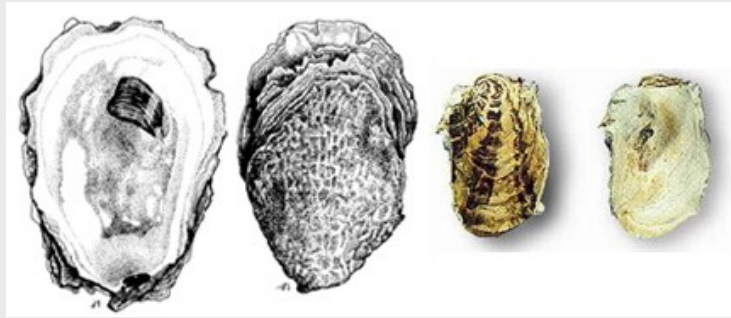




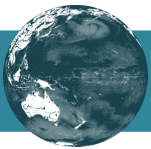
# Atlantic oyster

*Crassostrea virginica* (Gmelin, 1791)

## 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



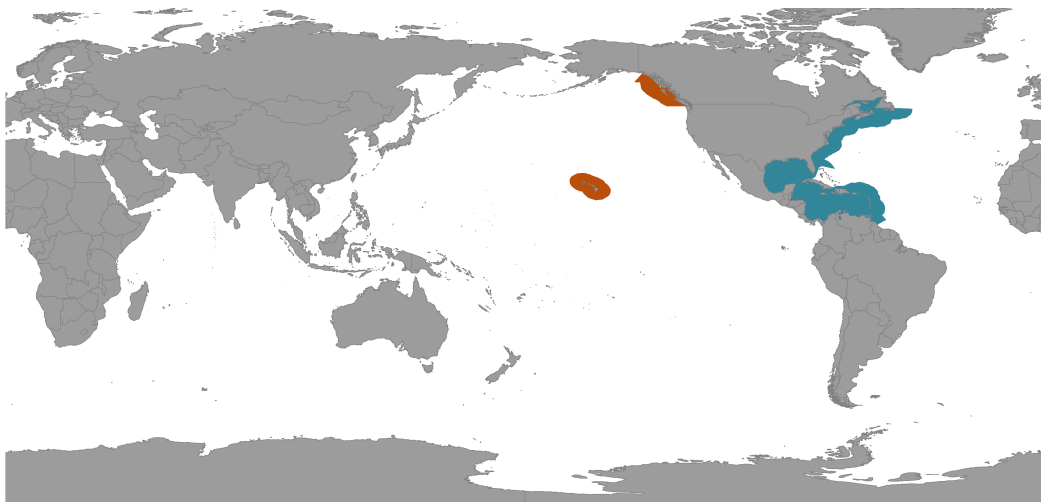
## PATHWAY

✓ ballast water

✓ biofouling

✓ aquaculture transfer

Native  
Cryptogenic  
Non-indigenous





# Atlantic oyster

*Crassostrea virginica* (Gmelin, 1791)

## 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

**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 \(2009\)](#)

