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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A population survey of toheroa on Ninety Mile Beach, Northland, was undertaken during March 2000. The area was stratified through examination of the beach for dense siphon holes (denoting toheroa beds) and limited exploratory digging every 1 km. The beach was divided into seven strata, representing different toheroa densities and/or areas along the beach. A two-phase, stratified random survey was undertaken using transects orientated down the beach slope, with 0.5 m^2 quadrats dug at 10 m intervals down each transect.

The population size of toheroa over 14 mm in length was 51.6 million (c.v. 19.8%), the highest abundance ever recorded from the beach. A further 10.2 million toheroa under 15 mm (c.v. 26.9%) were present. However, only 1 million (c.v. 40.6%) were 75 mm or greater, with only 2 animals over 99 mm being sampled. Most of the population was composed of juveniles less than 40 mm in length, probably representing a 0+ cohort.

Given an historical tendency for high mortality rates to follow large recruitment events, it is unknown whether this large recruitment event will translate into high adult toheroa abundance over the next 2 to 3 years. Ongoing monitoring of this cohort would be invaluable in assessing what post-recruitment factors (sources of mortality) are operating to keep adult population densities to low levels, relative to historical abundances.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Toheroa are large infaunal surf clams which historically supported regionally important cultural, recreational, and commercial fisheries. Once abundant on exposed surf beaches in Northland, Wellington, and Southland, populations have declined to levels where harvests are no longer permitted. The reasons for these declines are poorly understood, but are likely to include a combination of over-harvesting, environmental changes, and other impacts such as heavy vehicle traffic along some beaches.

Monitoring of the main northern North Island populations (Ninety Mile, Dargaville andMuriwai Beaches – Figure 1) has been carried out sporadically for more than 70 years. Gathering has not been permitted from these beaches since 1971, 1980, and 1976 respectively, but monitoring of the stocks has continued, with surveys being undertaken annually up until 1986. Since 1986, only brief inspections have been carried out in 1990 and in 1993. In 1999 a full survey was completed for Dargaville Beach (Akroyd et al. 1999). This report summarises the results of the most recent toheroa survey in Northland, undertaken on Ninety Mile Beach in March 2000. A two phase, stratified survey was used to estimate the population size and abundance of the toheroa population on the beach, down to the low water mark.

This project was funded through MFish contract TOH1999/01. The specific objective was as follows: "To determine the distribution of toheroa beds, and the abundance and size structure of toheroa for specific areas of Ninety Mile Beach on the west coast of the North Island. The target coefficient of variation for the estimates of absolute abundance is 20%".

1.2 Description of the fishery

Commercial harvesting of toheroa ceased in northern New Zealand in 1969 as a result of populations declining to very low levels. Recreational harvesting ceased forNinety Mile Beach in 1971, for Muriwai in 1976, and for Dargaville in 1980 (Stace 1990). Populations have not recovered since that time, and no harvesting (apart from customary purposes) has been permitted since the closures.

1.3 Literature review

Toheroa are a distinctive element of the fauna of exposed surf beaches in several parts of New Zealand. Beaches that have historically supported abundant populations include Ninety Mile, Dargaville and Muriwai Beaches on the west coast, Northland; Foxton, Waitarere, Hokio, Otaki, and Waikanae along the Wellington coast; and Te Waewae and Oreti Beaches in the far south (Redfearn 1974). Less important beach populations have been recorded from Mitimiti, Whangape, Piha, and Pollok (west coast North Island); Spirits Bay and Tom Bowling Bay (top of North Island); Tokerau and Te Arai (east coast North Island); Opotiki and Ohope Beaches (Bay of Plenty); Hampden, Waikouaiti, and Long Beaches (bottom of South Island) (Redfearn 1974). All of these populations are inter-tidal. Suggestions have been made that subtidal populations may also exist, based on "missing" cohorts (Cassie 1955) and evidence of drilling of toheroa shells by gastropod species that are absent from the intertidal (Waugh & Greenway 1967), but no direct evidence exists.

Adult sex ratios are equal, with most animals maturing in their second year (Redfearn 1974). Various proportions of the adult population are ripe for spawning throughout the year, but higher proportions are associated with rising sea temperatures. Partial spawning occurs from October to March, although minor spawning periods have also been observed in May–June. Rapson (1952) suggested a planktonic larval duration of 10–12 days. Intervals of at least a month have been noted between spawning events and the presence of spat on Dargaville Beach (Redfearn 1974).

Recruits have been observed at 2 mm in size, being carried up the beach on wave fronts. Redfearn (1974) reported that these settled into the sand in the slack water interval before each wave receded, and buried themselves to a depth of 1–2 cm. Settlement on the beach was determined by the fetch of the wave. After several weeks a band of juveniles formed just below high water mark. Historically, these juvenile beds sometimes extended for many kilometres (Redfearn 1974). Highest density settlement was recorded in the small bays formed along the beach, which were also where adult beds often occurred. Rip currents adjacent to these bays may aggregate larvae in an analogous manner to floating debris (Redfearn 1974). A gradual movement of animals down the beach subsequently occurred.

Historically, adult toheroa beds ranged from discrete populations 55–110 m long, separated by kilometres of empty beach (Muriwai), through to continuous beds stretching for kilometres (Dargaville) (Greenway 1969). Size trends along beaches have sometime been noted (increasing size going north), suggesting movement along the beach. Anecdotal observations suggest passive migrations of thousands of animals along the beach can occur over short time scales (Redfearn 1974). Movements up and down the shore may also occur, with beds moving 30 m or more during a night (Redfearn 1974). Greenway (1969) noted that although tagging experiments found most recoveries close to release points, some individuals were recovered several miles away. However, Rapson (1954) discussed occurrences of misshapen shells and reductions in growth rates in dense beds, suggesting that some beds at least are very stable in their location.

Toheroa are filter feeders, with Cassie (1955) noting that a feature common to all beaches with abundant toheroa populations was the frequent occurrence of dense concentrations of algae (especially diatoms) that often formed "thick, greenish scum on the waters surface", extending for 110 m or more out to sea. High proportional abundance of such food may be important to effective feeding, as toheroa are unable to actively select organic material from the water column and may experience problems under conditions where most ingested items are inorganic (Cassie 1955).

Toheroa lay down shell rings, which have been used for ageing animals assuming these rings are annual (an assumption that does not appear to have been validated). Assuming annual rings, North Island toheroa take 4–5 years to reach 'legal' size (100 mm) (Cassie 1955), while Southland animals are slower growing, taking 7 years (B. Street, unpubl. data, in McKinnon & Olsen 1984). Ages of 15 years were stated to be "not uncommon" on Muriwai beach by Cassie (1955), and Brunton (1978) mentioned 23 year old toheroa as not being uncommon in the South Island. The historical time series summarised in the present report appears suitable for deriving growth curves from length-based methods such as MULTIFAN, but this has not been attempted in the current project.

An unusual feature of northern beaches is the presence of very large dead toheroa shells which are heavier and bulkier than the shells of live animals found in the same area. These large shells may be sub-fossils, representing a species (or sub-species) of toheroa now extinct. (Cassie 1955). Shell ring counts from these shells have produced ages of up to 18 years. There has been speculation that these large animals may persist in sublittorial populations, but no direct evidence exists. An anecdotal report from the late 1940s from a local inspector of fisheries at Himatangi (Wellington coast) mentions large toheroa nearly one foot (305 mm) long (referred to as 'bottlers') being "littered" along the beach after an especially severe storm.

2. REVIEW OF THE FISHERY

2.1 Commercial harvesting

Commercial harvesting began in the late 1800s, with the first cannery opening at Dargaville in 1904; two were in operation by 1911. By 1923, only one of these was still in operation, but a second opened on Ninety Mile beach. By 1945 this cannery had shut down, although it re-opened briefly from 1962 to 1964. Overall commercial production of toheroa peaked in 1940 at 77 t, but then rarely exceeded about 20 t (Redfearn 1974). Quotas were introduced in 1962, based on annual population surveys. The Dargaville cannery continued seasonal operations in most years until 1969 (Redfearn 1974). However, by 1969 substantial declines in abundance led to the termination of commercial harvesting. Despite this, population numbers continued to decline, and recreational harvests ceased for Ninety Mile Beach in 1971, for Muriwai in 1976, and for Dargaville in 1980 (Stace 1990). Adult populations have not recovered since then.

2.2 Other information

There is no other information on harvests or fisheries relevant to this study. However, large fluctuations in abundance appear to be a natural component of the population dynamics of toheroa. Poaching is also likely to be of some importance.

2.3 Recreational and Maori customary fisheries

Currently there is no allowable recreational harvest for toheroa in New Zealand. Levels of customary take are unknown.

2.4 Other sources of mortality

Gulls (black-backed, *Larus dominicanus,* and red-billed, *L. novaehollandiae*) are important predators of toheroa (Brunton 1978). Small toheroa are eaten whole, while larger toheroa are carried into the air and then dropped two to three times until they crack. Animals up to 120–130 mm long can be handled. Rates of consumption of 20 toheroa per day (4–6 cm) were noted: thus a gull population of 353 individuals could consume 1.5 million toheroa in a year (Brunton 1978). Predation by fish, snapper in particular, may also be important, with toheroa siphon nipping being common (Redfearn 1974).

Mass mortalities appear to be a regular feature of toheroa populations, especially during summer. In 1930, an 8–10 mile stretch of Ninety Mile Beach suffered heavy toheroa mortality due to dry sand being blown from the sand-hills on to the beach by strong continuous easterly winds, with "toheroas presumably being suffocated" (Anon 1931, Rapson 1954). High summer mortality reported on all the Northland beaches in 1938 (Rapson 1954) was considered to be a result of lack of oxygen, and heat stress, resulting from calm surf conditions and tides not covering the toheroa for several days. Animals were also in poor condition from spawning. Heavy mortalities were also noted for the three main northern beaches during the summer of 1970–71 (Greenway 1972). Strong inshore winds with an associated sharp drop in air temperature have also been suggested as the cause of toheroa mortalities at Te Waewae Bay, Southland (Eggleston & Hickman 1971).

At Bluecliffs Beach in the South Island, population declines have been attributed to changes in beach profile and sediment type (Cranfield 1996, cited in Carbines & Breen 1998), with scouring events removing the finer sediment components of the beach leaving a layer of coarse sand that may be unsuitable for toheroa burrowing (McKinnon & Olsen 1994, Carbines & Breen 1998).

The passage of vehicles along the beach is also considered to be a significant mortality agent. Hooker & Redfearn (1998) found mortalities (crushed shells) of up to 14% in small toheroa (range 6–23 mm, mean 10–12 mm) following heavy vehicle use of the beach for a large recreational fishing contest.

The illegal fishery for toheroa may also be very significant. Estimates of illegal take are not available.

3. RESEARCH

3.1 Stock structure

Little is known about the stock structure of New Zealand toheroa. The three northern North Island beaches that historically supported abundant populations (Ninety Mile, Dargaville, Muriwai) may be connected via planktonic dispersal of larvae, but lack of information on local current speeds and direction makes this a tentative suggestion only.

3.2 Resource surveys

There is a long history of stock surveys for toheroa on northern beaches, starting at the beginning of the 20th Century. As far back as 1926, concerns were being raised about the over-harvesting of the resource (Anon 1926).

From 1962 to 1969 biennial surveys were conducted on the three main beaches. These surveys usually consisted of a narrow trench (0.5 m) being dug down the beach about roughly every 900 m, and all toheroa being excavated and measured. From this, densities were scaled up to the level of the beach. These were designed as before season / after season surveys, in order to manage the stock, but by 1967 the population was at such a low abundance that all harvesting ceased (Greenway 1969, 1972). Greenway noted that the accuracy of these surveys was modest, and not sufficient to be able to make estimates of the amount removed from the stock during the open seasons.

After harvesting ceased, annual population surveys continued through the seventies and early eighties until 1986. Subsequently, brief investigations were carried out in 1990 (data not available) and in 1993 (1 day each at Ninety Mile and Dargaville Beaches). In 1999 a full survey was carried out of Dargaville Beach (Akroyd et al. 1999). The survey reported in this document represents the latest toheroa survey (Ninety Mile Beach, March 2000).

Figure 2 shows abundance estimates for toheroa from the early 1930s up to the present, for the three main northern beaches. A distinction is made between animals greater and less than 75 mm, which is a historical minimum size limit. Associated size frequencies are given in Figure 3. In general, the abundance of toheroa declined over the survey period for all beaches.

In the early 1960s, a good proportion of the stock was composed of animals over 75 mm (about 3 inches), for Ninety Mile and Dargaville Beaches. A substantial decline was apparent in adult animals up until 1971 for Ninety Mile Beach, and 1974–77 for Dargaville, when numbers rose briefly again, before declining to relatively very low levels. Over this period Muriwai Beach had consistently low adult abundances, although numbers appeared to have been higher historically (1935–53). The two more northern beaches (Ninety Mile in particular) had three years of extremely high juvenile recruitment (arbitrarily defined as animals of less than 75 mm – probably representing 0+/1+ animals). These peaks occurred on Ninety Mile Beach in 1964 and 1971 and on Dargaville in 1972. Smaller peaks also occurred on Dargaville and Muriwai Beaches during the time series. These recruitment events did not result in large adult population abundances 2 to 3 years later, suggesting that large scale mortality was eliminating these recruitment pulses from the population before adult size was reached.

Given the once abundant larger size classes on these beaches, which supported commercial canning operations, it appears that some aspect of the population dynamics, or supporting habitat, has changed so that these areas can no longer support large adult beds of toheroa. Over the last 40 years, populations appear to have received erratic (if occasionally quite substantial) recruitment pulses, followed by large scale mortality that prevents increases in adult abundance. The Dargaville Beach 1999 and Ninety Mile Beach 2000 surveys (see below) reported substantial numbers of small toheroa, suggesting recent large scale recruitment. Given the erratic and infrequent timing of such recruitment pulses, this represents a rare opportunity to assess what factor/s may be eliminating such recruitment pulses.

3.3 Other studies

Carbines & Breen (1998) summarised information available on southern toheroa populations for Oreti and Bluecliffs beaches. Abundance surveys have been carried out on these two beaches since 1966.

3.4 Estimates of population size and size structure in 2000

3.4.1 Survey methods

To estimate total population size and associated size frequency distibutions of toheroa on Ninety Mile Beach, a survey of two-phase random stratified design was undertaken in March 2000. The historical data were of little use in stratifying the beach, being 14 or more years old (the 1986 survey was the most recent to cover the full extent of the beach) and poorly spatially referenced. Therefore, a preliminary examination of the beach was undertaken. The beach was traversed in a vehicle driven at low speed, with a driver and an observer looking for signs of toheroa beds. These were evident as areas of double siphon holes in the sand, with a 'pocked' aspect to the sand surface. In addition, at 1 km intervals a series of small excavations was made down the full extent of the beach slope, looking for toheroa. A differential GPS was used for spatial positioning (± 10 m accuracy) along the beach. Notes were kept of the relative density of animals (measured qualitatively by eye) and their dominant size range. Combining these two observations (siphon hole areas and density 'bins'), the beach was divided into seven strata (Table 1). These strata were roughly defined as follows; "H", toheroa densities over 20 m^2 (apparent as siphon holes on surface, seven toheroa beds); "H2", similar densities but no surface sign; "Mix", area between the seven beds identified as H; "M", densities of 10–19 m^2; "L", densities of 3–9 m^2; "VL", densities of 0–2 m^2; "LT", lower beach stratum of densities 0–2 m^2, starting 70 m from the high tide mark and extending down to low water, running below strata M, L, and VL.

Phase 1 transects were allocated across the strata in numbers thought to be roughly representative of the area of the stratum and its likely toheroa density. Phase 2 transects were allocated on the basis of maximising reductions in the variance estimates. This was achieved by adding a transect iteratively to each stratum, and using the existing density and variance information to predict the likely improvement in the c.v. for each possible stratum allocation. The transect was then assigned to the stratum giving the greatest improvement in the overall c.v., and the process repeated until all available phase 2 transects had been allocated (*sensu* Francis 1984).

Using historical data from the 1986 survey (the most recent survey to cover the full extent of the beach), it was estimated that 20 transects would be sufficient to achieve a *c.v.* of 12%, assuming that toheroa could be stratified into areas of zero abundance, less than 1 per m^2, and greater than 1 per m^2. Fourteen of these were assigned to the first phase, and the remaining 6 to second phase sampling. However, sampling proved to be more efficient than expected, and 27 transects were completed in the first phase, and a further 13 in the second phase.

Each transect was assigned a random starting point 0–9 m below high tide mark (in stratum LT, from the lower boundary of the adjoining strata, i.e. 70 m down the beach). Transect positions along the beach were located using differential GPS. Quadrats were dug at 10 m intervals down the transect to the lowest point on the beach possible given the tide (or until stratum LT if adjoining).

Quadrats were positioned using a rope knotted at 10 m intervals, minimising potential wind and passing vehicle problems (relative to using tape measures). At each 10 m interval, a 1 x 0.5 m (0.5 m^2) steel quadrat with vertical sides was driven into the substrate, and excavated to a depth of 30 cm. To allow for potential edge effects, animals encountered on the seaward edge of the quadrat or the left edge of the quadrat facing up the beach were included in the sample; any animals encountered on the landward edge or the right edge facing up the beach were excluded.

