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## The effects of experimental temperature increase on gametogenesis and heat stress parameters in oysters: Comparison of a temperate-introduced species (*Crassostrea gigas*) and a native tropical species (*Crassostrea corteziensis*)

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### Abstract :

The effect of thermal stress during reproduction was experimentally evaluated in the oyster *Crassostrea gigas*, a temperate species, and in the tropical oyster *Crassostrea corteziensis*. The temperature was gradually increased (1 °C day<sup>-1</sup>) from 20 °C to 34 °C for two weeks. As expected, *C. gigas* was the species most affected by heat stress, with the highest mortality rate ( $P < 0.05$ ) starting at 28 °C, while mortality in *C. corteziensis* was significant only at 34 °C. The reproductive effort at higher temperatures was reflected in *C. gigas* as the highest index of mature oocytes and the largest rate of atresic and degenerated oocytes. *C. corteziensis* showed significant increases in the proliferation of early-developing oocytes at maximum temperatures. Lipid peroxidation and lipofuscin accumulation significantly increased in both species at maximum temperatures, with levels in *C. gigas* being 8-fold higher than in *C. corteziensis*. A significant loss of biomass and glycogen reserves stored in gonads was found in *C. gigas* at 34 °C. The mRNA signal of Hsp70 was detected in gonadic tissues from both oysters after thermal stress for in situ hybridization (ISH), with a temperature increase in both species; the cover area of Hsp70 was significantly higher in *C. gigas* during the experiment. Hemocyte infiltration significantly increased with increasing temperature in both oyster species, and apoptosis was strongly correlated with Hsp70 in both species ( $r = 0.93$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). These results could explain the high tolerance that *C. corteziensis* has to thermal stress compared to *C. gigas* and could be used to adapt aquaculture strategies to the use of native species in subtropical climates to reduce summer mortality events.

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## Highlights

- ▶ Different mechanisms are triggered in temperate and subtropical oysters to withstand thermal stress.
- ▶ Histochemistry and *in situ* hybridization can pinpoint changes at cellular and tissue levels. ▶ *C. corteziensis* produce more *Hsp70* and apoptosis compared to *C. gigas* when temperature increases. ▶ *C. gigas* produce more lipofuscines, TBARS and degenerated oocytes when temperature increases.

**Keywords** : Summer mortality, Hemocyte apoptosis, Heat shock proteins, Lipid peroxidation, Atritic oocytes, Autophagy

## 46 **1. Introduction**

47 Oysters in the reproductive stage are acutely susceptible to thermal stress, particularly  
48 during the summer months, with up to 90% mortality for the Pacific oyster *Crassostrea*  
49 *gigas* reported in some countries (Samain et al., 2007; Fleury et al., 2020), an event  
50 commonly referred to as "summer mortality" (Soletchnik et al., 2006; Cotter et al., 2010;  
51 Huvet et al., 2010; Fleury et al., 2020). This mortality has been attributed to accelerated  
52 gonadal development and spawning that deplete energy (Berthelin et al., 2000; Delaporte et  
53 al., 2007; Samain et al., 2007). Continuous and drastic die-offs of temperate *C. gigas* have  
54 caused major economic losses around the globe (Huvet et al., 2010; Delisle et al., 2020;  
55 Fleury et al., 2020), which seriously threaten the food supply in growing areas and the  
56 viability of entire populations by failures in spat recruitment (Wendling et al., 2013).  
57 Summer mortalities are further enhanced in warm climates where *C. gigas* has been  
58 introduced and is the most important commercial species, even if it is outside its  
59 distribution range. There are, however, native species that are more tolerant to increased  
60 temperatures that are not used commercially, such as *Crassostrea corteziensis*, which is  
61 well adapted to semitropical waters and has been identified as a viable option for farmers  
62 due to its low mortality rates, fast growth, and continuous reproduction during warm  
63 seasons (Chávez-Villalba et al., 2007; Castillo-Durán et al., 2010; Rodríguez-Jaramillo et  
64 al., 2017).

65 Here, we endeavored to examine whether there exist differences in reproductive physiology  
66 that would make one species more tolerant to thermal shock in comparison to the other.  
67 Most reproductive studies have focused on *C. gigas*, where it has been described that when  
68 there are adverse environmental conditions that can produce physiological stress, the gonad  
69 presents hemocyte infiltration and phagocytosis of surrounding material (Le Pennec et al.,

1991; Dutertre et al., 2009; Huvet et al., 2010; Rahman et al., 2019) and even apoptosis (Lang et al., 2009; Sokolova et al., 2009; Kiss, 2010; Wang et al., 2018; Delisle et al., 2020). Prespawning oocyte autolysis, or atresia, appears to be part of an intricate and organized pathway employed by oysters during simultaneous intense reproductive effort and detrimental conditions (Beninger et al., 2017), which might allow oysters to divert part of the energy that was previously invested in unsustainable gametogenesis. The high metabolic rates necessary to support gametogenesis and environmental stress simultaneously lead to the accumulation of oxidative damage (Abele et al., 2007; Guerra et al., 2012), characterized by the progressive oxidation of lipids and lipoproteins and the subsequent accumulation of the fluorescent aging pigment lipofuscin (Keller et al., 2004). Products of oxidative damage can compromise cellular function and maintenance in bivalves (Abele et al., 2007; Guerra et al., 2012) and could be implicated in apoptosis and the induction of autophagy (Terahara & Takahashi, 2008; Eisenberg-Lerner et al., 2009). Evidence suggests that thermal stress has strong nonlethal effects on the “heat shock response” by means of the expression of proteins from the *Hsp70* family, which are capable of acting as molecular chaperones and inducing thermotolerance in *Crassostrea spp.* against nonlethal temperatures but above the physiological optimal range (Lang et al., 2009; Jackson et al., 2011; Hurtado-Oliva et al., 2015). Although temperature strongly drives summer mortality events in oysters (Samain et al., 2007; Delisle et al., 2020; Fleury et al., 2020), no studies have assessed the compensatory capabilities and effects of thermal stress during reproduction in oyster species with different ranges of native-distribution that are farmed in the same geographical area. To test the question outlined above, a bioassay of adult oysters of the two species was carried out under controlled laboratory conditions during which the water temperature was increased from 20 °C to 34 °C (1 °C per day). The

