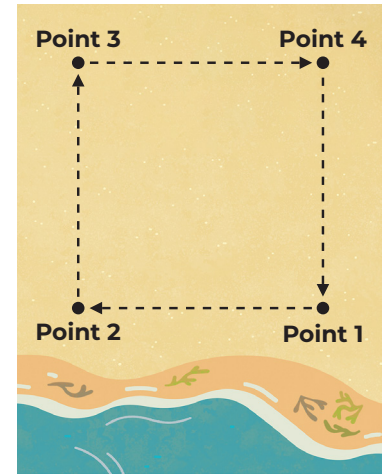


Oyster Observer Guide

Help us to understand the distribution of historical oyster bed shells along the Firth of Forth shoreline. **Restoration Forth** is a marine restoration project working with local communities to restore native oyster populations and seagrass meadows in the Firth of Forth, Scotland. There are three species of oyster and one species of mussel to look out for. These species are all bivalves, which means they have two hinged shells for protection.

How to carry out the survey

1. Pick a random spot on the beach and mark it with an item (jumper/stick/bucket etc.). This is point 1. Note the co-ordinates of this spot. You can do this on your phone by opening the Google Maps app and tapping on your location to drop a red pin. Click on the red pin to read your co-ordinates.
2. Starting at point 1, pace out a ten-by-ten metre square (ten adult paces each side) using items to mark each point.
3. Carefully explore your plot, taking note of all oyster and horse mussel shells on your survey form. You can collect your shells in a bucket, but remember to return them once you have completed the survey.
4. Tally up your totals for each shell species and upload your survey results using our online form.



Remember:

- This is a shore-based activity, please do not enter the water.
- Carry out your survey at a low or lowering tide.
- Shells might be whole or slightly fragmented. Discount any shells that are very fragmented (less than 50% of whole shell).
- You are responsible for your own safety. Use your judgement to assess your risk.

Shells to identify

Native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*)



Lower shell: Rounder and thicker with distinctive growth lines.

Upper shell: Flatter with ridges radiating from the hinge.

Colour: A variety of colours, from brown to white and even pink, purple or black.

Size: Up to 11cm.

Pacific oyster (*Magallana gigas*)



Lower shell: Elongated, domed or cup-like with obvious fluting at edge.

Upper shell: Elongated and flat.

Colour: Purple, white or brown, sometimes with stripes (but can vary greatly).

Size: Up to 15cm.

Saddle oyster (*Anomia ephippium*)



Lower shell: Smooth and rounded with a small hole through which the oyster attaches to hard surfaces underneath.

Upper shell: Smooth and rounded

Young shell: Translucent

Colour: White with pearly interior

Size: Up to 6cm (often size of a fingernail)

Horse mussel (*Modiolus modiolus*)



Lower shell: Cup-like, elongated and smooth.

Upper shell: Mirror image of lower shell.

Colour: Purple or dark brown, but may be white when weathered.

Size: Up to 20cm.

Scan to fill in online observer form:

