



# Seeking Opportunities for Restoration and Recovery of Native Olympia Oysters through Partnerships with the Commercial Mariculture Industry

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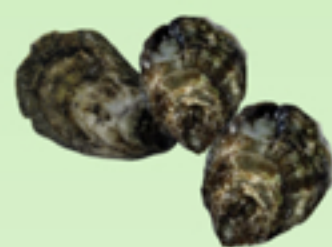
The goal of this project is to inform a cooperative management approach for native Olympia oyster (*Ostrea lurida*) subsistence and sustainable harvest on the Oregon coast. It seeks to identify and develop an innovative solution that balances ecological restoration of the species with the needs of local shellfish mariculture operators.

## Why should I care about Olympia oysters?

**They are ecological engineers!**  
They naturally create subtidal reefs which serve as habitat for other marine life.

**They filter water!**  
Each Olympia oyster is capable of filtering 8-12 gallons per day which improves water quality.

**They are tasty!**  
They were an important food source for native peoples; now they are considered a specialty food item.



Do you think Olympia oysters are important to Oregon?

If you answer 'YES', add a bean to the bag below.

## What happened to Olympia oysters?

Once abundant along the Oregon coast, they were historically harvested to devastatingly low numbers.

They were then replaced in the mariculture industry by the bigger, juicier Pacific oyster.

Their populations have struggled to bounce back.



Lincoln County Historical Society

Do humans play a role in the success of one species over another?

If you answer 'YES', add a bean to the bag below.

## What is the difference between the native Olympia oyster and the non-native Pacific oyster?



**Olympia oysters** are native to the west coast from Baja to British Columbia, they are smaller, and provide many ecological benefits.

**Pacific oysters** were introduced from Japan in 1903 and are now a popular mariculture species, which is important for commercial oyster growers.



Do you think that introducing a new species to a habitat can be beneficial?

If you answer 'YES', add a bean to the bag below.

## How does commercial oyster farming play a role?

Commercial growers depend on the Pacific oyster now for their livelihoods and to meet market demand. The Pacific oyster is bigger, faster-growing, and easier to produce in large quantities.

Without significant demand for the Olympia oyster as a product, there is less incentive to grow it.



ODFW

Is it important to you that the seafood you eat is caught locally?

If you answer 'YES', add a bean to the bag below.

## Is there a way to promote both habitat values and profits for oyster farmers?

To what extent can commercial oyster farms help facilitate restoration and recovery efforts for native Olympia oysters?

Why does it matter if commercial shellfish farmers can play a substantial role in the recovery of a sensitive species?

We seek answers to these questions and more!



Do you have ideas or suggestions for this project?

Please share them!



Oregon State University  
College of Earth, Ocean,  
and Atmospheric Sciences

