

FEB 4 1976

Byline

Clam fishing may return to Bay Area

BERKELEY (UPI) — Clam fishing, which thrived 76 years ago in San Francisco Bay, may soon return as a result of cleaner water, a study by the University of California Lawrence Laboratory indicated today.

The study said the bay may be ready for sport clamming in the near future and possibly for commercial oyster fishing with a harvest of 13 million pounds a year.

"In recent years the water quality of the bay has been substantially improved, owing to the effort of the Regional Water Quality Control Board," the report said.

"The shellfish industry flourished from the 1890s through the first decade of this century in the bay, but disappeared in the 1920s as the result of heavy contamination of the clam beds by industrial and domestic waste.

The study found that concentrations of mercury, DDT and polychlorinated biphenyls found in shellfish in the bay is below the tolerance levels for these pollutants. However, it said, there are traces of lead, cadmium and other metals in the clams and it is not known how dangerous they are.

The report stressed the need for further study "before any area of the bay can be safely opened for shellfish harvesting."