

**SHELL DISEASE IN *CRASSOSTREA*
GRYPHOIDES (SCHLOTHEIM)**

SHELL diseases have been prevalent in British, Dutch and French oysters. Cole and Waugh (1956) find that in case of British oysters, the disease commences with the dendritic white markings in the shell, usually in both valves. These markings are probably the results of infection by a fungus. The disease occurring in Dutch and French oysters is commonly referred to as 'maladie du pied', and here, it is in the form of greenish-brown patches and warts, leading to the serious loss of condition. When the disease reaches the muscle attachment, there is interference with the closing mechanism, resulting in death.

The occurrence of a shell disease does not appear to have been recorded in case of the back-water oyster, *C. gryphoides*. However, during the collections of *C. gryphoides* from a cultivated farm near Bombay for the study of some aspects of its biology, seven specimens were noted with shell disease. The interior of the shell of one oyster was strewn with greenish-brown patches and the muscle scar appeared disfigured (Fig. 1). The disease of this oyster, therefore, appears to resemble, 'maladie du pied', diagnosed by Giard (1894), Hornell (1910), Ranson (1936) and Cole (1950) in French and Dutch oysters.

In the case of five other oysters, a dark-green patch on the interior of the shell was noticed, but there was no marked disfiguration of the muscle scar or the interior of the shell as mentioned above (Fig. 2). It is likely that this may perhaps be the beginning of the oyster disease. In the case of the remaining specimen of oyster, the muscle scar was found blistered and the animal was almost detached from its shell. However, the interior of the shell was not disfigured by greenish-brown patches as above (Fig. 3).

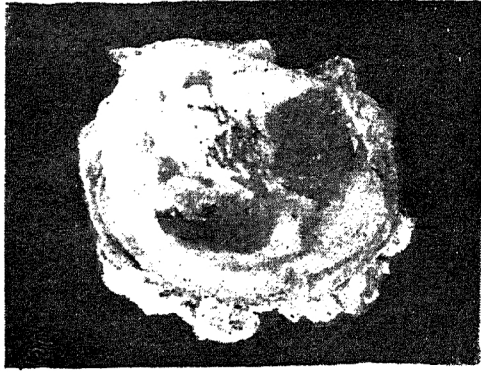


FIG. 1



FIG. 2

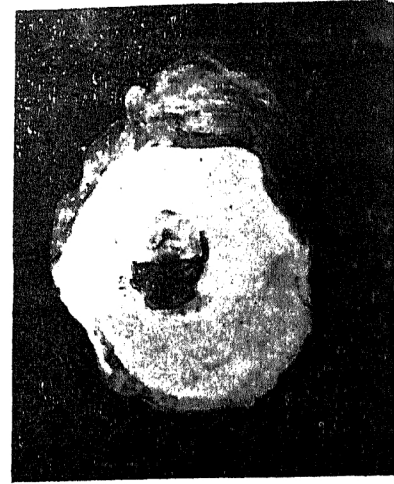


FIG. 3

In all these specimens, the meat was watery, pale and brown in colour, giving the oyster unhealthy appearance.

Korringa's investigations have shown that shell disease spreads rapidly in hot summers. However, in case of *C. gryphoides* out of nearly three thousand specimens examined during a period of two years only seven were found affected, indicating thereby the absence of the spread of shell disease.

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* Not referred to in original.