94 main objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of the experimental increase in  
95 temperature on the overall physiological responses of both *C. gigas* and *C. corteziensis*  
96 during gametogenesis.

97

## 98 **2. Materials and methods**

### 99 **2.1. Source and management of oysters**

100 Diploid adult oysters were produced and cultured in controlled conditions in a  
101 commercial system in Topolobampo, Sinaloa, México. A total of 70 adults of *C. gigas*  
102 (length =  $12.7 \pm 0.2$  cm) and 70 of *C. corteziensis* (length =  $10.2 \pm 0.1$  cm) were  
103 collected, packed in ice, and transported by plane to the aquaculture experimental  
104 facilities of the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur (UABCS) in La Paz, Baja  
105 California Sur, México. On arrival, oysters were washed and scrubbed to eliminate  
106 epibionts. Histological inspection at the start of the experiment using 10 oysters of each  
107 species showed that the animals were in good health and in early gametogenesis (stage  
108 I) according to Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al. (2008).

109

### 110 **2.2. Experimental design and increasing temperature**

111 The oysters were separated by species (60 adults of *C. gigas* and 60 adults of *C.*  
112 *corteziensis*) and placed in six 100 L tanks (20 oysters per tank) supplied with filtered  
113 seawater (1  $\mu\text{m}$  filtered and UV-treated aerated;  $20 \pm 1$  °C, pH  $8.3 \pm 0.1$ , and  $35.1 \pm 0.1$   
114 PSU). Animals were fed a daily ratio of an algal mixture of *Chaetoceros gracilis*, *C.*  
115 *calcitrans* and *Isochrysis galbana* (50:25:25 equivalent volume) at a density of  $4^{10}$  cells  
116 oyster<sup>-1</sup> day<sup>-1</sup> throughout the whole experiment. After 20 days of acclimatization, the  
117 temperature was increased  $1$  °C day<sup>-1</sup> in two of the three tanks of each species using

118 submersible electric heaters ( $\pm 1$  °C) until reaching 34 °C after 2 weeks. The third tank  
119 housing each species remained at  $20 \pm 1$  °C as a control.  
120 Sequential oyster samplings were performed at the beginning of the experiment ( $20 \pm$   
121  $1$  °C), after one day ( $22 \pm 1$  °C), after 6 days (at  $28 \pm 1$  °C), and after 12 days (at  $34 \pm$   
122  $1$  °C); 15 animals per tank (including controls) were sampled at each time. During each  
123 sampling, biometric variables of wet weight (flesh without shell) and size (shell total  
124 length) were recorded. The survival of the organisms was assessed daily.

125

### 126 **2.3. Quantitative histology and histochemistry**

127 Cross-sections of the mid-visceral mass (~3 mm) from each oyster were fixed in Davidson,  
128 paraformaldehyde in phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), and Karnovsky solutions processed  
129 and embedded in paraffin (Paraplast X-Tra, Mc Cormick Scientific, San Diego, CA, USA)  
130 and resin (JB-4 plus Polyscience Inc, Warrington, PA), respectively, according to  
131 Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al. (2008). Paraffin 4- $\mu$ m thick tissue sections were stained with  
132 hematoxylin-eosin to analyze the general morphology of the gonads, Periodic Acid-Schiff  
133 (PAS) for neutral carbohydrates (in magenta color), Sudan Black B (SBB) to detect neutral  
134 and polar lipids in black-bluish and gray hues, respectively, and Kinyoun Carbol Fuchsin  
135 (KCF) for demonstration of reddish-brown lipofuscin-like inclusions (Rodríguez-Jaramillo  
136 et al., 2008). Polychromatic staining was used in semi-fine (0.5  $\mu$ m) resin cuts to analyze  
137 the gonad cellular structure and to compare the tissue and morphological characteristics of  
138 the oysters (Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al., 2008).  
139 The histological slides were digitalized at high resolution (600 dpi; 20 $\times$ ), and three  
140 randomly selected images were processed with Image-Pro Premier v.9.0 software (Media  
141 Cybernetics, Silver Spring, MD, USA). The software relies on automatic calculations of the

142 area ( $\mu\text{m}^2$ ) occupied by tissues, cells, carbohydrates, and lipids based on the segmentation  
143 of pixels in the image in relation to the intensity of the specific color of each cell type,  
144 tissue, or biochemical component according to each staining technique mentioned above.  
145 The gonad coverage area (GCA), connective tissue index (CTI), oocyte index (OI),  
146 hemocyte index (HI), carbohydrate index (CHI), and lipid index (LI) were also determined.  
147 The calculations of each index ( $\tau_{index}$ ) were based on those described by Rodríguez-  
148 Jaramillo et al. (2008) using the formula:

$$149 \quad \tau_{index} = \frac{\tau}{\beta} * 100$$

150 where  $\tau$  represents the coverage area of each specific tissue, cell, or component, and  $\beta$  is  
151 the total area of the image.

