

## Re: opening oysters with stone tools?

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.anthropology.paleo/2005-03/0124.html>

---

**From:** Marc Verhaegen (fa204466\_at\_skynet.be)

**Date:** 03/04/05

Date: Fri, 4 Mar 2005 19:49:47 +0100

<richardparker01@yahoo.com> wrote in message  
news:1109911018.536578.253590@141g2000cwc.googlegroups.com...

>I think we've all been barking up the wrong tree, and asking the wrong  
>question about the wrong thing. Perhaps the oystercatcher notion wasn't  
>such a bad one. Most answers concerned opening oysters on dry land, not  
>in the sea, like oystercatchers and early fisher/foragers. Most posts  
>tried to work out how they used stone tools, when they didn't need to for  
>this purpose, perhaps one of their main food sources. 1- Underwater (I am  
>not suggesting that early humans ate while submerged, although they may  
>well have done so).

We can, so why not our ancestors? I read once that some Polynesian women dive with a wooden spatula, which they use to prevent molluscs from closing their shells.

> - Underwater, bivalves (clams, mussels, oysters, etc) gape open, to feed  
> and respire. Like the oystercatcher, all you have to do is to nip  
> something in, cut the adductor muscle somehow, and the feast is yours.

: -)

> - It's much more difficult when the animal is out of water. If it is  
> subject to daily tides (on top of a reef, say) it will have spent it's  
> whole life training to deal with exposure to a hot, desiccating sun for  
> about 4-8 hours daily. It's not going to allow you to get it open easily,  
> and leaving it out in the sun to open will take no effect for at least 12,  
> if not 24 hours. Though you might fool it if you left it in a shallow pool  
> and let the sun slow-cook it. For exactly the same reason, most univalve  
> (snail) species of shallow water and reef top have a very thick operculum  
> or sealable front door. We've also been thinking about how clever  
> professional oyster servers are when they serve the oyster on the shell,  
> whole, and both undamaged. It's not at all necessary for a hungry shore  
> forag