

The Zooarchaeological Study of Sculpin (*Cottidae*) at an Ancient W̱SÁNEĆ Village Site



This research was supported by the Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards

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March 10th, 2025

Introduction

Most abundant family of fish at TEL, ɪ́ĆE

W̱SÁNEĆ bullhead moon (April-May)



Why so many?

How were they harvested?

SENĆOTEN : SXÁN, Eɫ
Common : Sculpin, Bullhead
Scientific : *Cottidae*



Figure 1: Red Irish Lord Sculpin (Sara Thiebaud)



Figure 2: Buffalo Sculpin (Aaron Dufault)

Methodology

- n = 2,500 (NISP)
- 3 units excavated at TEL, ɪ́ĆE (Cordova Bay) in 2023
- Sifted using 1/4 inch dry screens
- Identified down to species and element using the Comparative Zooarchaeology lab at UVic

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my supervisors Dr. Thom and Dr. Lam for guiding my research. Becky Wiggen for teaching me how to ID fish bones. All of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members who shared their knowledge. And all of my fellow field-school members for recovering this assemblage.

Results

Sculpin are the most abundant fish at TEL, ɪ́ĆE, and are 3.5 times more abundant than any other fish within the assemblage

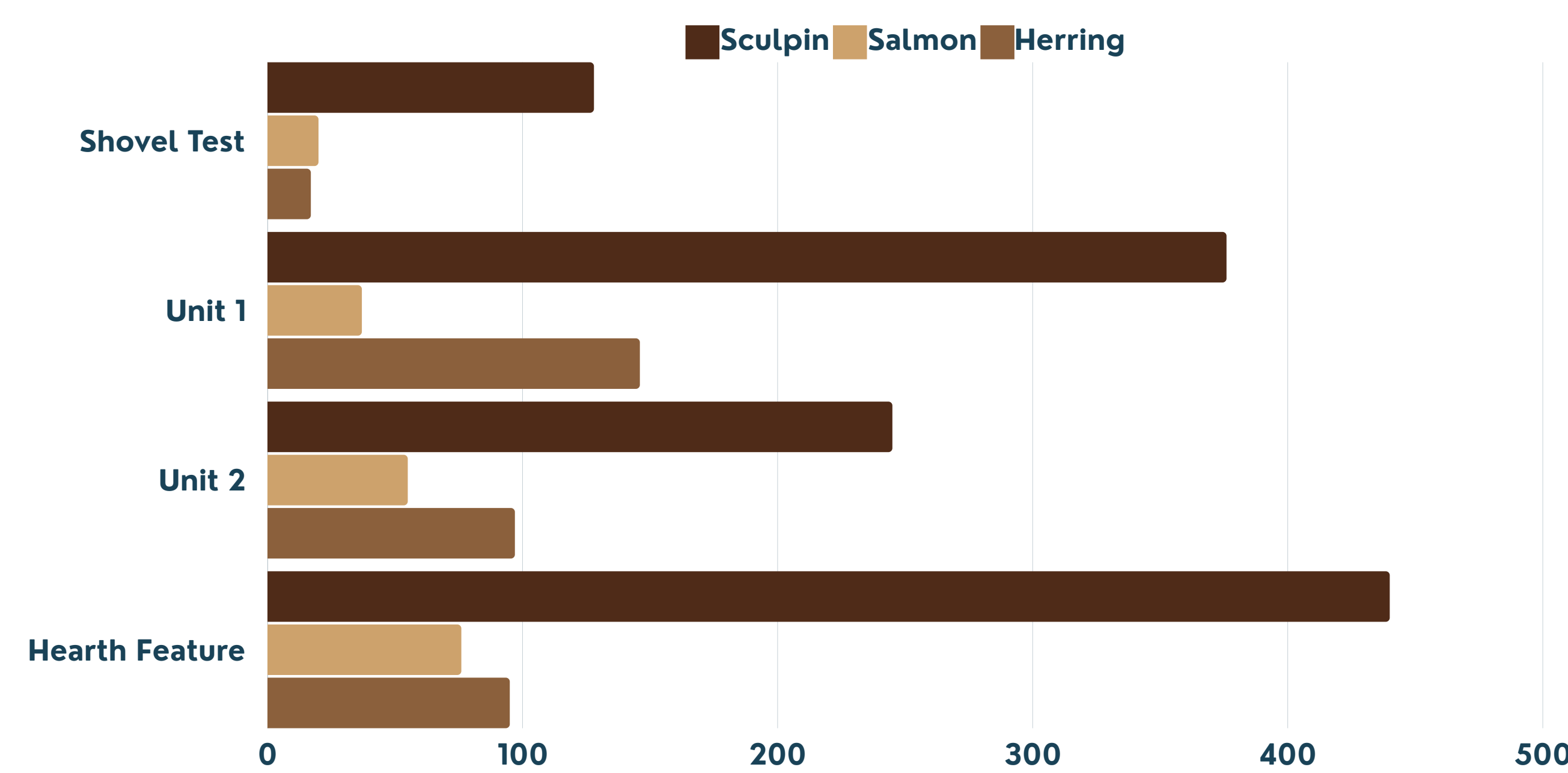


Figure 3: Horizontal bar graph illustrating the difference in frequency between the three most abundant fish types in the study sample: Sculpin, Salmon, and Herring.

