

depurated shellfish (Table 2 and Figure 3). The reductions in Faecal Coliform counts were highly significant across depuration intervals ($F = 25.8$, $p < 0.01$), with the most pronounced effects observed within the first 48 hours.

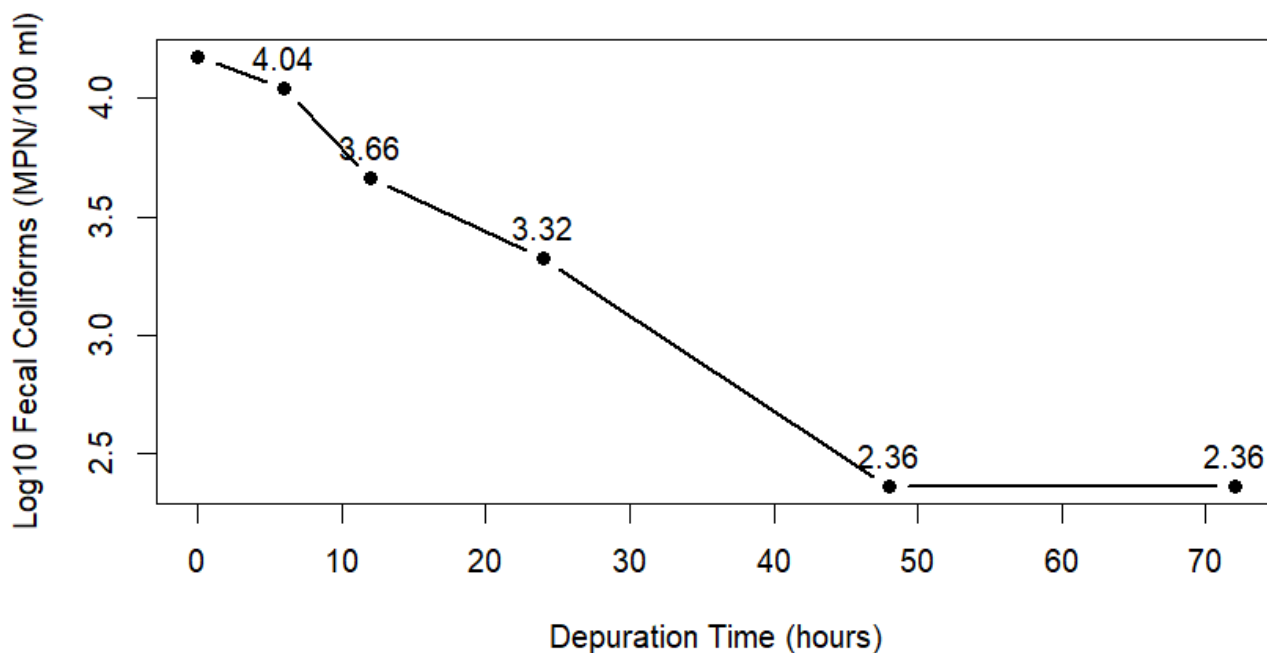


Figure 3 FC reduction in *V. cyprinoides* during closed water depuration with a sponge filter

2.2.4 Reduction in *Vibrio* spp. count in the black clam *Villorita cyprinoides*

The initial *Vibrio* spp. count was found to be 5.1×10^5 cfu/g. After 48 hours of depuration the *Vibrio* spp. count becomes 1.2×10^5 cfu/g (reduction around 76.47 %) (Table 2 and Figure 4). Complete depuration of *Vibrio* spp was not achieved within the 72 hours of depuration.

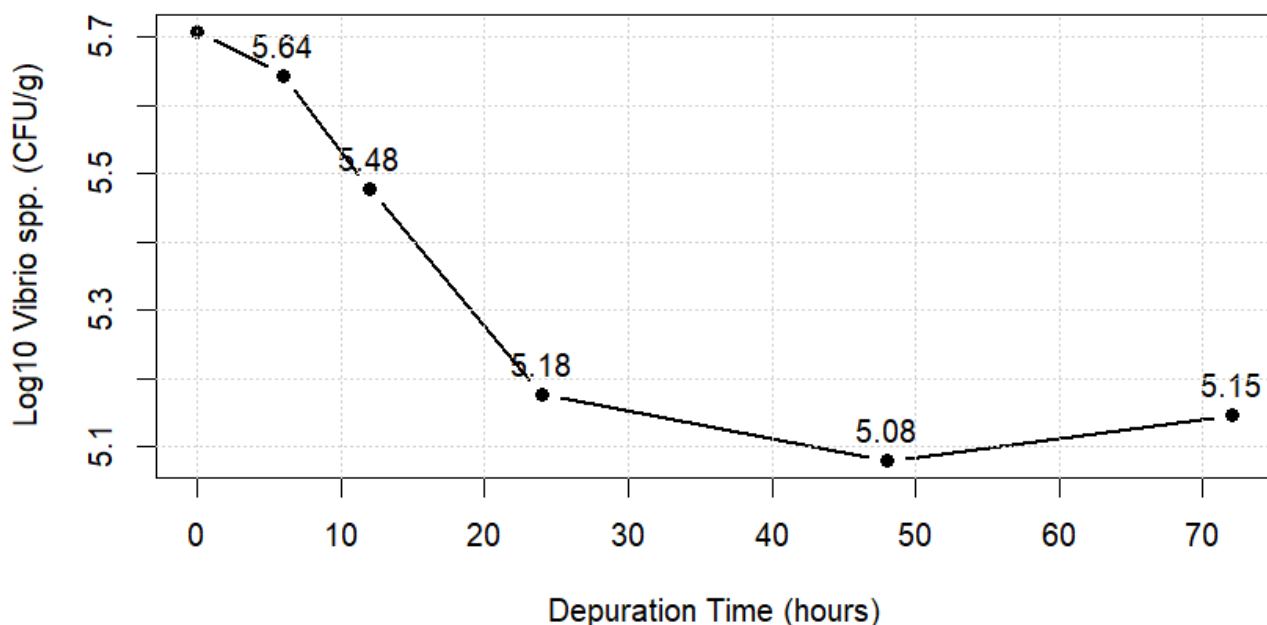


Figure 4 *Vibrio* spp. reduction in *V. cyprinoides* during closed water depuration with a sponge filter

2.3 Bacteriological changes in biofilm-associated microbes on the depuration tank walls during depuration

Bacterial load in the biofilm samples of the depuration tank wall at different depuration time intervals (0 h, 24 h, 48h, 72 h) was recorded for all parameters, including TC, FC, THB and *Vibrio* spp. Count (Table 3). The results showed