For three transects in each stratum, sand was removed from the quadrat and sieved through a 5 mm Netlon bag. A PVC tube was used to hold the bag in place while the sand was sieved. This allowed the detection and quantification of smaller individuals, but was not carried out for all transects because this would significantly reduce the number of transects able to be processed. The remaining transects were dug out, the sand scattered across the beach, and all visible toheroa collected by hand. The maximum dimension of individual animals was measured to the nearest whole millimetre down.

The basic sampling unit for analysis was the mean quadrat density for each transect rather than that for each quadrat. Since a stratified random approach was used, the following equations were applied.

The sample mean for stratum *h* was calculated as

$$\overline{y_h} = \left[\sum_{i=1}^{n_h} y_{hi} \right] / n_h$$

where

h	denotes the stratum being considered
i	denotes the sampling unit (average density per quadrat, within a transect)
y_{hi}	denotes the value of the ith unit of stratum h
n	is the sample size taken (number of transects sampled)

The sample variance for stratum h was calculated as

$$s_h^2 = \left[\sum_{i=1}^{n_h} ((y_{hi} - \overline{y_h})^2) \right] / (n_h - 1)$$

As random sampling was done in each stratum, the sample mean is an unbiased estimate of the population mean, and the sample variance is an unbiased estimate of the population variance. To combine all of the sampling strata on a beach to get a beach population mean and variance, the stratified estimator was

$$\overline{y_{st}} = \sum_{h=1}^{L} W_h \overline{y_h}$$

where W is the weighting given to each stratum contribution (in this case the area of each stratum within the beach) and L is the number of strata.

The variance estimator was

$$\mathrm{var}(\overline{y_{st}}) = \sum_{h=1}^{L} W_h^2 \frac{s_h^2}{n_h} \left(\frac{N_h - n_h}{N_h} \right)$$

where N_h is the population size in stratum h.

The coefficient of variation for the overall population of a shellfish population at a beach was simply

$$\mathrm{c.v.} = \frac{\sqrt{\mathrm{var}(\overline{y_{st}})}}{\overline{y_{st}}} \mathrm{x}100$$

Population abundances were calculated for animals less than 15 mm (sieved transects only), greater than 14 mm, and greater than 75 mm: 15 mm is an arbitrary figure at which it is assumed that detection rates by workers in the field approach 100%. No data are currently available to calculate detection curves relative to size, given the sampling procedures used.

3.4.2 Survey results and discussion

Toheroa were located along the full length of Ninety Mile Beach, but were particularly common in strata H, H2, and Mix, which were adjacent to each other. Specific stratum location is not given in this report to protect the location of the adult beds, but can be provided on request from the Ministry of Fisheries. An estimated 51.6 million toheroa 15 mm or longer were present on the beach (c.v. 20%), with a further 10.2 million under 15 mm (c.v. 27%). The population size of animals 75 mm or more long was 1.03 million (c.v. 41%); only two toheroa of 100 mm or greater were encountered during sampling.

The bulk of the population was composed of animals of 40 mm or less (Figure 4), which were probably a 0+ cohort (Redfearn 1974). There was evidence of two peaks in the size frequency data (see Figure 3), suggesting either multiple successful spawning events or the presence of two age classes. Fewer animals were found in the 60–79 mm range, and only a small proportion of the population exceeded 80 mm in length.

Most of the larger animals measured came from a series of discrete beds within strata H and H2. Stratum H covered seven short stretches of beach identifiable as toheroa beds through a characteristically pitted surface (Greenway 1969) often with a slight watery sheen to the sediment surface. Stratum H2, however, did not display such characteristics on its surface, and often there was little sign on the beach surface of toheroa. Hence the division of the beach into strata using siphon holes had some utility, but was not as effective for stratification purposes as it might have been. Smaller toheroa (the bulk of the population) showed no sign on the beach surface, and beds could not be mapped using siphon holes.

The digging of exploratory lines of holes along the beach at regular intervals was essential in providing sufficient information for stratification. The stratification chosen worked reasonably well, but there was still large variability within strata H and H2. The patchiness of toheroa over distances along the beach, within areas of higher abundance, makes better stratification problematic.

3.5 Yield estimates

No yield est imates are available for toheroa.

4. MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The number of toheroa in March 2000 was the highest ever recorded. However, the population was heavily dominated by small toheroa under 40 mm in length (0+/1+ cohort). It should be noted that this survey may have been more efficient at sampling smaller toheroa (about 30 mm) than previous surveys which did not use mesh sieves. It is not possible to quantify the magnitude of this potential difference. Many small juveniles were also found on Dargaville Beach in 1999 (see Figure 3) (Akroyd et al. 1999); some of the small toheroa measured on Ninety Mile Beach in

May 2000 may have been from the same recruitment event quantified for Dargaville Beach. The number of toheroa measured on Dargaville Beach in 1999 was also the highest ever recorded there, although the small average size (10–15 mm) makes comparisons with previous surveys difficult (for the same reasons as the Ninety Mile Beach survey).

In the present survey, only a few adult beds were found along Ninety Mile Beach, with 1 million toheroa being estimated to be longer than 74 mm. Historically, the abundance of larger animals has ranged up to 5–10 million (mid 1960s, 1970–71) during the survey period (and probably higher before this), although for most of the time series, abundance has been very low.

The historical time series shows that large recruitment events occur at irregular intervals, but these fail to generate higher abundances of larger animals. This suggests that two general processes are acting to limit the 'regeneration' of large adult toheroa beds on the beach. The first is that recruitment is erratic, varying by at least two orders of magnitude over a scale of years, with many years having little or no recruitment. This pattern may be driven by large scale climatic processes, but remains to be investigated. The second general process is that when large numbers of juvenile toheroa do recruit onto the beach, they suffer high mortality rates, the end result being few animals growing into adults. The specific processes operating can only be speculated upon, but may include poaching, impacts of vehicle traffic, changes in food availability, or changes in the physical habitat itself (such as lower freshwater run-off or changes in run-off chemistry due to pine forest plantations behind the beach system). These possibilities are not listed in any particular order, and none of them may necessarily be a contributing factor.

The current situation presents a rare opportunity to investigate reasons for the post-recruitment mortality that occurs on the beach. It is recommended that studies begin immediately to document the fate of this cohort (and more importantly, the factors causing mortalities) over the next 1 to 3 years, at which time animals should have grown to adult sizes. Given the irregularity of recruitment, and the infrequency of toheroa surveys commissioned since 1986, such an opportunity may not arise again for many years.

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Table 1: Stratum description, areas, transect allocation, and transect densities.

Stratum	Description*	Area (m^2)	No. of transects Phase 1	Phase 2	Total
H	High density beds	282 414	5	2	7
L	Low density zone	4 483 840	4	1	5
LT	Lower tidal zone	4 706 177	3	4	7
M	Medium density	567 440	5		5
Mix	Areas between "H" beds	393 720	4		4
H2	High density, no sign	1 107 767	3	5	8
VL	Very low density	936 800	3	1	4
		Total	27	13	40

These descriptions were given at the time of the initial work to stratify the beach: subsequently it turned out that some strata thought to be very low in toheroa abundance (e.g., L and VL) held substantial numbers, though these were not detected in the initial digging at 1 km intervals.

Table 2: Estimated population size by stratum, for toheroa less than 15 mm (sieved quadrats only), greater than 14 mm, and greater than 74 mm. Coefficients of variation (c.v.s) are given in parentheses.