152 The gonad sections stained with the lipophilic dye KCF were digitalized and analyzed as  
153 described above. The lipofuscin area was not expressed as an index but as  $\mu\text{m}^2$  because  
154 the distribution of the pigment granules was not homogeneous within the tissues.

155 The developmental stages used to classify the male and female gametes of both oyster  
156 species were based on those described by Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al. (2008). The frequency  
157 of each oocyte type (oogonia, previtellogenic, vitellogenic, postvitellogenic, and atretic  
158 oocytes) as well as spermatogonia, spermatocytes, and spermatozoa was determined by  
159 means of digital image analysis (Image-Pro Premiere) within a predetermined area of 1.44  
160  $\text{m}^2$  at  $20\times$  in the same three sections where the gonad coverage area was calculated to  
161 estimate the proportion of each area occupied by each gamete type.

162 For the oocytes in particular, additional features were estimated as indicators of the impact  
163 of thermal shock on oyster reproduction. The area (A) of  $\sim 50$  oocytes per female was  
164 determined using digitalized images taken at  $40\times$  from three different regions of the ovary.



165 Oogonia analysis was performed at 100×. The images were processed with SigmaScan  
166 software (Systat Software, Inc., San Jose, CA, USA) to calculate the theoretical diameter  
167 (TD) of oocytes using the formula proposed by Saout *et al.* (1999):

$$DT = \sqrt{4A/\pi}$$

#### 170 **2.4. Lipid peroxidation**

171 The levels of lipid peroxidation were measured in the gonads from each oyster by  
172 quantifying the content of thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS). Frozen (-  
173 80 °C) samples were homogenized in cold phosphate buffer solution (50 mM, pH 7.5)  
174 and phenyl-methyl-sulfonyl-fluoride solution, and 250 µL of the supernatant extracts  
175 were incubated for 15 min at 37 °C and then cooled to 4 °C for 15 min. The reaction  
176 was stopped by adding a mix of 12.5% trichloroacetic acid and 0.8 mol mL<sup>-1</sup>  
177 hydrochloric acid, followed by 1% TBA. The extracts were stirred in an ice water bath,  
178 incubated for 10 min at 90 °C, cooled to room temperature, and centrifuged at 1509 x g  
179 for 10 min at 4 °C. The supernatants were recovered, placed in 200 µL microplate wells  
180 in triplicate, and read at 560 nm. The TBARS content was quantified using a standard  
181 curve (0–10 pmoles mL<sup>-1</sup>) using 10 µmol mL<sup>-1</sup> 1,1,3,3-tetraethoxypropane. The total  
182 protein concentration per tissue was analyzed using the method of Bradford (1976),  
183 which uses a commercial colorimetric reagent (B6916, Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO)  
184 and bovine serum albumin (9048-46. -8, Sigma-Aldrich) as a standard. The analysis was  
185 performed in triplicate in a microplate reader at 620 nm, and the results were reported as  
186 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> of protein. The TBARS concentration was expressed as nmol TBARS mg<sup>-1</sup>  
187 protein (Guerra *et al.*, 2012).

188

189 **2.5. *Hsp70* cDNA partial cloning**

190 For RACE-PCR amplification of *Hsp70* mRNA ends of both species, gene-specific  
191 primers (GenBank AF144646.1; sense 5'-GCA AGT AAA CCC ATG ATC AAA-3'  
192 T<sub>m</sub> 63.14 °C; antisense: 5'-GAG ACA TCA AAG GTT CCT CCT-3' T<sub>m</sub> 61.28 °C)  
193 were designed using highly conserved regions of the *Hsp70* transcript in *C. gigas*. The  
194 amplification efficiency of primers was tested by PCR in samples of *C. gigas* and *C.*  
195 *corteziensis*. Subsequently, 12.5 µL of PCR was prepared containing 2 µL of cDNA,  
196 0.48 µM of each primer, 0.2 µM dNTP mix (Invitrogen), 2.5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 1X PCR  
197 buffer, and 0.2 U of Platinum *Taq* DNA polymerase (Invitrogen). The amplification  
198 conditions were the same as those described by Fabioux et al. (2005). PCR products  
199 (400–500 bp) were separated using electrophoresis, and fragments were gel-excised,  
200 purified using the QIAquick Gel Extraction Kit (Cat No. 28706X4 Qiagen, Venlo,  
201 Netherlands), subcloned into the plasmid vector P Gem (Invitrogen), transformed into  
202 *Escherichia coli* competent cells (Invitrogen), and sequenced (GENEWIZ, San Diego,  
203 CA, USA).