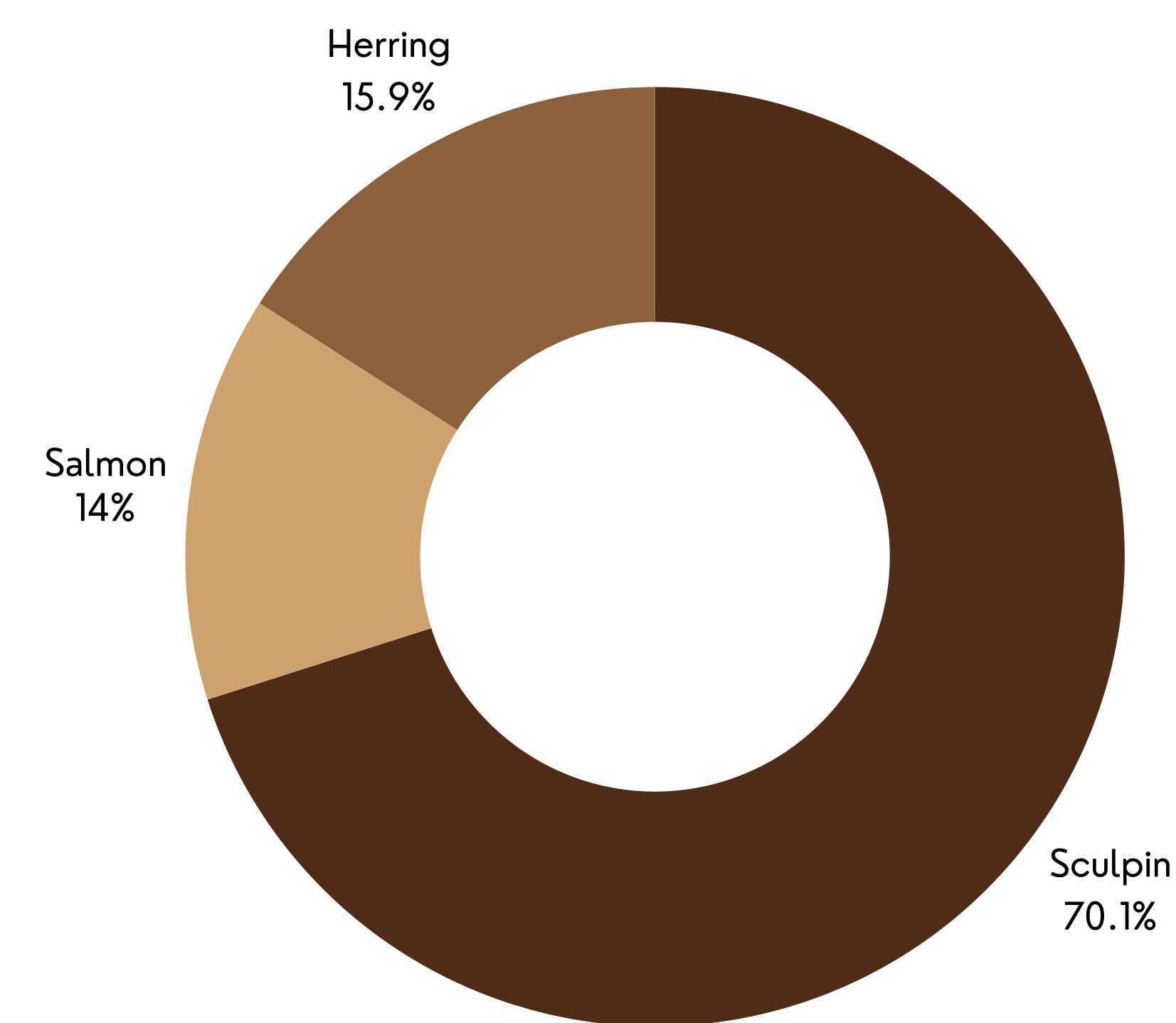


Figure 4: Illustration of a subsample containing the three most abundant fish types.

50% overall relative abundance of Sculpin



Figure 5: Unilateral barbed point recovered from TEL, ɪ́ĆE.