Stratum	Size component: Less than 15 mm		Greater than 14 mm		Greater than 74 mm	
H	1 312 702	(91)	13 182 223	(50)	164 004	(52)
L	3 523 017	(54)	3 416 259	(32)	0	
LT	915 090	(52)	8 962 546	(20)	336 156	(100)
M	491 444	(44)	2 468 052	(17)	56 744	(100)
Mix	561 051	(82)	2 763 422	(24)	0	
H2	1 107 768	(22)	16 022 153	(45)	356 711	(55)
VL	2 271 030	(60)	4 829 488	(41)	117 100	(100)
All strata	10 182 102	(27)	51 644 143	(20)	1 030 714	(41)

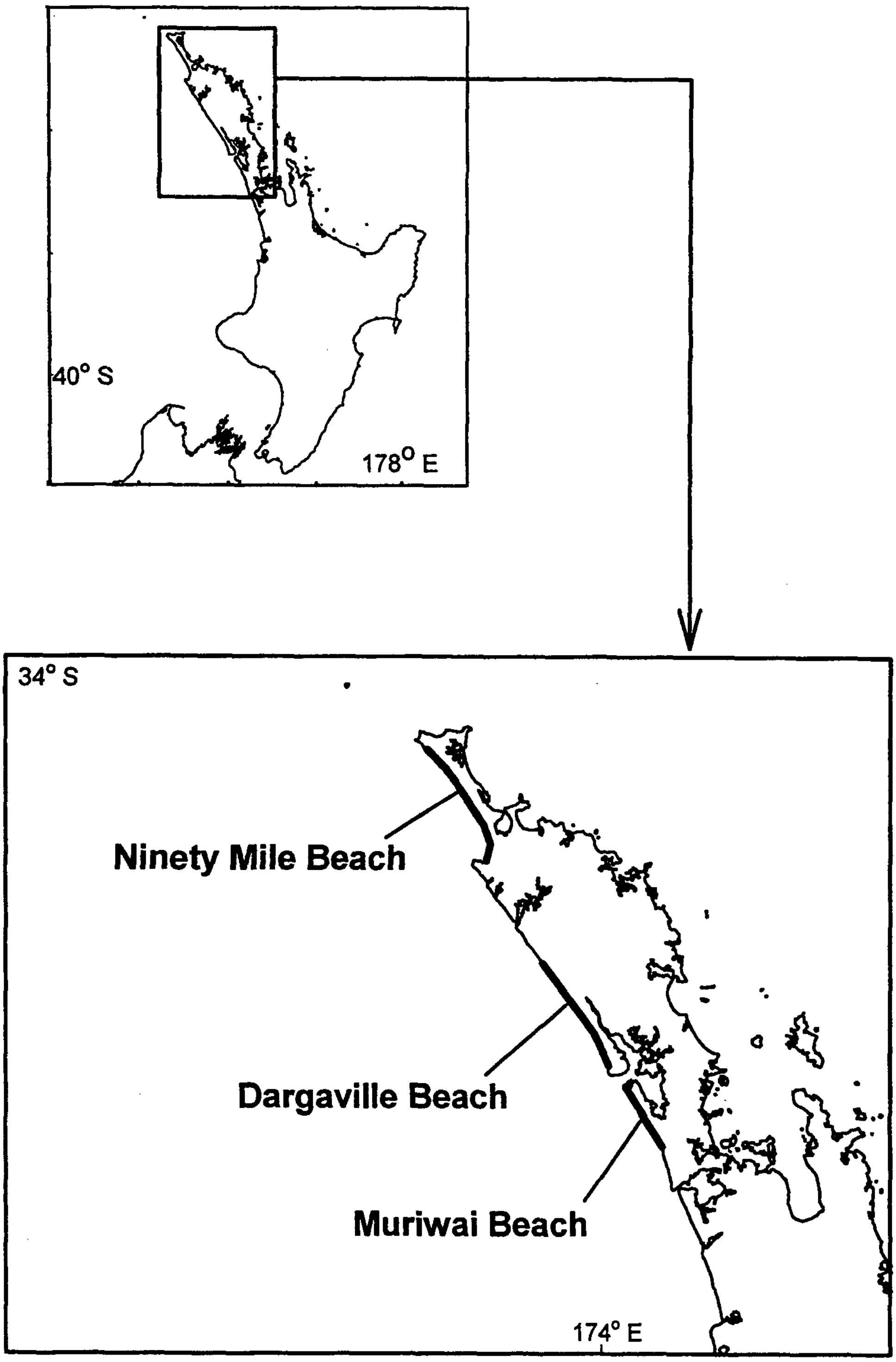

Figure 1: Location of three main northern beaches that contain important toheroa populations.

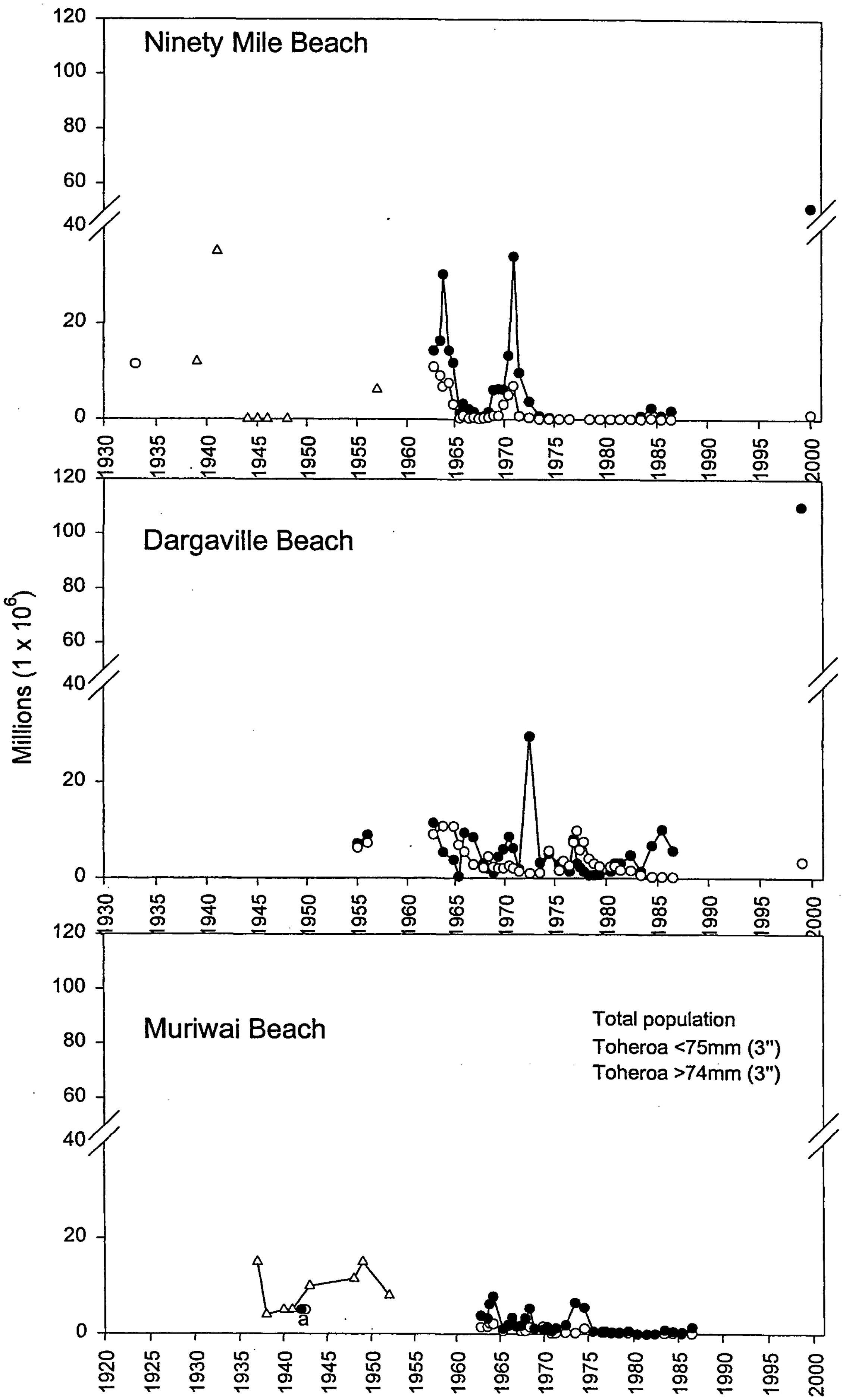

Figure 2: Time series of total toheroa abundance on three main northern beaches; Ninety Mile Beach, Dargaville Beach, and Murawai Beach, 1933–2000. "a" denotes a 1942 survey on Murawai beach where the estimates of under and over 75 mm toheroa are slightly offset to allow both estimates to be viewed. Where total population estimates are given, no date are available that allow size divisions to be made.