204

205 **2.6. *In situ* hybridization and apoptotic cell death**

206 The *Hsp70* transcripts were localized in gonad and digestive gland tissues from *C. gigas*  
207 and *C. corteziensis* through *in situ* hybridization (ISH). Sense and antisense single-  
208 stranded *Hsp70* DNA probes were prepared by random-priming PCR and tagging them  
209 with the DIG-DNA Labeling and Detection Kit<sup>®</sup> (Cat. No. 11093657910 Roche Applied  
210 Science, Penzberg, Germany). The template was the *in vitro* linearized plasmid *Hsp70*  
211 DNA fragment from *C. gigas* and *C. corteziensis*. Cross-sections (~ 0.5 g) from each  
212 oyster were stored in 4% paraformaldehyde for 48 h, dehydrated in an ethanol series

213 (70–100%) prepared with DEPC-treated water (Invitrogen), and embedded in paraffin  
214 (Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al., 2008). Thin sections (4  $\mu\text{m}$ ) were mounted on poly-L-  
215 lysine-coated glass slides (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) under RNase-free  
216 conditions. Rehydrated sections were permeated for 15 min with 10  $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$  proteinase  
217 K (Sigma-Aldrich). The tissue hybridization procedure was performed as described by  
218 Boullot et al. (2017) using 5  $\mu\text{L}$  of each DNA probe and anti-DIG antibody coupled  
219 with alkaline phosphatase (Roche) at a 1:500 dilution. Hybridization without probes  
220 was used as a negative control. Slides were mounted and digitalized at 20 $\times$ .  
221 Additionally, an *in situ* Cell Death Detection Kit<sup>®</sup> (Cat. No. 11684795910 Roche  
222 Applied Science, Mannheim, Germany) was used following the provider's instructions  
223 to find fragmented DNA strands in apoptotic cells using a fluorescent marker for  
224 terminal deoxynucleotidyl transferase (TdT) dUTP nick-end labeling (TUNEL). For  
225 both the ISH and TUNEL probes, an image signal processing technique (Rodríguez-  
226 Jaramillo et al., 2008) was applied using Image-Pro Premiere software for the automatic  
227 identification of color pixels expressed as area ( $\mu\text{m}^2$ ).

228

## 229 **2.7. Statistical analysis**

230 *A priori* Shapiro-Wilk and Bartlett's tests were applied to confirm the normal frequency  
231 distribution and homogeneity of variances of the data. Bifactorial analyses (factors: Species  
232 and Temperature) of variance (ANOVA) were used to evaluate the effect of thermal shock  
233 in the two species of oysters. An angular transformation was applied to the values  
234 expressed in percentages before analysis, but data are reported untransformed as the mean  $\pm$   
235 standard error. In cases where significant differences were found, a Tukey test (HSD) *post*  
236 *hoc* analysis of means comparison was used. A Pearson correlation coefficient was run to

237 establish the relationship between temperature increase and oocytes with distended  
238 endoplasmic reticulum or vacuolated oocytes, hemocyte infiltration, and hemocytes in  
239 apoptosis of both species of oysters. Another correlation was made between the  
240 carbohydrate coverage area and the sum of degenerating oocytes. Differences were  
241 considered statistically significant at  $P < 0.05$  for all analyses (Zar, 2010). All analyses  
242 were performed using Statistica software 8.0 (StatSoft Inc., Tulsa, UK).

243

## 244 2. RESULTS

### 245 3.1. Oyster survival and biometrics

246 Survival was significantly affected by species, temperature, and their interaction. For *C.*  
247 *gigas*, survival decreased ( $P < 0.05$ ) with increasing temperature, with the lowest survival  
248 rate at 34 °C. For *C. corteziensis*, significant decreases in survival were found only at  
249 34 °C. After two weeks of thermal stress, the survival rate for *C. gigas* was 91% and was  
250 97% for *C. corteziensis* (Fig. 1A).

251 Total length was different only between the species, with *C. gigas* being larger than *C.*  
252 *corteziensis* after treatment ( $P < 0.05$ ), but no significant difference in size within species  
253 was observed (Fig. 1B). Biomass was affected by species ( $P < 0.05$ ) and by temperature ( $P$   
254  $< 0.05$ ), with a significant decrease for *C. gigas* at 34 °C compared to the initial  
255 temperatures (Fig. 1C). Unfortunately, it was not possible to determine the sex of the  
256 oysters were without opening and sacrificing them. We employed 60 animals for each  
257 species, and could only distinguish their sex when final samples were taken. We sampled  
258 10 oysters at 20 °C and 22 °C for each species, followed by 15 oysters at 28 °C, and the  
259 remaining individuals at 34 °C . We obtained an overall sex ratio of roughly 1:1.

260

### 261 **3.2 Relative frequencies of oocytes**

262 Normal previtellogenic, vitellogenic, and postvitellogenic oocytes of *C. gigas* and *C.*  
263 *corteziensis* are presented in Figures 2A and 2B, respectively. Hemocytes involved in the  
264 reabsorption of the gametes were observed in both *C. gigas* (Fig. 2C) and *C. corteziensis*  
265 (Fig. 2H).

266 Oocyte frequencies are shown in Figure 3. A significant difference between species was  
267 observed in oogonia frequencies ( $P < 0.05$ ), with the highest proportion of oogonia  
268 observed in *C. corteziensis* (13% at 34 °C) compared to *C. gigas* (2.7% at 28 °C and  
269 34 °C); no effect ( $P > 0.05$ ) of temperature or the interaction was found (Fig. 3A).

270 Previtellogenic oocytes were significantly affected by both factors and their interaction ( $P$   
271  $> 0.05$ , Fig. 3B). A greater frequency of previtellogenic oocytes was observed in *C.*  
272 *corteziensis* (20.1% at all temperatures) than in *C. gigas* (5.1% at all temperatures), and a  
273 greater number of previtellogenic oocytes was observed at 22 °C in *C. corteziensis* and at  
274 20 °C in *C. gigas*. An effect of species was observed on the frequency of vitellogenic  
275 oocytes ( $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 3C). A higher proportion of vitellogenic oocytes was observed in *C.*  
276 *corteziensis* (27.3% at all temperatures) than in *C. gigas* (18.8% at all temperatures). The  
277 proportion of vitellogenic oocytes also declined with increasing temperature in both species  
278 ( $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 3C). Postvitellogenic oocytes were affected by species and temperature ( $P <$   
279  $0.05$ , Fig. 3D), with a higher proportion of postvitellogenic oocytes in *C. gigas* (28.2% at  
280 all temperatures) than in *C. corteziensis* (11.3% at all temperatures), and late-developing  
281 oocytes decreased as temperature increased.

