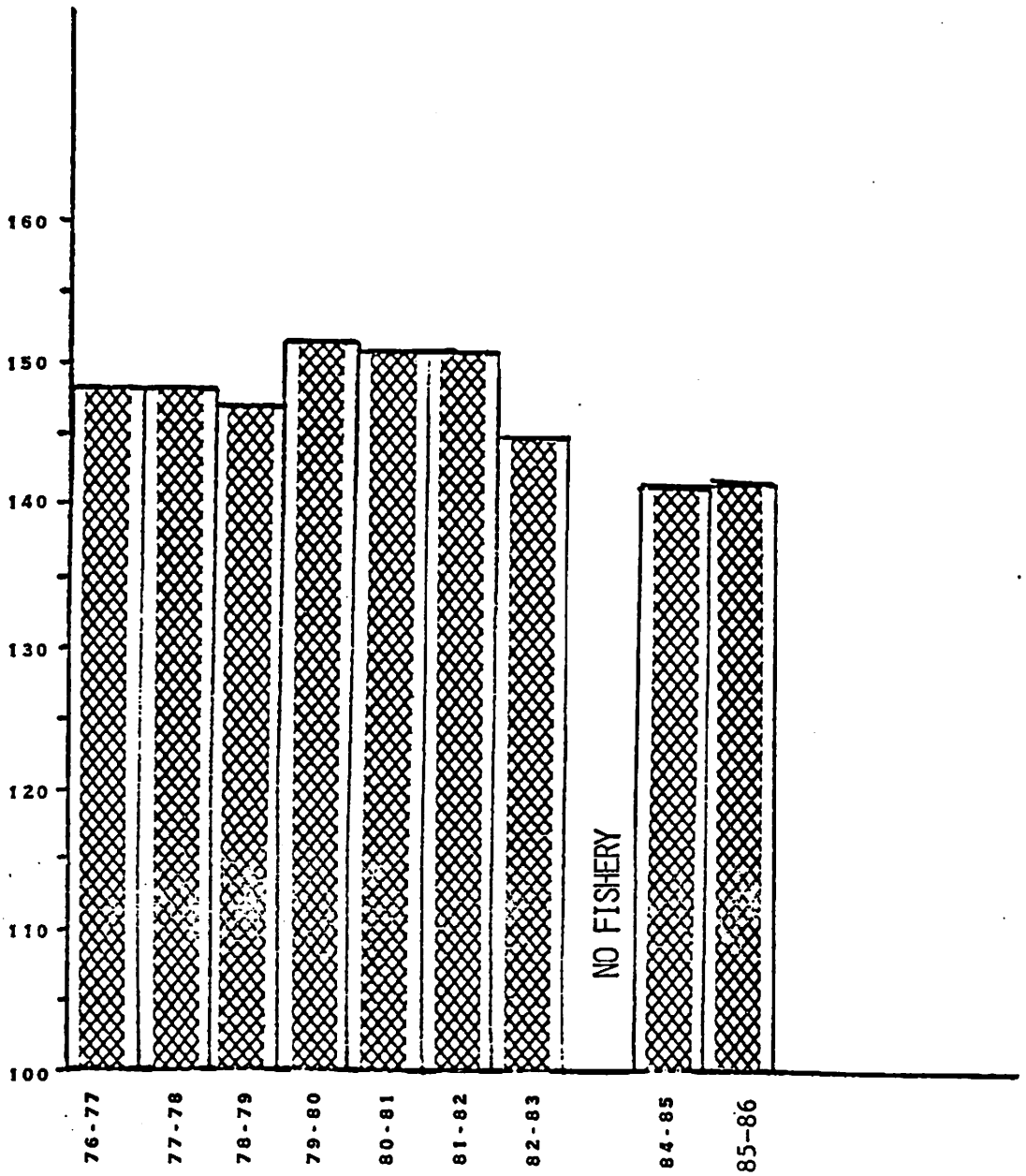

Figure 4. Historic Bristol Bay red king crab average length frequencies.

ST. MATTHEW

1985-86 Fishery

The season opened by regulation at 12:00 noon September 1, 1985 for a .9 to 1.9 million pound harvest guideline. Just prior to the season opening and vessels leaving for the St. Matthew fishing grounds, an announcement was made by the Department of Public Safety that stored pots, that is pots unbaited and doors tied open, could be stored on the fishing grounds in 30 fathoms or less prior to the opening of the season. As stated in previous reports, most of the commercial fishing occurs inside 30 fathoms, thus the pots first placed on the grounds as stored pots pre-empt the best fishing grounds and guarantees that vessel an area to fish.

Tank inspections and registrations were given on the grounds by four ADF&G samplers placed onboard four of the seven floater processors. There was no observer coverage on the 10 catcher/processors. A total of 79 vessels were registered, 11 less than the 1984-85 fishery. Price for the crab on the grounds again varied by processor and ranged from $1.60 a pound to $1.90 a pound.

Ten catcher/processors took over 498,000 pounds, 20 percent of the total harvest. Their average catch of 50,000 pounds was 22,000 pounds more than the average catch of "catcher only" vessels. Catcher/processors averaged four crab per pot more than the catcher only vessels.

ADF&G estimated over 13,000 pots on the fishing grounds during the 1985-86 season, 1,800 pots less than the previous season. The average of 164 pots per vessel was identical for both seasons. Average catch per pot was nine, two crab less than the previous season. Due to the decline in recruit and prerecruit crab at St. Matthew and the continued commercial catch of larger older crab, crab averaged 5.0 pounds, one-half a pound more than the 1984-85 season (Table 1).

With a decrease in the harvest guideline of almost 2.0 million pounds from the 1984-85 season and the large effort, the fishery lasted only five days with a season harvest of 2.4 million pounds. On September 4, three days after the opening of the fishery with only 350,000 pounds accounted for but with over 1.4 million pounds estimated to be onboard vessels or in the gear, the closure

announcement was made for 12:00 noon September 6. As experienced in the past, the CPUE continued to remain high and in some areas actually increased during the short season, thus accounting for the harvest of over 2.4 million pounds.

As experienced during last years fishery, the entire Northern District of the Bering Sea closed to the taking of king crab on September 6. The St. Lawrence section had been open since August 1 but experienced no commercial fishery or catch.

ST. MATTHEW

COMPARATIVE AVERAGE CATCHES OF CATCHER/PROCESSOR VS. CATCHER VESSELS

SEASON	1985-86	1984-85	1983-84
NUMBER OF C/P'S.	10	12	13
NUMBER CATCHER'S	69	78	151
LBS. OF C/P CATCH	498,374	471,378	962,262
% C/P CATCH	20.5	12.5	10.2
AVG. C/P CATCH	49,837	39,286	74,020
AVG. CATCHER CATCH	27,953	41,174	56,239
AVG. CPUE C/P'S	12.4	11	16.1
AVG. CPUE CATCHER'S	8.8	11	14.5
TOTAL CATCH	2,427,110	3,770,078	9,454,323
AVG. # POTS PULLED C/P'S	784.9	834.4	887.1
AVG. # POTS PULLED CATCHER	634.0	811.6	1,047.8
C/P RANGE CATCH	24,440 - 76,396		20,997 - 117,962

Table 1. Comparative average catches of catcher/processor vs catcher vessels.