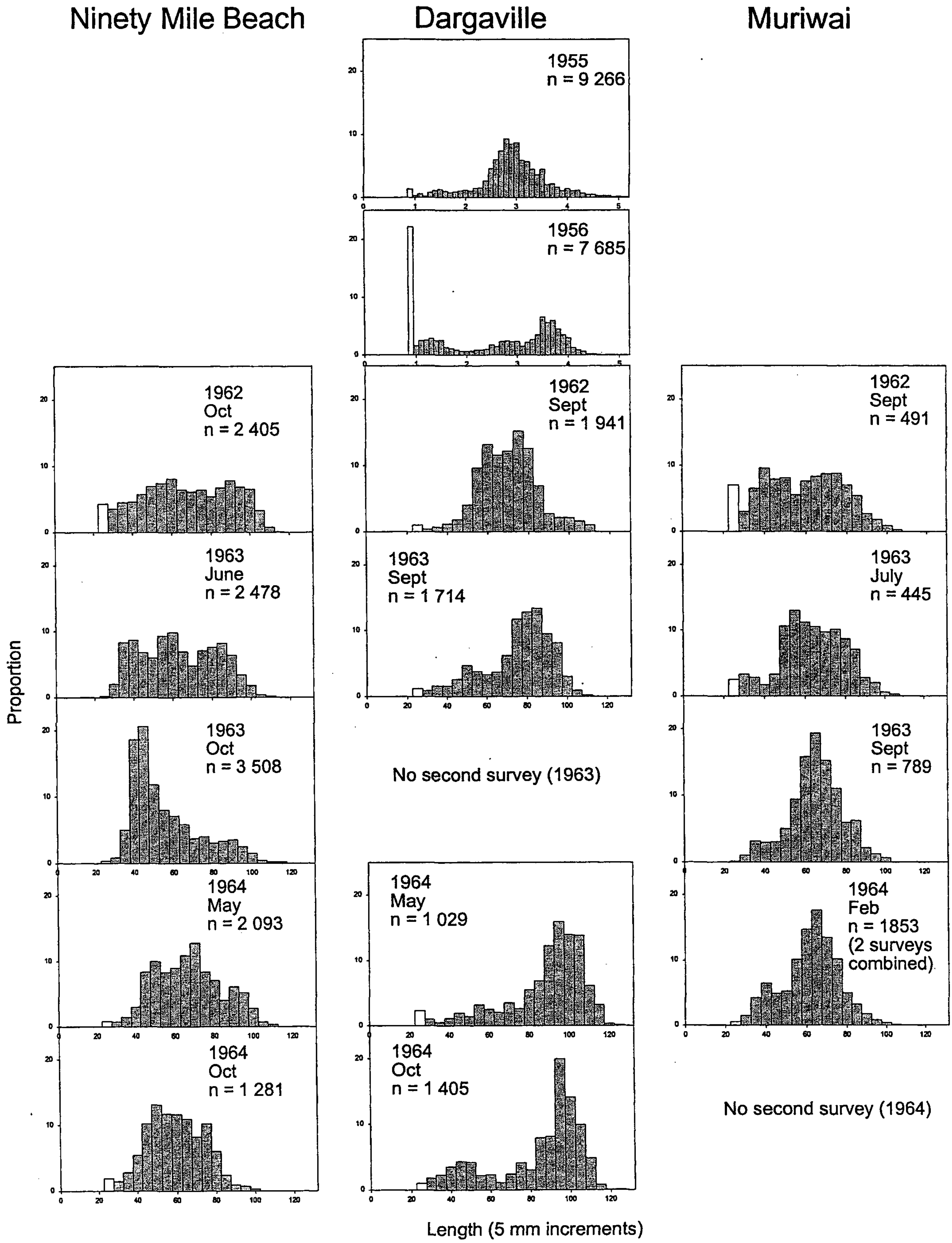

Figure 3: Length frequency time series for toheroa on three main northern beaches; Ninety Mile Beach, Dargaville Beach, and Muriwai Beach, 1955–1964. 1955 and 1956 data are expressed in inches, data from 1962 onwards in mm. Animals <30 mm (or less than 1 inch) are grouped into one white bar (historically recorded in this way), all other bars (grey) are for the size classes indicated.

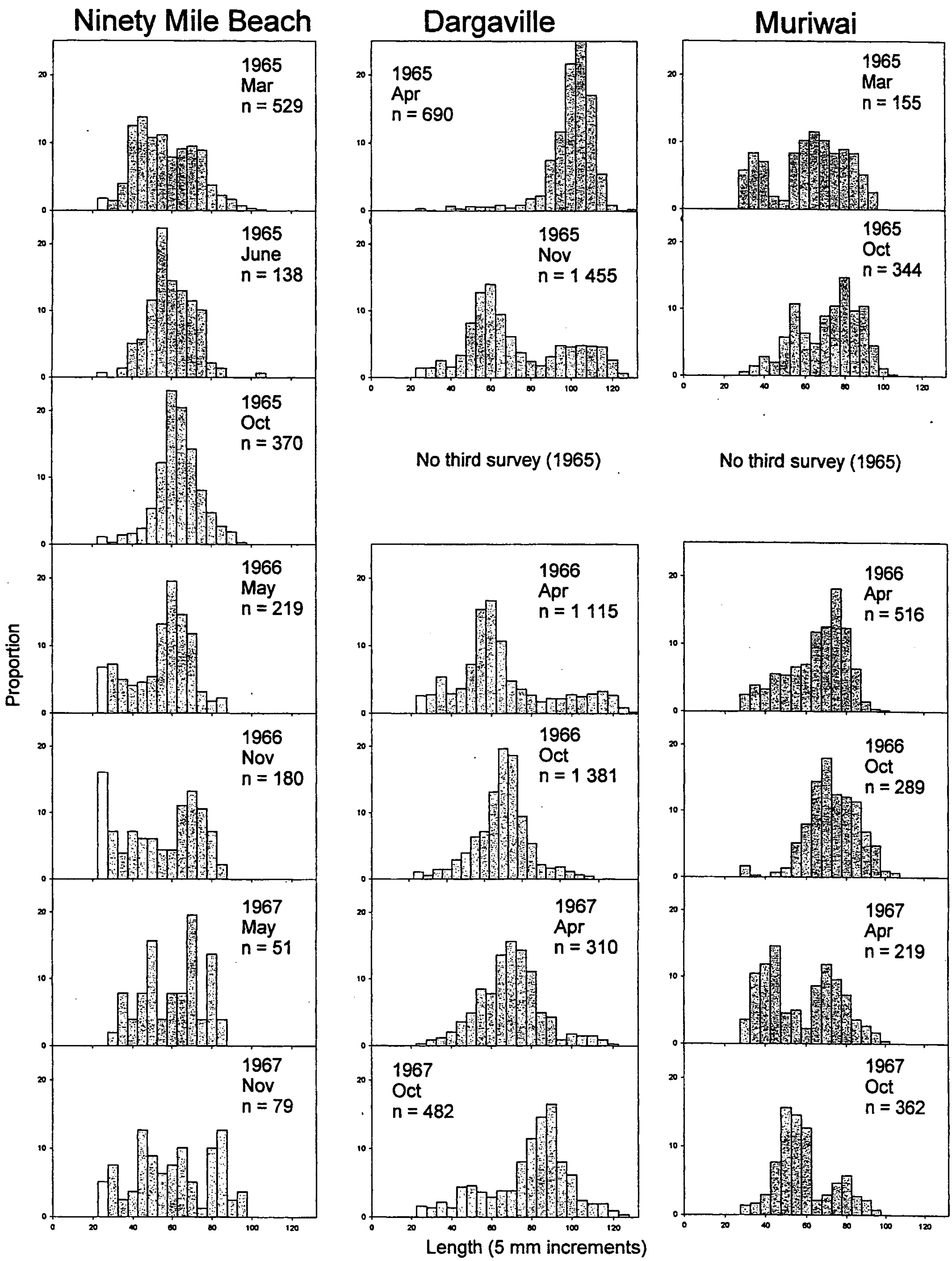

Figure 3 continued; 1965–67.

