

Do you know how to identify shell-boring worms?

Shell-boring worms, such as *Polydora websteri*, live in the water column as larvae before settling onto the outer surface of oyster shells. Once there, they burrow into the inner shell, creating burrows and blisters filled feces and mud, making shucked oysters unappealing to consumers. Use the images below to identify the signs of investation.



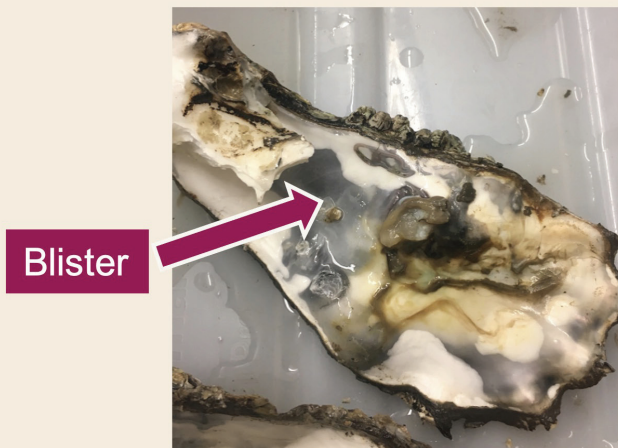
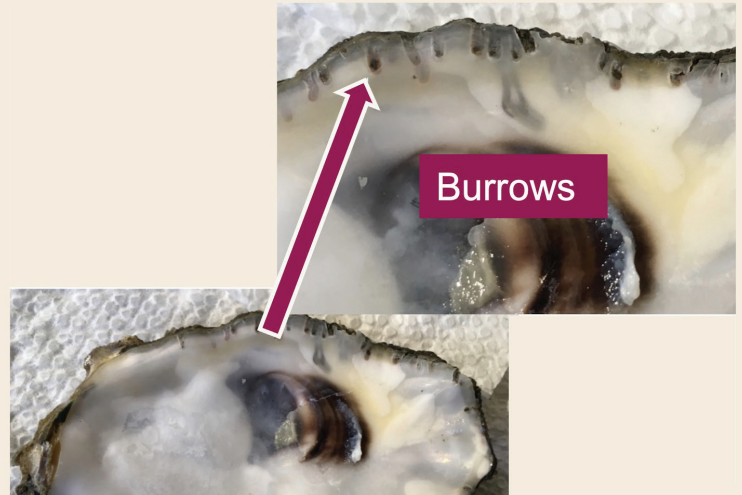
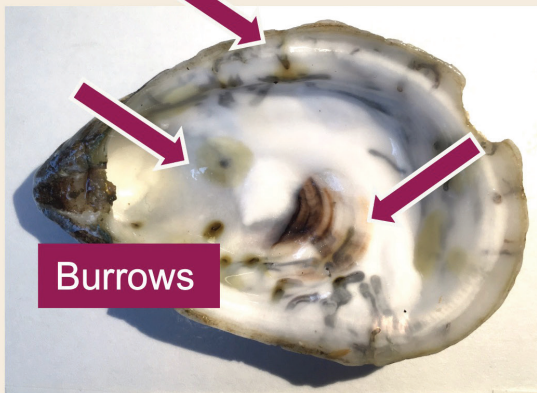
Examples of healthy shells



Normal shell marks



Examples of infested shells



Polydora infestations occur on shellfish farms all along the US west coast. While harmless to the consumer, the presence of these marks make half-shell products unattractive. If you'd like to know more, or how to treat these pests, contact Dr. Chelsea Wood (chelwood@uw.edu) at the University of Washington or Teri King (teri.king@noaa.gov) at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This project was funded by the Western Regional Aquaculture Center from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grants 2018-38500-288889 and 2020-38500-32561.