



Atlantic oyster

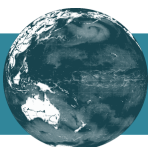
Crassostrea virginica (Gmelin, 1791)

REPUBLIC OF THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS

KEY FEATURES



- Shells typically broadly oval and thick, growing to about 10–15 cm long
- Lower valve convex, upper valve flat, usually with concentric ridges and lines
- Exterior colour dirty white to grey, interior is bright white with a deep purple or red-brown muscle scar
- Usually found in estuaries and embayments and can tolerate a wide range of temperatures and salinities
- Sexes are separate, fertilisation is external
- Matures to adulthood and can start reproducing after around two years
- Competition for space is an important source of mortality but uncrowded oysters can live to 20 years



PATHWAY



ballast water

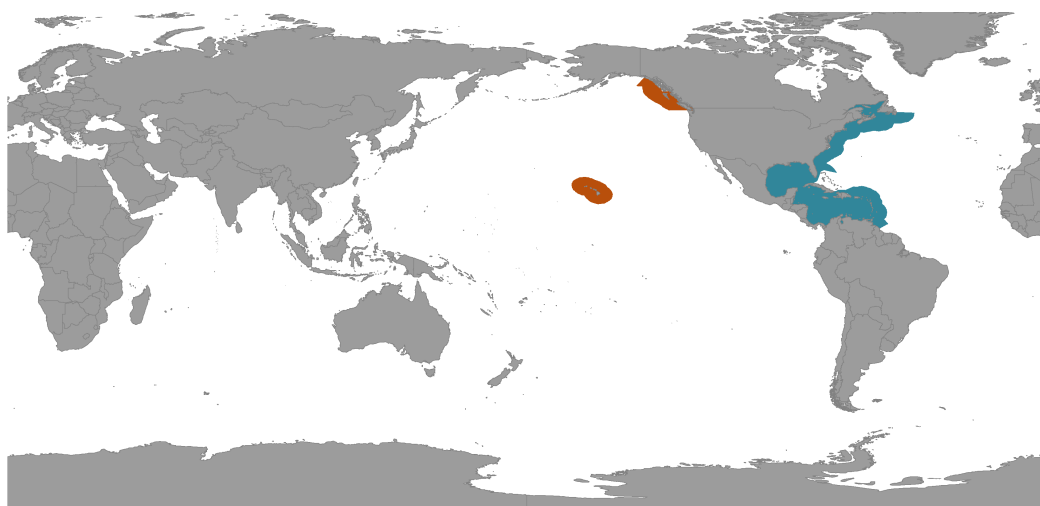


biofouling



aquaculture transfer

- Native
- Cryptogenic
- Non-indigenous





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IMPACTS



Environmental impacts

Fouling organism that can affect native communities. Capable of changing habitats in estuary ecosystems. Before a die-off in the early 1970s, these oysters formed extensive beds in the estuarine areas of Pearl Harbour, Hawai'i



Human health impacts

The human pathogen *Vibrio vulnificus*, which causes primary septicaemia in patients with weakened immune systems, can be found in this oyster. Raw consumption of these oysters can lead to infection



Social & cultural impacts

None known



Economic impacts

Can increase costs of vessel maintenance as it is a prolific fouling species. The introduction of *C. virginica* introduced the parasite *Perkinsus marinus*, the cause of 'Dermo' disease, to Hawai'i

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Could be confused with other oyster species of genus *Crassostrea*

DISTRIBUTION

Not present in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Native range

Northwest Atlantic, Caribbean Sea and South Atlantic

Non-indigenous range

Baltic sea and Hawai'i. Has been introduced to some areas of the South Pacific as spat but failed to establish

CREDITS AND REFERENCES (click reference for more information)

Images

Top: from [FAO 2009](#), bottom : from [Amaral and Simone 2014](#)

References

[Amaral and Simone 2014](#), [Hawaii Biological Survey \(2001\)](#), [Hewitt et al. 2011](#), [Carlton and Eldredge \(2009\)](#)