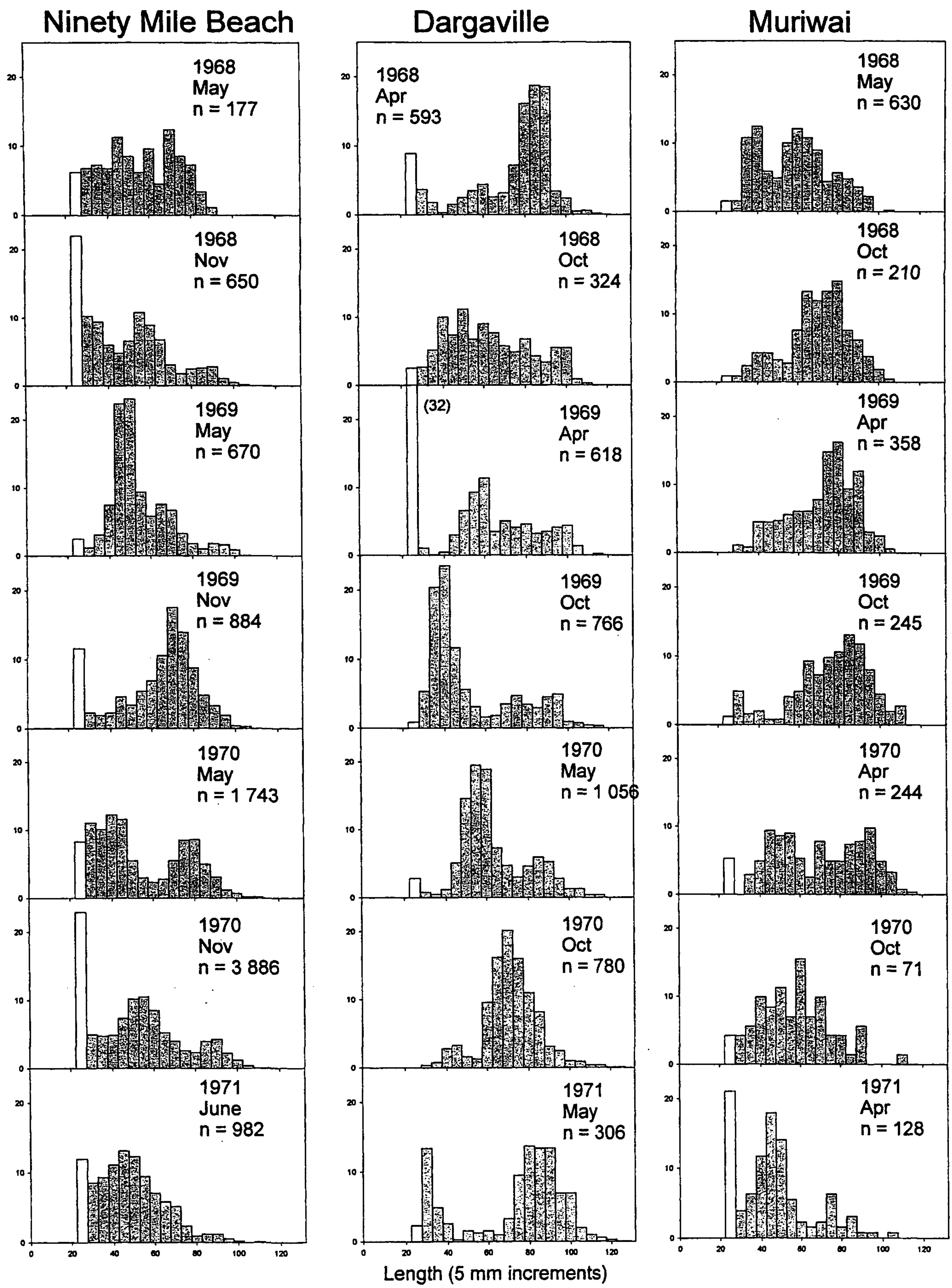

Figure 3 continued; 1968–71.

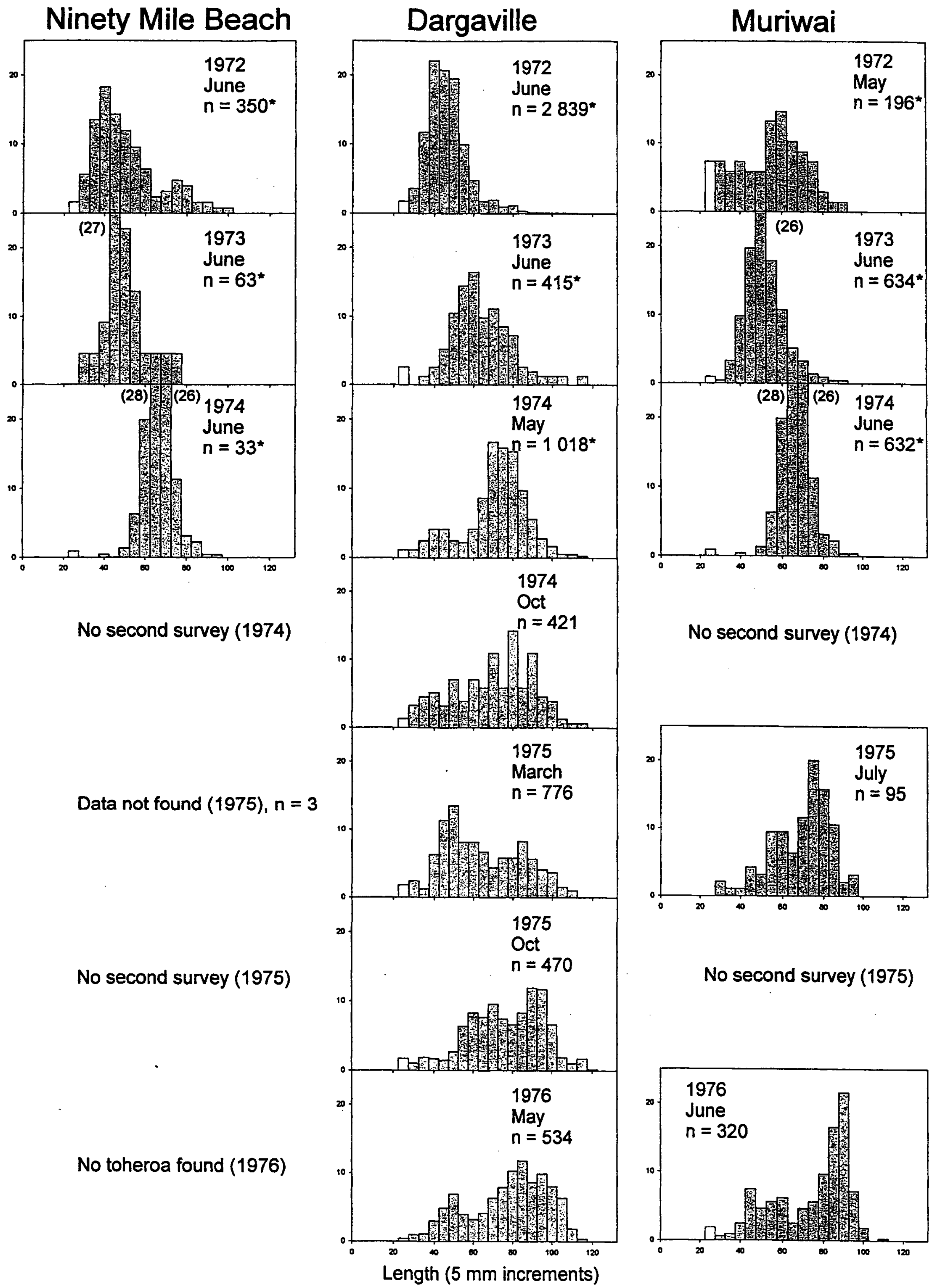

Figure 3 continued; 1972–76. Samples marked with "*" were derived from graphed data, the original numbers not being found.

