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The yield of the United States clam fisheries could be nearly doubled in volume, with a corresponding increase in value, if scientific methods of cultivation were applied to this valuable resource, Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, said today.

Although current production of clams is slightly more than 30 million pounds annually, most of this quantity is taken from uncultivated grounds and represents the harvesting of a wild crop, according to Dr. Gabrielson. The application of modern methods of shellfish cultivation by state or local governments or by private individuals, where feasible, would greatly increase the yield and value of this resource.

The Atlantic Coast clam fisheries, which furnish about 95 percent of the total U. S. production, depend largely on two species, the soft-shelled clam and the hard clam or quahog. Both species grow in intertidal or shallow water and are thus easily cultivated.

Dr. Victor L. Loosanoff, aquatic biologist in charge of the Fish and Wildlife Service Laboratory at Milford, Conn. reports that the cultivation of soft clams may be successfully undertaken in almost any protected area north of New Jersey.

"Many beds, which at present are almost barren or entirely devoid of these animals, can be converted with comparatively little effort into clam-growing farms," Dr. Loosanoff said. "Utilization of such areas would result in an increased supply of clams for the market, and in the conversion of thousands of acres of

unproductive bottoms to a source of revenue. The cultivation of hard shell clams - which are found from Maine to Florida - may also be rendered a very profitable and dependable business provided some fundamental rules are observed in selecting the ground for the farm and taking care of it."

Where clam beds are available for private leasing, returning war veterans would find a profitable outdoor occupation in clam farming, according to Dr. Loosanoff. The clam farm requires less care than the agricultural farm and offers more profit, he said. Hard clam farms, under cultivation, can yield as much as 600 bushels of 2½ inch clams per acre annually, it is estimated. At current prices, this represents an income of $1800 to $2400 per acre of cultivated bottom.

Dr. Loosanoff said that since the biology and habits of the soft and hard clams are well known, the biologists of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the fishery authorities of the various states are familiar with the principles of successful cultivation.

In addition to the hard and soft clam fisheries, two new clam industries were developed during the war on the Atlantic Coast - a fishery for the surf clam in the Long Island area and one for the ocean quahog in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Since both species inhabit deep water, it is believed that cultivation would be difficult if not impossible.