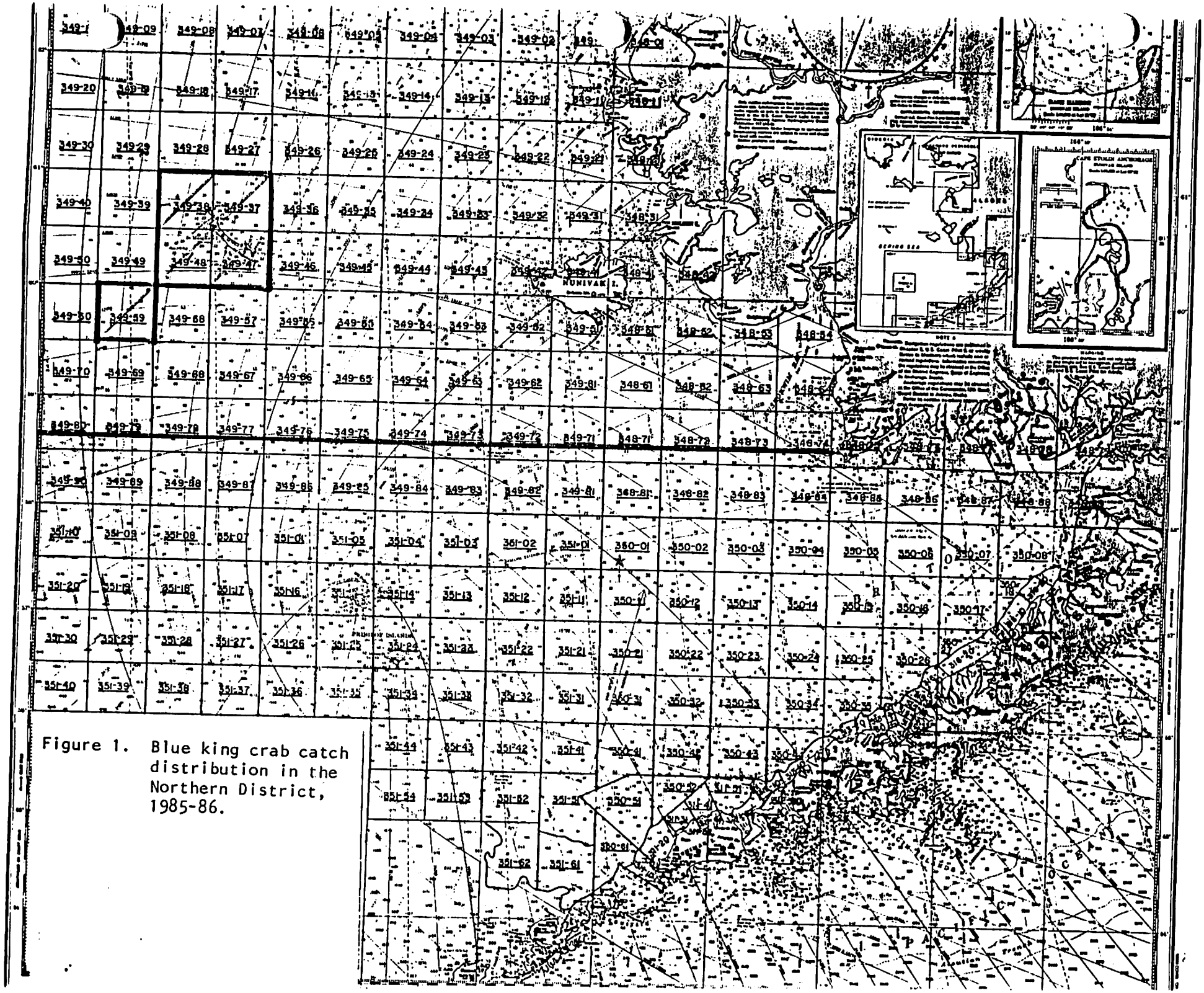

Figure 1. Blue king crab catch distribution in the Northern District, 1985-86.

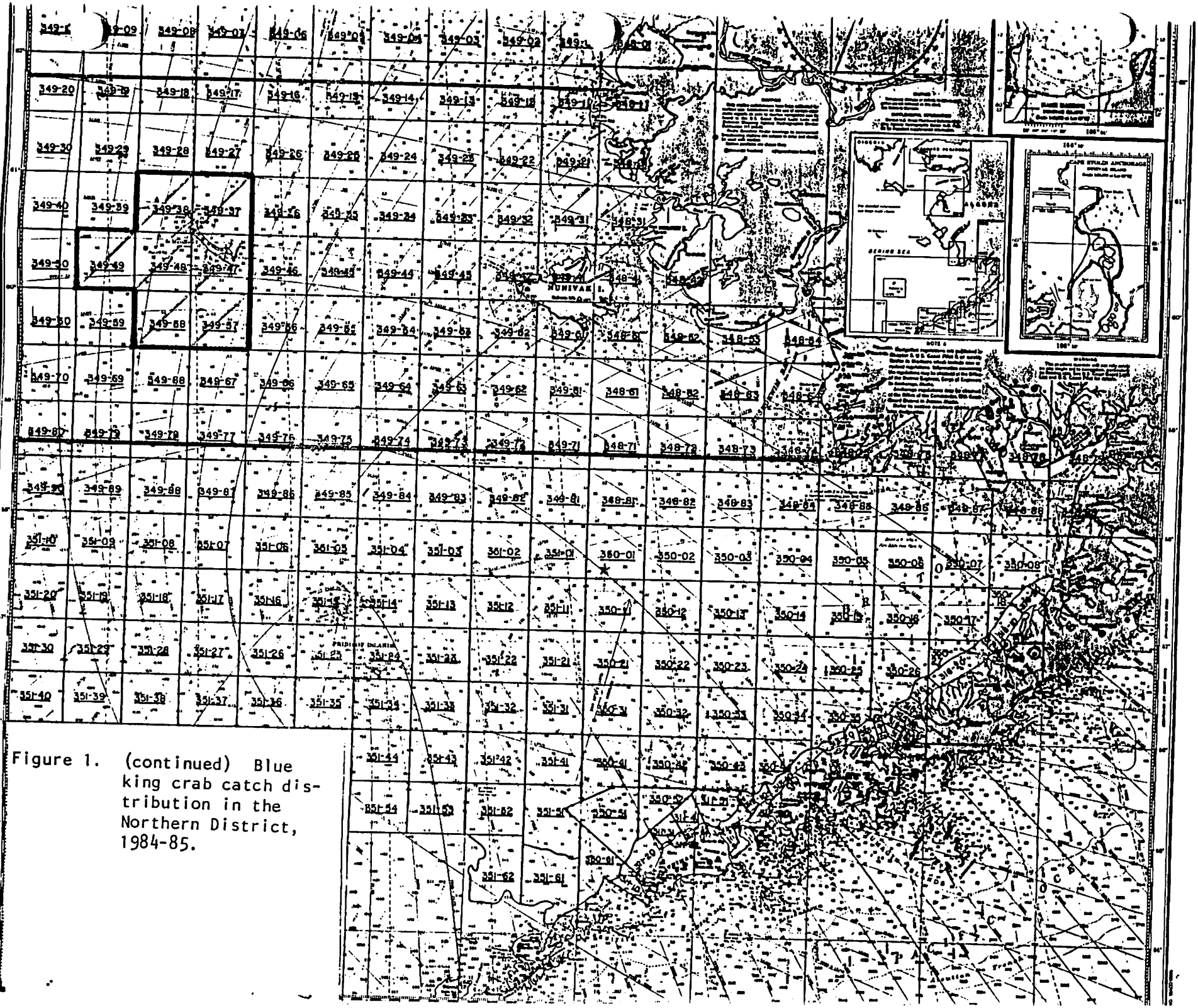

Figure 1. (continued) Blue king crab catch distribution in the Northern District, 1984-85.

