

APPENDIX 9.1

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON MODERN OYSTER SHELL SAMPLES

The information about modern oyster shells was obtained from several sources and differed from that recorded for archaeological shells in some instances. On live specimens, only the linear dimensions of the left valve can be measured accurately (the right valve is normally inset in the left valve (Winder 1980)).

On live oyster samples recorded from Poole Bay and Poole Harbour in Dorset (Horsey and Winder forthcoming; Winder forthcoming b) and Sowley Ground and Newtown Beds in the West Solent (Winder 1989b) length and width of left valves, infestation and other characters were recorded. However, some organisms are likely to have been under-recorded because observation is often obscured by the two valves being tightly shut and covered in soft-bodied organisms.

Unpublished measurements of live oysters recorded by Dennis Key of the Fisheries Laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) at Lowestoft for native oysters from the Rivers Roach and Colne in 1960 - 61 were for width and length overall; infestation records were insufficiently detailed to be used. Data from the 1988 MAFF Solent oyster survey (Dennis Key and Peter Walker) comprised frequencies of maximum diameter (left valve) only.

For the empty shells of modern oysters from the 1971 Colchester Oyster Feast, measurements of individual left valves for the whole sample were provided by Jeremy Heath, Keeper of Natural History at Colchester and Essex Museum; and infestation was recorded in detail for a subsample of these shells by Winder.

APPENDIX 9.2

PROBLEMS WITH VARYING RECORDING PROCEDURES

The implications for analysis of the restraints imposed by the varying nature of the data for modern oysters was resolved as follows. In order to compare the size of archaeological shell samples with modern live samples, maximum diameter of the left valves was used throughout, ie the greater of the length and width measurement. Where only grouped size frequencies were available, comparisons were made by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test alone. Where individual measurements were available, both two sample t-tests and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were used. Samples for which infestation characters had not been recorded were omitted from comparisons of infestation patterns. Additional South Coast samples from the Greyhound Yard site in Dorchester and Corfe Castle in the Isle of Purbeck (both in Dorset) were introduced to make up for the number of samples from the Solent which could not be used for the infestation analysis.