Discussion

- Ideal Sculpin habitat along Cordova Bay Beach and surrounding islands
- Most common method of fishing sculpin = hook and line
- Large abundance of sculpin in hearth feature suggests they were cooked and/or boiled
- Sculpin likely supplemented other foods such as salmon
- Bullheads were a great delicacy eaten by W̱SÁNEĆ elders

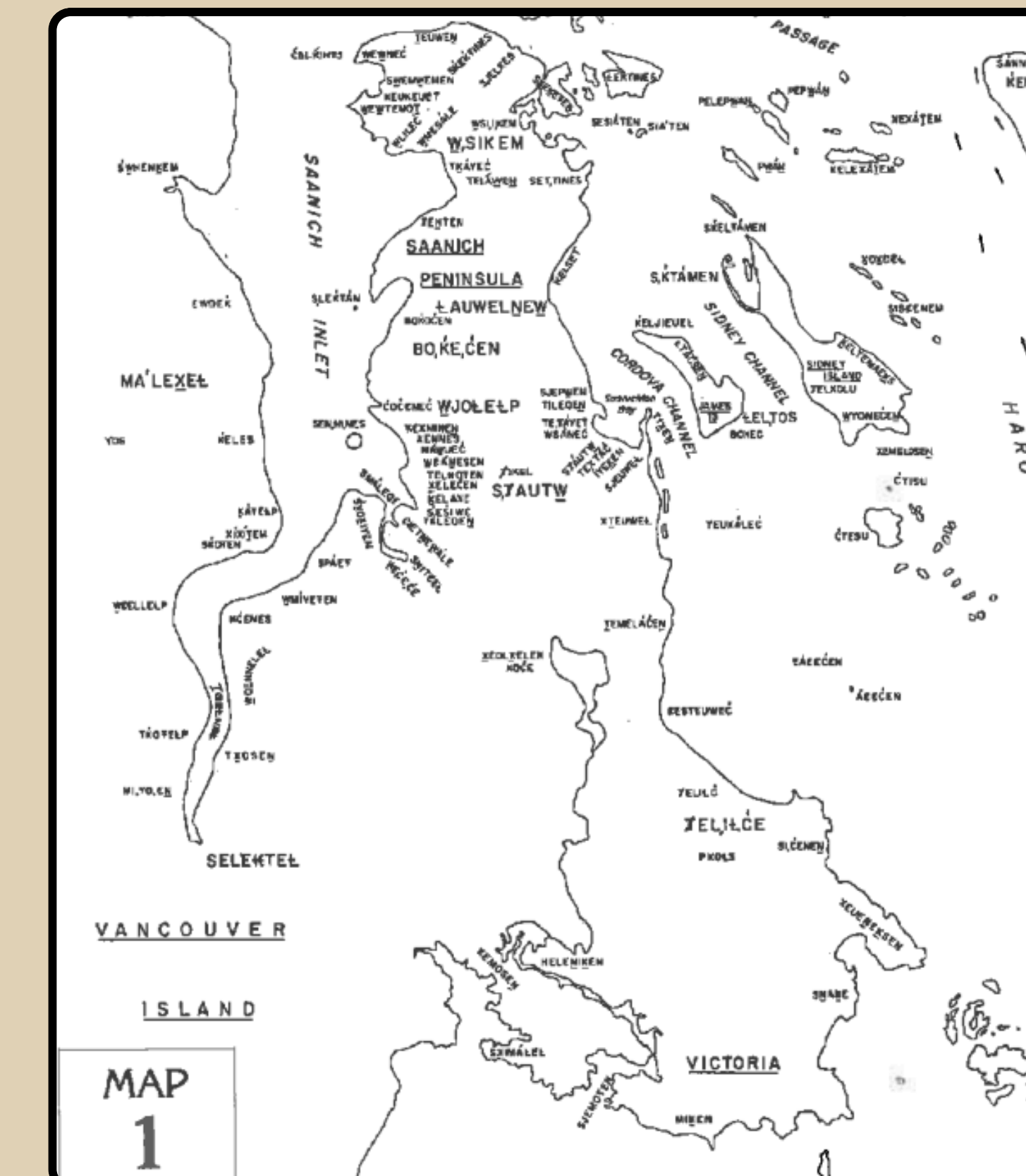


Figure 6: W̱SÁNEĆ Placename Map (Saltwater People)
Figure 7: Shell midden at TEL, ɪ́ĆE

Conclusion

Sculpins were abundant around TEL, ɪ́ĆE and were harvested using hook and line
A high abundance of Sculpin in the sample suggests they were a food source
The intentional use of sculpin at TEL, ɪ́ĆE expands the scope of W̱SÁNEĆ land use

References: <https://oregonmarinereserves.com/2021/03/26/red-irish-lord/>;
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