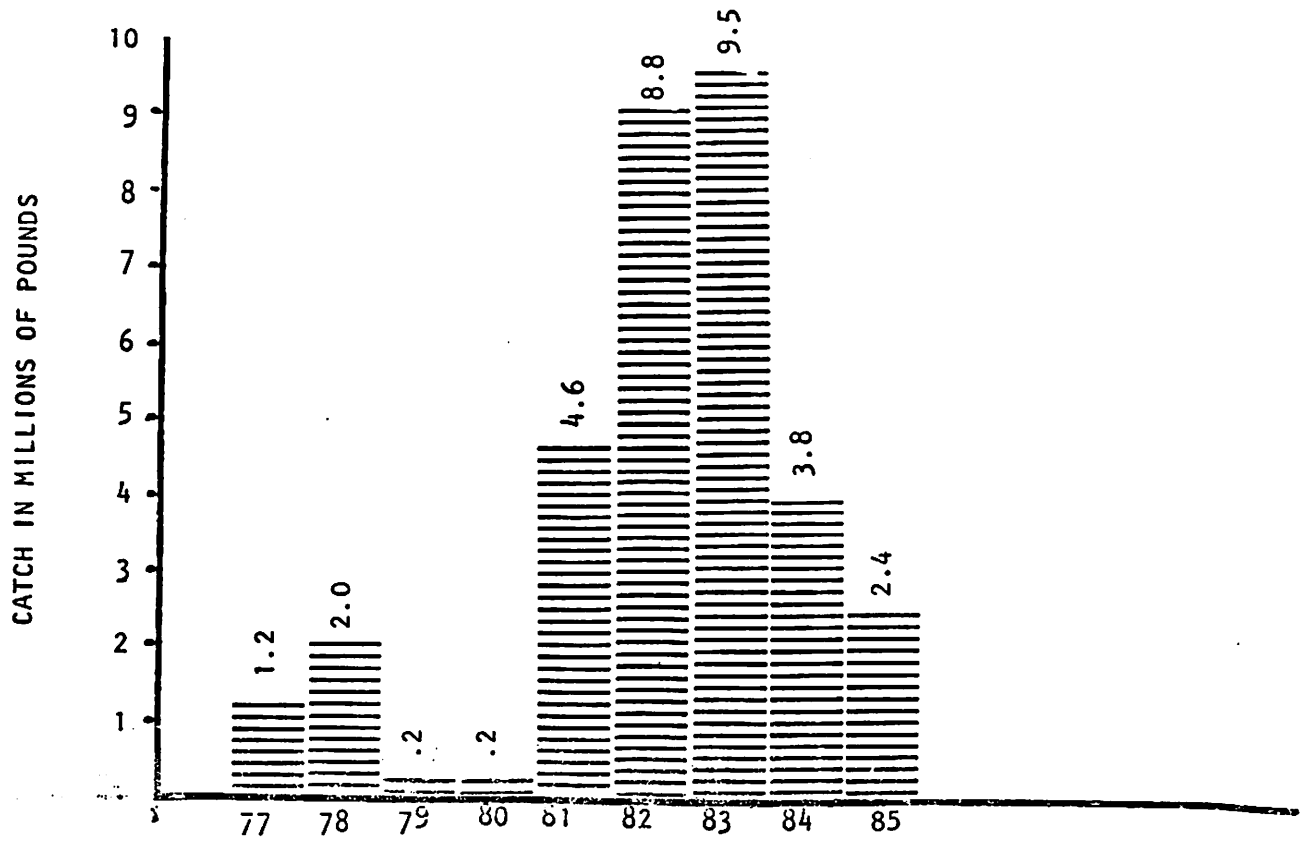

Figure 2. Historic blue king crab catch in the Northern District of registration Area "Q" (St. Matthew and St. Lawrence Islands).