282

### 283 **3.3 Oocyte condition and degeneration**

284 Atretic oocytes, cells with structural degeneration, were observed mainly at the  
285 vitellogenesis and postvitellogenesis stages for *C. gigas* (Fig. 2A) and *C. corteziensis* (Fig.  
286 2B). Signs of oocyte degeneration were the loss of roundness of the cell and the nucleus  
287 and folded cytoplasmic and nuclear membranes for *C. gigas* (Fig. 2C) and *C. corteziensis*  
288 (Fig. 2D) and distention of the endoplasmic reticulum for *C. gigas* (Fig. 2E) and *C.*  
289 *corteziensis* (Fig. 2F), and oocyte vacuolation was evident for both species (Figs. 2G, 4A,  
290 and 4C for *C. gigas*, and Figs. 2H, 4B, and 4D for *C. corteziensis*). Oocyte autophagy was  
291 found in both oyster species. The formation of autophagosomes was observed as small  
292 round structures of different sizes without a nucleus and with an appearance and color  
293 similar to the ooplasm of the oocytes in *C. gigas* (Figs. 4A and 4C) and *C. corteziensis*  
294 (Figs. 4B and 4D). Large acidophilic and basophilic yolk granules and strong vacuolation  
295 were observed in the ooplasm of atretic oocytes from both *C. gigas* and *C. corteziensis* after  
296 thermal stress.

297 Vacuolated oocytes increased ( $r = 0.5$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) with increasing temperature, from 0.85%  
298 at 20 °C to 8.7% at 34 °C, with no differences found between species (Fig. 5A). Oocyte  
299 atresia was significantly affected by species ( $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 5B), with the highest values in  
300 *C. gigas* (11.7%) compared to *C. corteziensis* (6.4%). The frequency of cells with distended  
301 endoplasmic reticulum increased directly proportionally to increasing temperature ( $r = 0.4$ ;  
302  $P < 0.05$ ), from 0.8% at 20 °C to 8.2% at 34 °C, without significant differences between  
303 species (Fig. 5C). Degenerated oocytes (Fig. 5D) are expressed as the sum of all oocytes  
304 that showed the signs of structural degeneration mentioned above, and they were  
305 significantly higher in *C. gigas* (20.8%) than in *C. corteziensis* (12.5%,  $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 5D).  
306 Temperature also affected degenerated oocytes, with significantly higher occurrences at

307 higher temperatures ( $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 5D). The autophagosome proportion increased as the  
308 temperature rose ( $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 5E) from 20 °C (0.9%) to 34 °C (6.1%).

309

### 310 **3.4. Oocyte index (OI) and hemocyte index (HI)**

311 The area occupied by oocytes, expressed as the oocyte index (OI), was significantly  
312 affected only by species ( $P < 0.05$ ), with higher values in *C. gigas* ( $61.7 \pm 4.34\%$ ) than in  
313 *C. corteziensis* ( $35.6 \pm 3.93\%$ ) (Fig. 7A). The hemocyte index (HI) was affected only by  
314 temperature, which significantly increased from 2.63% at control temperatures of 20 °C  
315 and 1.76% at 22 °C to 11.94% at 34 °C ( $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 7B). A direct and significant  
316 relationship ( $r = 0.5$   $P < 0.05$ ) was observed between thermal stress and hemocyte  
317 infiltration in the gonads of both oyster species.

318

### 319 **3.5. Carbohydrates and lipids in gonads**

320 Neutral carbohydrates, mainly glycogen and glycoconjugates, were identified as  
321 magenta-pink patches within the oocytes and in the surrounding vesicular connective  
322 tissue in female gonads from both oyster species. As shown in Figures 6A and 6B,  
323 carbohydrates stained intensely in the vesicular connective tissue, one of the main energy  
324 storage tissues in oysters.

325 The lipid content found in female gonads consisted of neutral lipids (triglycerides) stained  
326 in black-bluish hues and polar lipids (phospholipids) stained in gray blurs. The oocytes  
327 had a higher triglyceride content than the oysters exposed to a higher temperature (34 °C),  
328 while neutral lipid storage was not observed in vesicular connective tissue (Fig. 6C and  
329 6D).

330 The carbohydrate content (carbohydrate index, %) was significantly affected by the  
331 species, temperature, and interaction of the factors (Fig. 7C). In *C. gigas*, the carbohydrate  
332 index decreased steadily and significantly from  $51.74 \pm 2.27\%$  at 20 °C to  $22.29 \pm 2.76\%$   
333 at 34 °C. In *C. corteziensis*, carbohydrates were significantly higher at 24 °C and 28 °C  
334 (above 70%) but significantly decreased to  $33.64 \pm 6.44\%$  at 34 °C ( $P < 0.05$ ). The values  
335 at 34 °C were similar for both species. An inverse relationship between the concentration  
336 of carbohydrates stored in gonadal tissue and oocyte degeneration was observed, and this  
337 energetic depletion was stronger in *C. gigas* ( $r = -0.53$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) than in *C. corteziensis*  
338 ( $r = -0.49$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ).

339 The lipid index steadily decreased ( $r = -0.5$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) during the experiment from above  
340 50% at 20 °C and 22 °C to values of approximately 30% at 28 °C and 34 °C in relation  
341 to the temperature factor ( $P < 0.05$ ), but no difference was found between species (Fig.  
342 7D).

343

### 344 **3.6. Lipid peroxidation and lipofuscins**

345 Lipid peroxidation levels (TBARS) were affected by both factors (Species and  
346 Temperature) and their interaction (Fig. 11A), with significantly higher levels in *C. gigas* at  
347 28 °C ( $3,556 \pm 626$  nmol mg<sup>-1</sup> protein) (Fig. 11A).

348 Lipofuscins stained with a lipophilic dye were identified as reddish granules in female  
349 gonads of *C. gigas* (Fig. 8A) and *C. corteziensis* (Fig. 8C). Lipofuscins appeared after the  
350 reabsorption of degenerated oocytes. In Figures 8C and 8D, evidence of dense lipofuscin  
351 granules inside brown cells from the two species is shown.

352 Both species and temperature had a significant effect on lipofuscin coverage area, with  
353 higher values in *C. gigas* ( $7,400.16$  μm<sup>2</sup> total) than in *C. corteziensis* ( $1,201.62$  μm<sup>2</sup> total).



354 Lipofusin accumulation began at 28 °C, then a sudden increase ( $P < 0.05$ ) at 34 °C was  
355 found for *C. gigas*, and a slight but significant increase at the same temperature was  
356 observed for *C. corteziensis* (Fig. 11B). A significant relationship ( $r = 0.62$ ) between  
357 increasing temperature and the accumulation of lipofuscins was found in the gonads of both  
358 oysters.

359

### 360 **3.7. Heat shock protein (*Hsp70*) in gonads**

361 The detection of the *Hsp70* transcript in ovarian tissues from *C. gigas* and *C. corteziensis*  
362 was performed using *in situ* hybridization (ISH) (Fig. 9). The signal intensity of the  
363 coupling between the mRNA and labeled cDNA was assessed as the coverage area by  
364 digital image analysis. The staining of *Hsp70* mRNA in the ovaries of both oyster species  
365 was lowest ( $P < 0.05$ ) at 20 °C (the control) and 22 °C, with no significant differences  
366 between species found ( $P > 0.05$ ) at these two temperatures. Transcript detection peaked to  
367 its highest levels ( $P < 0.05$ ) in both oyster species at 28 °C; at this temperature, *Hsp70*  
368 mRNA detection levels were higher in the gonad of *C. corteziensis* ( $25,989 \pm 1,555 \mu\text{m}^2$ )  
369 than in *C. gigas* ( $8,803 \pm 373 \mu\text{m}^2$ ) ( $P < 0.05$ ). The *Hsp70* transcript signal detection values  
370 decreased significantly at 34 °C to the levels found at 22 °C for both species (Fig. 11C).

371

### 372 **3.8. Cell apoptosis**

373 Apoptotic hemocytes were observed both inside (Fig. 10A) and outside degenerating  
374 oocytes, mainly phagocytic atretic oocytes in the two oysters (Fig. 10B and D). Oocytes  
375 were observed breaking into apoptotic bodies, which are small vesicles that contain  
376 fragments of nuclear material and cellular organelles, and part of the plasmatic membrane  
377 (Fig. 10F).

378 The fluorescent signal of apoptotic cells was evaluated by digital image analysis and  
379 expressed as the hemocyte apoptosis index (Fig. 11D). Significant differences were  
380 obtained in the hemocyte apoptosis index for the species ( $P < 0.05$ ) and temperature factor  
381 ( $P < 0.05$ ) but not for the interaction. Hemocyte apoptosis increased with temperature ( $r =$   
382  $0.93$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) from less than 1% at 20 °C and 22 °C, regardless of species, until reaching  
383 the highest levels (above 60%) at 34 °C ( $P < 0.05$ ). Both species had more hemocyte  
384 apoptosis at 28 °C, but it only reached a significant difference ( $P < 0.05$ ) compared to  
385 22 °C in *C. corteziensis* ( $19.2 \pm 5.2\%$ ). At 34 °C, apoptosis significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) peaked  
386 at  $64.9 \pm 4.9\%$  for *C. gigas* and  $89.7 \pm 2.7\%$  for *C. corteziensis*.

387

### 388 **3. DISCUSSION**

389 The subtropical oyster *C. corteziensis* exhibits rapid growth and high gametogenic  
390 activity in waters at temperatures between 22 °C and 33 °C (Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al.,  
391 2008; Hurtado et al., 2012; Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al., 2017), in contrast to *C. gigas*,  
392 which is commonly grown in temperate zones where water does not increase above  
393 22 °C (Cotter et al., 2010; Wendling et al., 2013). However, *C. gigas* has been  
394 introduced by several countries into warm waters that are frequently above 24 °C. Here,  
395 as expected, we found a significant decrease in survival for *C. gigas* when temperatures  
396 rose to 28 °C, and it decreased further at 34 °C, while in *C. corteziensis*, survival only  
397 decreased significantly at 34 °C (Fig. 1). Shells of *C. gigas* were larger than those of *C.*  
398 *corteziensis*, and this was of course not affected by temperature in a relatively short  
399 bioassay, but biomass was significantly decreased in *C. gigas* at 34 °C. Biomass loss  
400 could be a consequence of decreased food ingestion in oysters exposed to thermal stress,  
401 as suggested by Ren et al. (2000), with a lower microalgae clearance rate of *C. gigas* at

402 temperatures above 25 °C. Another possibility is biomass loss as a consequence of  
403 forced spawning of immature oocytes in response to stress or reabsorption of the gonad  
404 to face stress. We wanted to understand if there were differential mechanisms at tissue  
405 levels that are put forward in *C. corteziensis* that enable it to withstand higher  
406 temperatures and are lacking in *C. gigas*, and that eventually produce tissue  
407 degeneration to a degree that is no longer compatible with life.

408 It has previously been proposed that temperature can accelerate gonad development and  
409 affect the energetic budget in *C. gigas* and eventually promote energetic exhaustion,  
410 gamete degeneration and high mortality (Berthelin et al., 2000; Fabioux et al., 2005;  
411 Samain et al., 2007; Huvet et al., 2010). Several studies reported a direct correlation  
412 between summer mortality events and reproductive effort in *C. gigas* (Berthelin et al.,  
413 2000; Delaporte et al., 2007; Samain et al., 2007; Cotter et al., 2010; Huvet et al., 2010).  
414 Here, we found that the oocyte index (Fig. 7) was higher in *C. gigas*, a result of larger  
415 postvitellogenic oocytes, while in *C. corteziensis*, almost no postvitellogenic oocytes  
416 were found at 34 °C (Fig. 3). *C. gigas* matures slowly during cold months and spawns as  
417 temperature increases in summer (Delaporte et al., 2007; Samain et al., 2007). Under  
418 natural conditions in the Gulf of California, *C. corteziensis* displays an opportunistic  
419 reproductive strategy with continuous gametogenesis and partial spawning throughout  
420 the year (Chávez-Villalba et al., 2007; Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al., 2008; Hurtado et al.,  
421 2012). *C. gigas*, which is more susceptible to summer mortality, invests more energy in  
422 reproduction (Delaporte et al., 2007; Huvet et al., 2010). Partial spawners recruit fewer  
423 oocytes per spawn, using up fewer biochemical reserves to mature oocytes and investing  
424 less energy in reproduction per spawn, thus leaving reserves that can be canalized to face  
425 thermal stress. A higher reproductive effort in *C. gigas* as temperature increased was

426 coupled to lower carbohydrate content, suggesting a greater energy depletion in *C. gigas*  
427 at higher temperatures. Carbohydrates are a major energy reserve in bivalves, and they  
428 are oxidized to produce energy. *C. gigas*, which is less tolerant to summer mortality, had  
429 more reactive oxygen species (ROS) production (Delaporte et al., 2007; Lambert et al.,  
430 2007), and Delaporte et al. (2007) concluded that increased metabolism during maturation  
431 *per se* could be considered a stress. Here, we found that *C. gigas* was more mature and  
432 had significantly more TBARS, an indirect method of measuring ROS, at 28 °C than *C.*  
433 *corteziensis* at the same temperature (Fig. 11). Maturation and temperature are two stress  
434 factors that increase ROS; Rahman et al. (2019) also reported an increase in ROS  
435 production in *C. gigas* as the temperature increased from 20 to 25 °C. Among other  
436 factors, increased ROS production can upregulate the expression of heat shock proteins  
437 (Landis et al., 2021), and a larger expression of heat shock proteins has been reported in  
438 *C. gigas*, which is more tolerant to thermal stress, than in susceptible *C. gigas* (Lang et  
439 al. 2009). Heat shock protein expression increased in mature stages in *C. gigas* compared  
440 to resting gonads and then decreased after spawning, while levels in other tissues were  
441 relatively stable (Meistertzheim et al., 2009), in accordance with increased metabolism  
442 as a result of maturation producing stress. Here, we found that *Hsp70* in gonads was  
443 significantly higher at 28 °C in both species, in accordance with increased metabolism  
444 and maturation. However, in *C. corteziensis*, expression was higher than in *C. gigas*, in  
445 accordance with a higher capacity to neutralize stress in the former. Oxidized products  
446 derived from oxidative damage accumulate in lysosomes, producing lipofuscins (Keller  
447 et al., 2004). The results from this study show that *C. gigas* accumulated the highest  
448 amounts of lipofuscins in the gonads as temperature increased, up to 7-fold higher at  
449 28 °C and 20-fold higher at 34 °C than at 20–22 °C. In contrast, in *C. corteziensis*

450 lipofuscin levels were 2-fold higher at 34 °C than at 20 °C (Fig. 11B). Some studies have  
451 shown that excessive oxidative stress and lipofuscin accumulation may compromise the  
452 integrity of tissues and induce autophagy (Moore, 2008) and apoptosis (Matés et al., 2008;  
453 Sokolova, 2009; Zhang et al., 2011).

