

Marvellous Molluscs

The Pearl Oyster

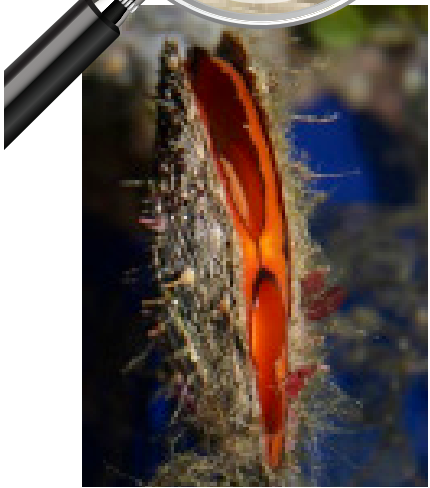


The **pearl oyster** is an invertebrate (no backbone) animal, of the **bivalve mollusc family**. Its outer protection is a **hinged double shell** that grows with it. Less than one percent of the oyster's tiny **planktonic larvae** survive the first month drifting on the currents before they settle to the sea floor. Here they change into juvenile oysters or spats. Spats require a hard surface to permanently anchor to. If they settle in an unsuitable place they die.

Look at how each stage of the shell grows into the next.



▶ The **pearl oyster** produces nacre (nay-ker) known as **mother of pearl**. To our eyes the nacre looks smooth but under a microscope the nacre looks like this! The jagged surface fractures light and creates the lustrous sheen we call mother of pearl.



▶ **Pearl oysters** are **filter feeders** using their gills to catch small food particles of plants and animals in the water. A good food supply, pristine quality and temperature of the water are major influences on this bivalve mollusc's growth and survival.



Instructions To Make A 'Clacking Castanet'

You will need:

Print out one of the pearl oyster castanet templates

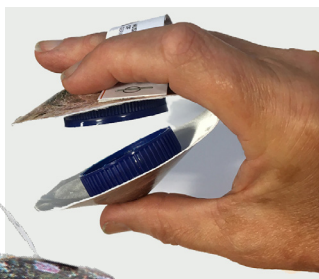
Scissors

Glue

Staples/sticky tape

Four small pieces of blu tac

Two matching plastic or metal bottlecaps.



Check which shell you have – the silver-lipped pearl oyster from the Broome area or the black-lipped pearl oyster from the Houtman Abrolhos Islands.



What can you find out about your shell and the mollusc animal that lives inside?

1. Cut off the top finger band of each and set aside. Fold the page in two along the long blue dotted line. Glue together.
2. Cut around the shell and along the orange lines, leaving two white wedge shapes marked A and B. **Do not cut the blue dashed lines.**
3. Look for the three lots of dashed blue lines. Fold along these.
4. Slide the A and B wedges under and stick with glue, staple or sticky tape.
5. Take the finger band and fold up along the dashed blue lines.
6. Line up the white dots on the finger band with the white dots on the shell and stick with a staple or sticky tape.
7. Refold along dashed blue line - the hinge line - where the two shell halves meet.
8. Roll the four pieces of blu tac into sausage shapes and press on to the top edge of each bottlecap.
9. Press one bottlecap firmly onto the inside of a shell half using your thumb and fingers. Line up the second cap on top of the first, close the shell and press to secure the second cap.
10. Slip your fingers through the finger band and test your clacking castanet!



What other decoration can you add to make the castanet uniquely yours?

Silver-lipped Pearl Oyster - Broome
Pinctada maxima

Fold along blue dotted lines

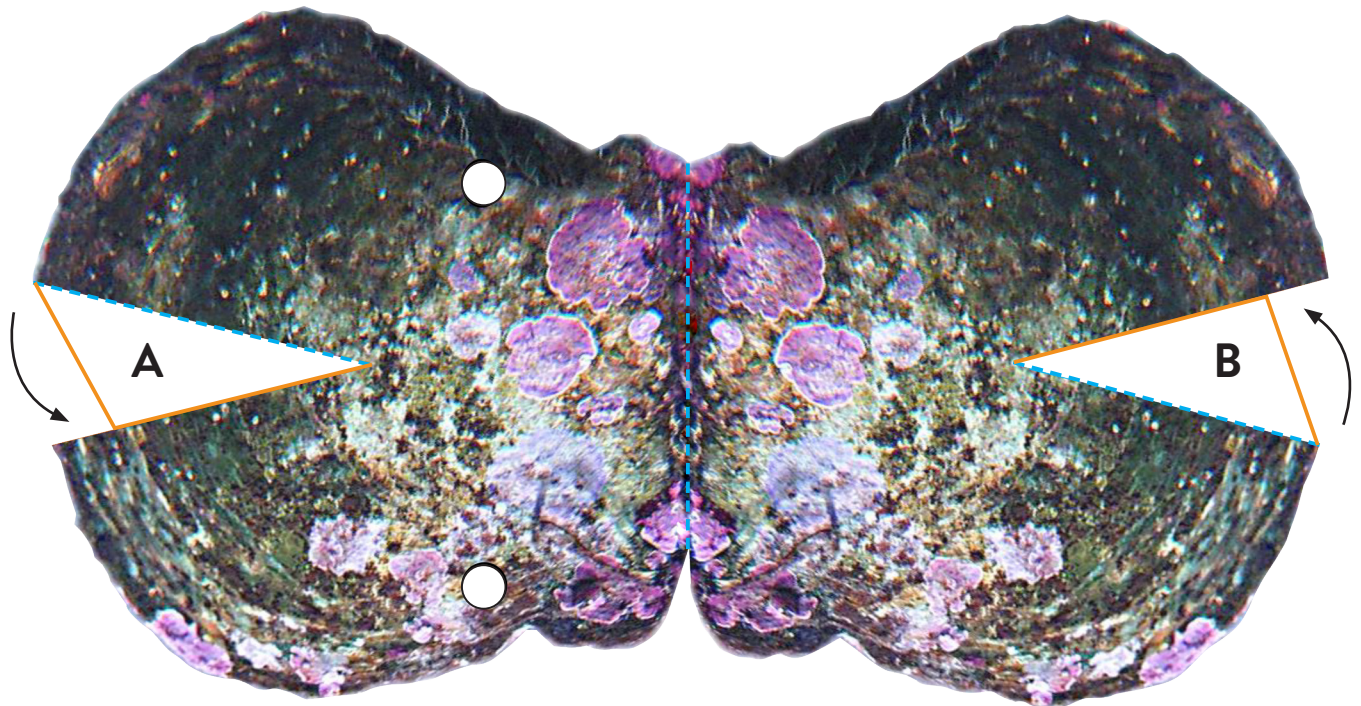


Finger band



Black-Lipped Pearl Oyster – Abrolhos
Pinctada margaritifera

Fold along blue dotted lines



Finger band 