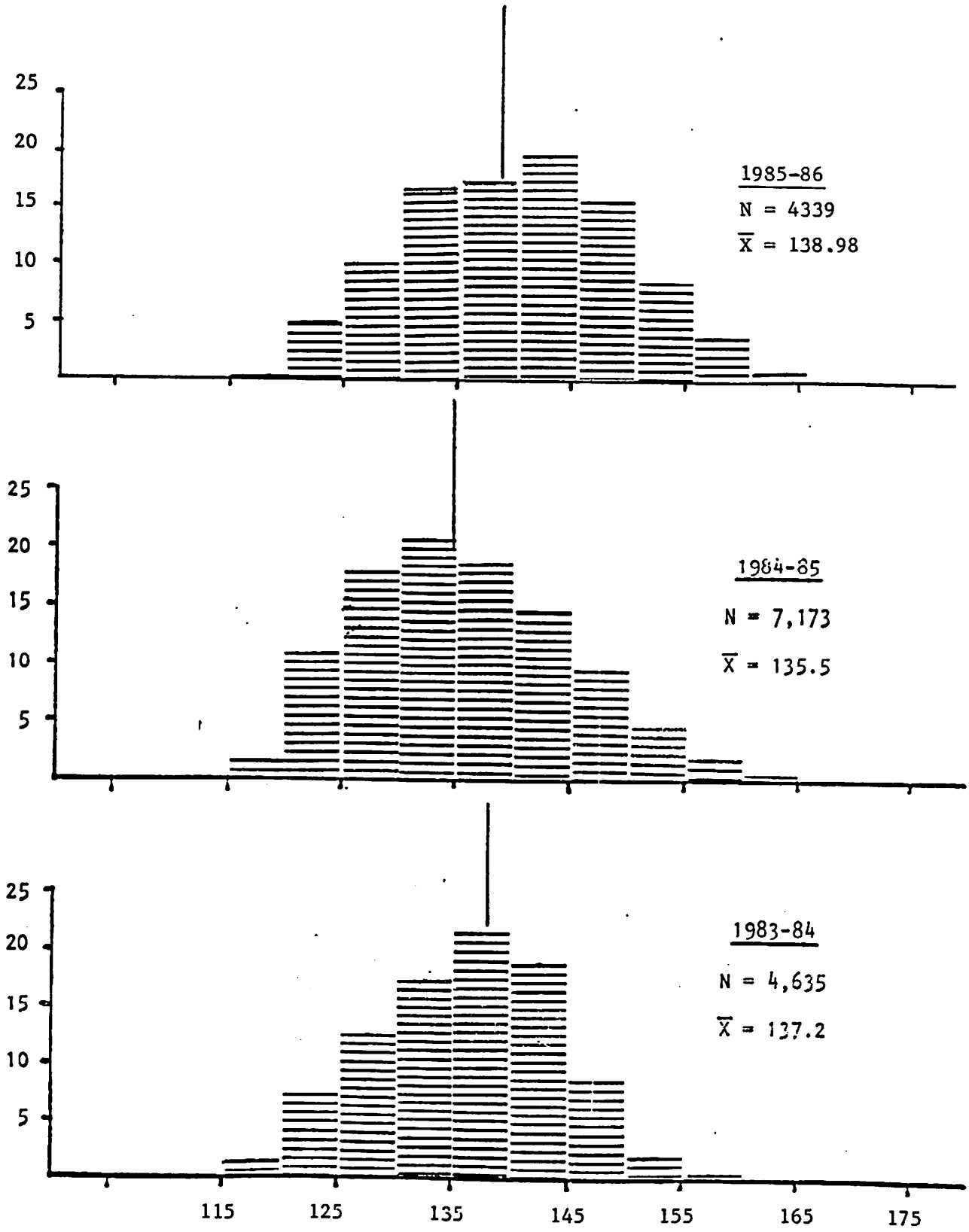

Figure 3. Blue King Crab Length Frequencies Distribution from the St. Matthew Section of the Bering Sea.