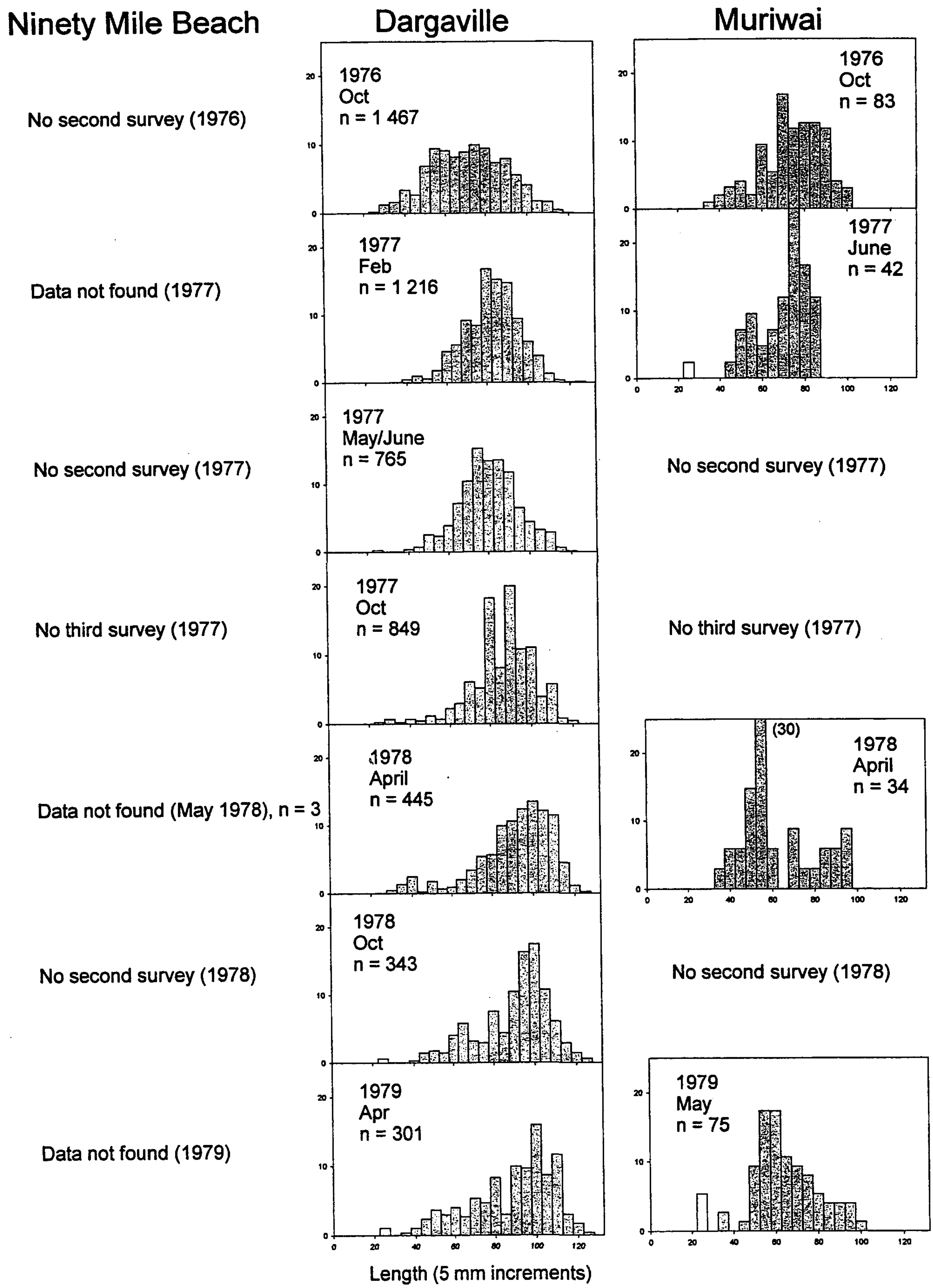

Figure 3 continued; 1976–79.

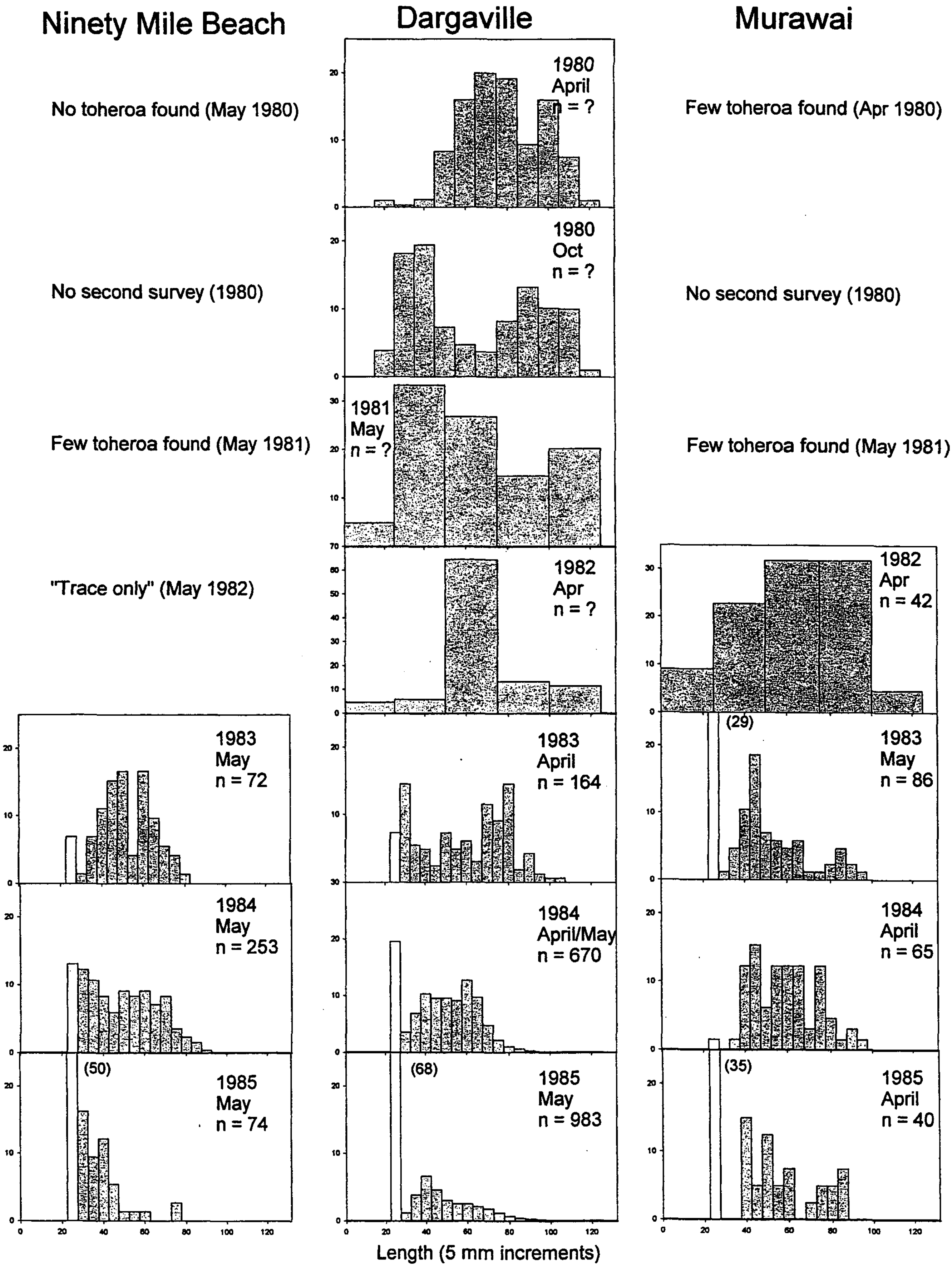

Figure 3 continued, 1980–85. Data from 1980 were found only in 10 cm increments, while data from 1981 and 1982 were recoverable only in 25 mm increments

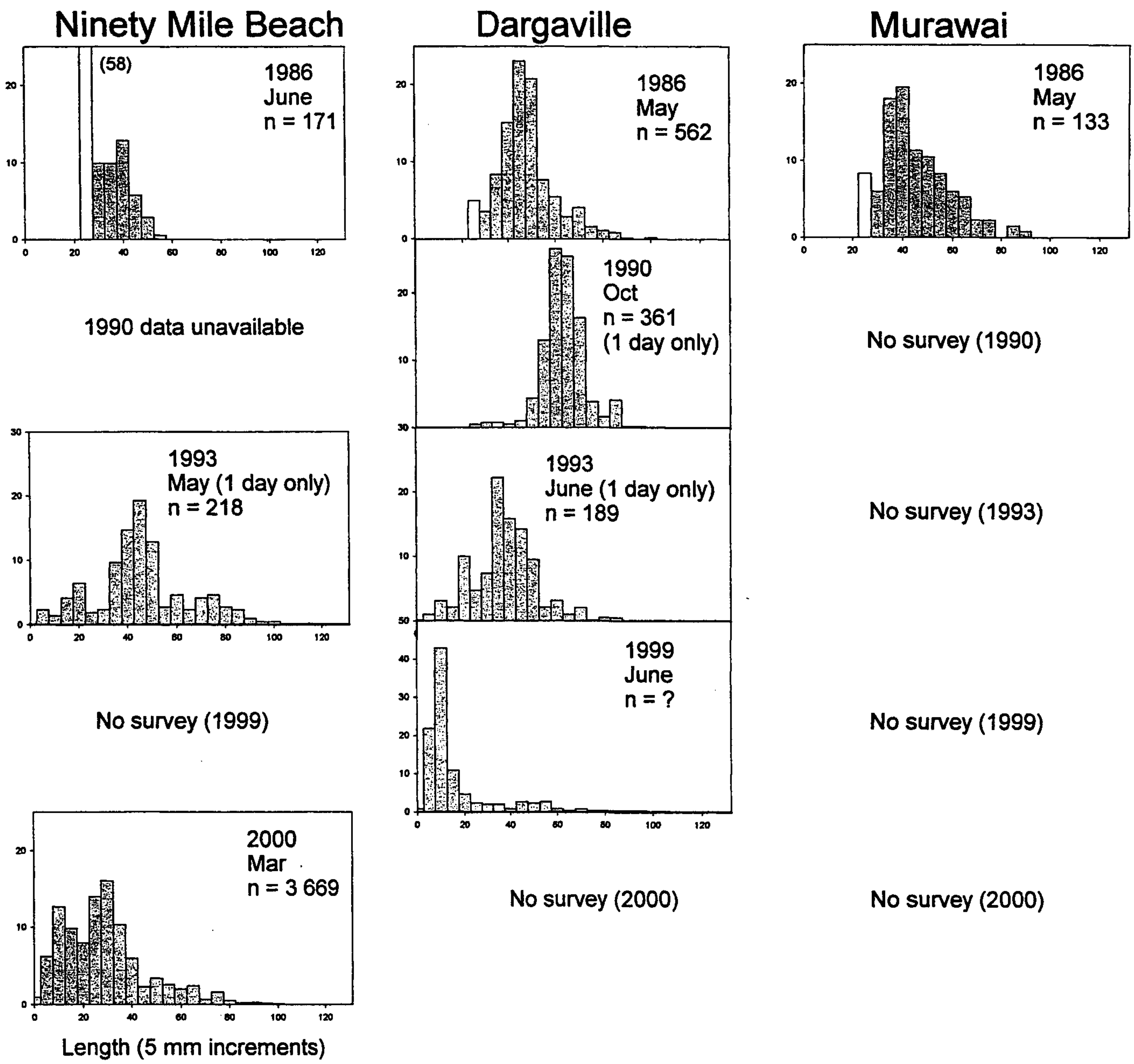

Figure 3 continued,1986–2000.

