



Adult Oyster
Drill In Its
Shell

DID YOU KNOW?
Hermit crabs often use discarded oyster drill shells as their homes. The hermit crab does not make its own shell.



Hermit Crabs
In
Drill Shells



MS Oyster Stewardship Program
Mississippi Department of
Marine Resources
Office of Marine Fisheries
Developed by the Shellfish Bureau

1141 Bayview Ave • Biloxi, MS 39530
228.374.5000 • 1.800.374.3449
www.dmr.ms.gov

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PREDATORS OF THE OYSTER: THE SOUTHERN OYSTER DRILL

Stramonita haemastoma



**HAVE YOU SEEN
THIS ANIMAL?**



MS Oyster Stewardship Program
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
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OYSTER DRILL EGG CASINGS



THE SOUTHERN OYSTER DRILL

The Southern oyster drill, *Stramonita haemastoma*, can be found throughout the Gulf of Mexico. Oyster drills are one of the most devastating predators to oysters. The drill's rate of feeding usually increases during the warmer months. They do not like colder water and will stop feeding at about 54°F. Drills prefer salty water above 15 parts per thousand (ppt), but can tolerate fresher water down to 8ppt.

The oyster drill uses a radula, or tongue-like projection with teeth, to open the oyster and then digest the meat. They can consume one large oyster every few days. Drills are devastating to oyster reefs because of their large population. They lay their eggs in creamy yellow casings. Once the eggs hatch or the casings have dried out, the casings turn purple. These egg casings can each contain up to 900 embryo. These animals can also overwhelm an oyster reef by eating young oysters called spat. One drill can consume over 100 spat per day.

*Information derived from "Marine Maladies? Worms, Germs, and Other Symbionts From the Northern Gulf of Mexico" by Robin M. Overstreet

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Oyster Drill Egg Casings Attached to a Live Oyster



Oyster drills will attach their egg casings to any hard surface including this hatchet.