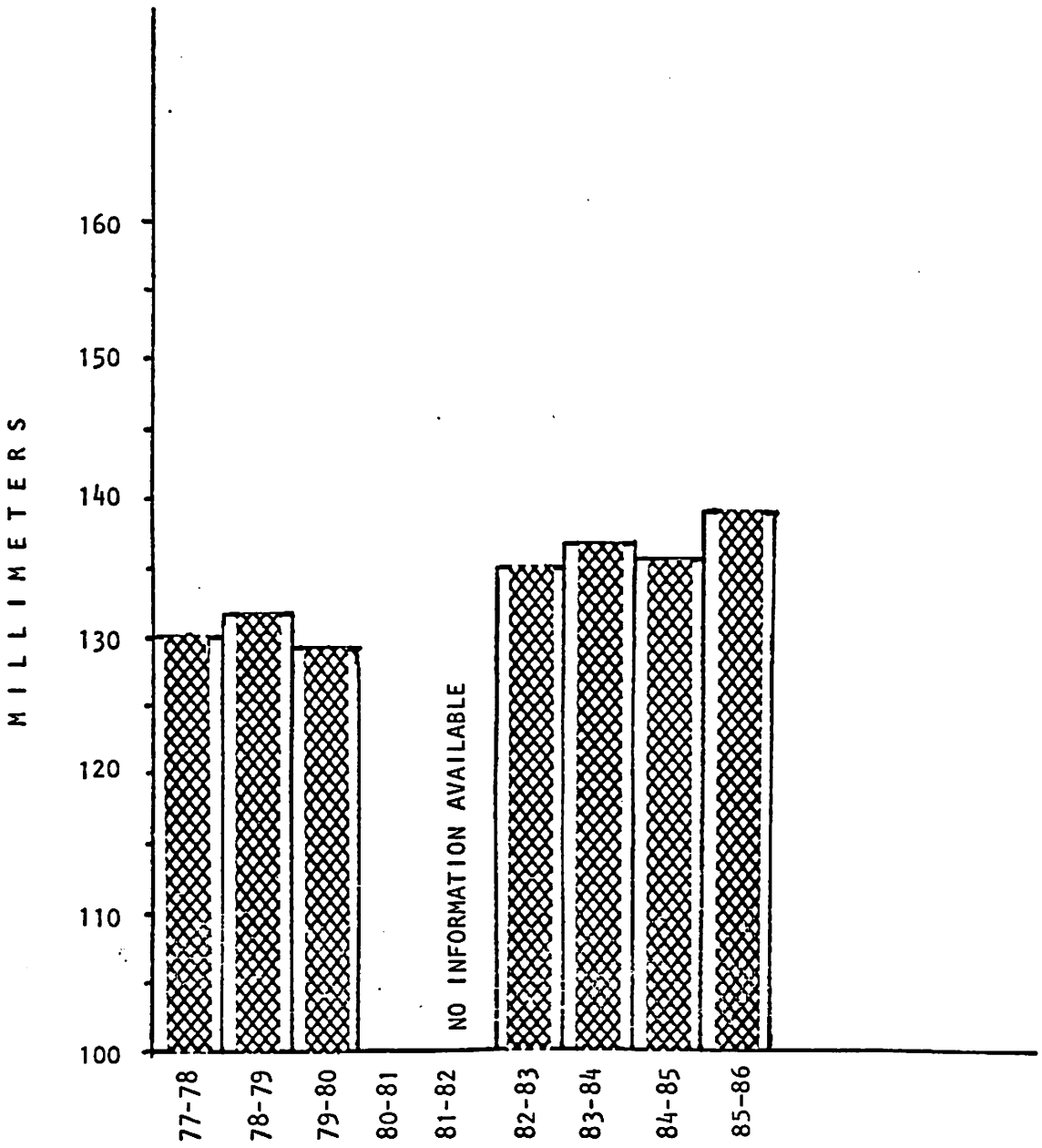

Figure 4. Historic St. Matthew blue king crab average length frequencies.