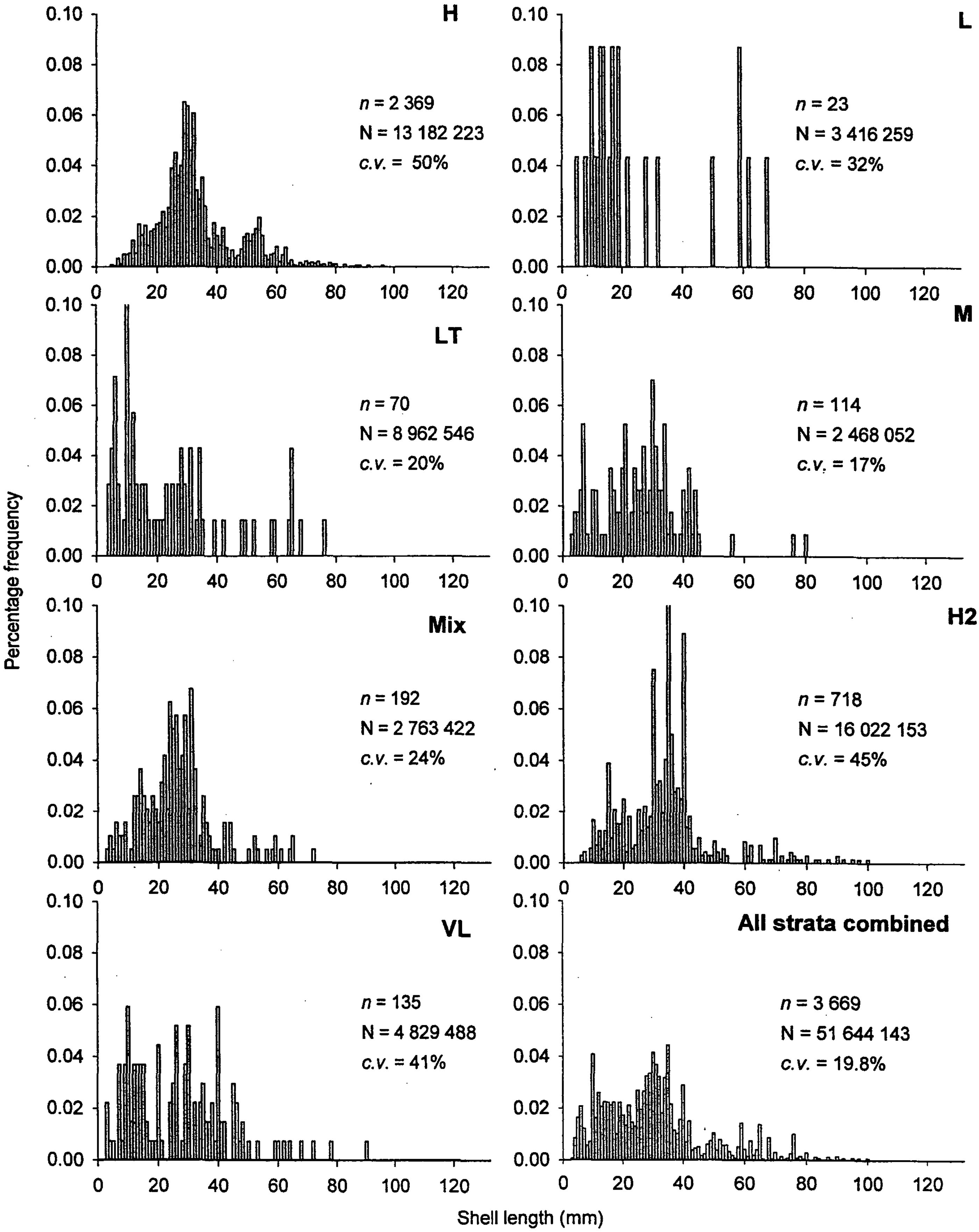

Figure 4: Ninety Mile Beach stratum length compositions of toheroa, March 2000 survey. *n*, number of shellfish measured;N, estimated number of toheroa within the stratum; c.v., coefficient of variation. Total population estimates given are only for animals greater than 14 mm (assumed to be the point at which survey efficiency approaches 100%).

Appendix 1: Historical toheroa population estimates for Ninety Mile, Dargaville and Murawai Beaches. Estimates before 1957 are from Cassie (1955) and Redfearn (1974), those from 1962–71 from Greenway (1972), those from later years taken from various unpublished reports and memos, held at the Ministry of Fisheries Auckland office. The 1999 Dargaville data come from Akroyd et al. 1999. Superscript letters denote the month in which a survey was undertaken; ([M], March; [Ma], May; [J], June; [Ju], July; other letters as respective months). [1] denotes only toheroa over 3 inches (76 mm); [2] denotes only half of the beach having been surveyed.

			Density (thousands)
Year	Ninety Mile Beach	Dargaville	Muriwai
1933	11000-12000[1]	–	–
1934	–	–	–
1935	–	–	–
1936	–	–	–
1937	–	–	15000
1938	–	9000	4000
1939	12000	–	–
1940	–	–	5000
1941	35000	–	5000
1942	–	–	5000 [1]
1943	–	–	5000 [2]
1944	scarce	–	–
1945	scarce	–	–
1946	6000	–	–
1947	–	–	3000 [2]
1948	very scarce	5000	10000&13000
1949	–	–	15000
1950	–	–	1000 [2]
1951	–	–	–
1952	–	–	8000
1953	–	–	–
1954	–	–	–
1955	–	10000	–
1956	–	–	–
1957	6200	–	–
1958	–	–	–
1959	–	–	–
1960	–	–	–
1961	–	–	–
1962	24992[O]	20529[S]	5181[S]
1963	22081[Ma], 26200[J], 37048[S]	18142[S], 10866[Ma]	4717[J], 8339[S]
1964	22100[Ma],15319[O]	14837[O]	7353[F], 12408[F],600[S]
1965	1457[J], 3907[O]	11774[Ap], 15365[N]	1600[M], 3633[O]
1966	2314[Ma], 1901[N]	3274[Ap], 14583[O]	5449[Ap], 3052[O]
1967	538[Ma], 834[N]	5090[O]	2313[Ap], 3823[O]
1968	1900[Ma], 6900[N]	6300[Ap], 3400[O]	6700[Ap], 2200[O]
1969	7100[Ma], 9300[N]	6500[Ap], 8100[O]	2600[O]
1970	18406[Ma], 41000[N]	11151[M]a, 8200[O]	2577[Ap], 700[O]
1971	10400[J]	3200[Ma]	1400[AP], 900[N]
1972	3700[J]	29980[J]	2100[Ma]
1973	700[J]	4328[J]	6695[J]
1974	300[J]	10750[Ma], 4446[O]	6674[J]

1975	30[J]	6135[Ma], 3907[O]	1003[J]
1976	0[J]	5639[Ma], 15492[O]	3300[J], 876[O]
1977	180 (first 20 miles)	12841[F], 8078[Ma], 8965[O]	444[J]
1978	30[J]	4699[Ap], 3700[O]	359[A]
1979	none found	3179[Ap]	792[A]
1980	none found	3700[Ma], 5500[O]	200[A]
1981	50[Ma]	4600[Ap]	20[Ma]
1982	20[Ma]	6300[Ap]	40[Ap]
1983	766[Ma]	2085[Ap]	908[Ma]
1984	2672[Ma]	7073[Ap/Ma]	686[Ap]
1985	781[Ma]	10 380[Ma]	420[Ap]
1986	1806	5935	1404
1987	–	–	–
1988	–	–	–
1989	–	–	–
1990	–	–	–
1991	–	–	–
1992	–	–	–
1993	–	–	–
1994	–	–	–
1995	–	–	–
1996	–	–	–
1997	–	–	–
1998	–	–	–
1999	–	113000[J]	–
2000	51500[Ma]	–	–