454 Another strategy to reduce reproductive effort in oysters with maturing gonads is to  
455 reabsorb oocytes or eject immature oocytes as inviable spawn. Oocytes degenerate as a  
456 strategy to recycle the energy reserves used to mature oocytes and channel them to other  
457 tissues to cope with periods of stress and energy depletion (Beninger et al., 2017). In the  
458 tropical oyster *C. gasar*, gametes are not expelled and are recycled in the digestive system  
459 (Diadhiou et al., 2019). Here, we found that degenerated oocytes significantly increased  
460 at higher temperatures in both species (Fig. 5D). Degenerated oocytes are no longer viable  
461 and are reabsorbed by several possible mechanisms, one of which is autophagy. Oocyte  
462 autophagy was found in both oyster species, with a significant increase at higher  
463 temperatures (Fig. 5E). Autophagy consists of degrading and recycling proteins and  
464 organelles from the cells through their inclusion into double-membrane vesicles called  
465 autophagosomes or autolysosomes, which leads to the degradation of the enclosed  
466 cytoplasmic components by lysosomal enzymes, as has been described in hemocytes of  
467 *C. gigas* (Picot et al., 2019). Starvation is the first trigger of autophagy and can be  
468 observed in several tissues of *C. gigas*, including gonads, using mRNA transcripts (Han  
469 et al., 2019; Picot et al., 2019), but it can also be induced by metabolic stress, drug  
470 treatment, radiation damage, and oxidative damage (Eisenberg-Lerner et al., 2009).  
471 Perturbation of autophagy has been associated with several diseases in *C. gigas* tissues,  
472 indicating that this process is involved in the maintenance of cellular homeostasis  
473 (Moreau et al., 2015). During reproduction, Kalachev et al. (2019) found more autophagic

474 vesicles in the cytoplasm of cells in the gonads of *C. gigas* in the active gametogenesis  
475 stage than in the resting stage, indicating that it is probably a cyclic process associated  
476 with gonad cleansing, used to save some of the energy previously invested into gonad  
477 development. This would allow partial spawn to remove residual oocytes and their  
478 biochemical reserves as a mechanism to reabsorb the gonads and the nutrients stored to  
479 fuel gametogenesis.

480 Autophagy has a complex interplay with apoptosis. In some cellular settings, it can serve  
481 as a cell survival pathway, suppressing apoptosis, and in others, it can lead to death itself,  
482 either in collaboration with apoptosis or as a back-up mechanism when the former is  
483 defective (Eisenberg-Lerner et al., 2009). Direct relationships have been found between  
484 thermal stress and the apoptosis rate of all hemocyte types in *C. gigas* (Gagnaire et al.,  
485 2006; Zhang et al., 2011). It has been suggested that temperatures close to 29 °C trigger  
486 the expression of genes related to the apoptotic process and cell death and the  
487 upregulation of genes related to autophagy (Delisle et al., 2020). We observed a higher  
488 apoptotic index at higher temperatures, particularly for *C. corteziensis* at 28 °C and 34 °C  
489 and for *C. gigas* at 34 °C. Higher apoptotic cell levels have been associated with a better  
490 immune response in oyster species, as they remove damaged, senescent, and infected cells  
491 (Terahara & Takahashi, 2008). Hemocyte apoptosis can represent the ultimate defense  
492 response when the immune system is unable to clear the products of gamete degeneration  
493 in a failed attempt of gonad maturation under stressful conditions (Sokolova, 2009; Kiss,  
494 2010). Quickly induced atresia of oocytes with the concomitant increase in apoptotic  
495 hemocytes might be a mechanism in partial spawners that could increase tolerance to  
496 summer mortality.

497 The results from this study support the theory that summer mortality is a multifactorial  
498 phenomenon (Samain et al., 2007; Fleury et al., 2020), where gonad formation and  
499 physiological status are suspected to play key roles in the outcome of the interaction with  
500 their environment. Profound ecophysiological differences exist between tropical and  
501 subtropical Ostreidae of the American Pacific, mainly those related to the gametogenic  
502 development of their populations in a latitudinal form (Rodríguez-Jaramillo et al., 2017).  
503 Our results from this study suggest that the overall physiological status of oysters,  
504 particularly during simultaneous gamete production and thermal stress, plays a significant  
505 role in the massive mortalities of susceptible species such as *C. gigas* and corroborates  
506 the ideas stated by Samain et al. (2007) and Huvet et al. (2010), where summer mortalities  
507 of this species during warmer months may be due to metabolic disturbances in oysters  
508 associated with their reproductive effort under conditions of thermal stress. Nonetheless,  
509 transcriptomic and proteomic approaches to compare the responses between *C. gigas* and  
510 *C. corteziensis* could confirm these suggestions. Additionally, a comparison with males,  
511 which should be more tolerant to increases in temperature because energy output for  
512 female gonad development is higher, could indicate more clearly what mechanisms are  
513 triggered by sex.

514

#### 515 **Conclusions.**

516 This study provides evidence of differences between the introduced temperate *C. gigas* and  
517 the native tropical *C. corteziensis* in response to increasing temperatures during  
518 reproduction. The Pacific Oyster displayed the highest rates of mortality, biomass losses,  
519 oocyte degeneration, and depletion of energy reserves during gametogenesis and higher  
520 expression of the *Hsp70* transcript. It is possible that these differences have an evolutionary

521 and adaptive basis, which results in distinct capabilities to face high temperatures in the  
522 summer. Summer mortalities can trigger worldwide economic losses in oyster aquaculture  
523 and threaten natural beds of wild populations. The information provided by this study could  
524 contribute to improving genetic selection programs of oyster families tolerant to elevated  
525 temperatures and to establishing oyster aquaculture strategies that are less susceptible to the  
526 changing global environment.

527

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532

### 533 **Conflict of interest**

534 The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

535

### 536 **Data availability statement**

537 The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author  
538 upon reasonable request.

539

### 540 **Ethics statements**

541 The adult oysters (*C. gigas* and *C. corteziensis*) were transported and handled according to  
542 CIBNOR Internal Committee for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (CICUAL), and  
543 the number of sampled organisms contemplated "the rule of maximizing information



544 published and minimizing unnecessary studies". In this sense, 140 oysters were considered  
545 the minimum number of organisms needed for this experiment.

546

547

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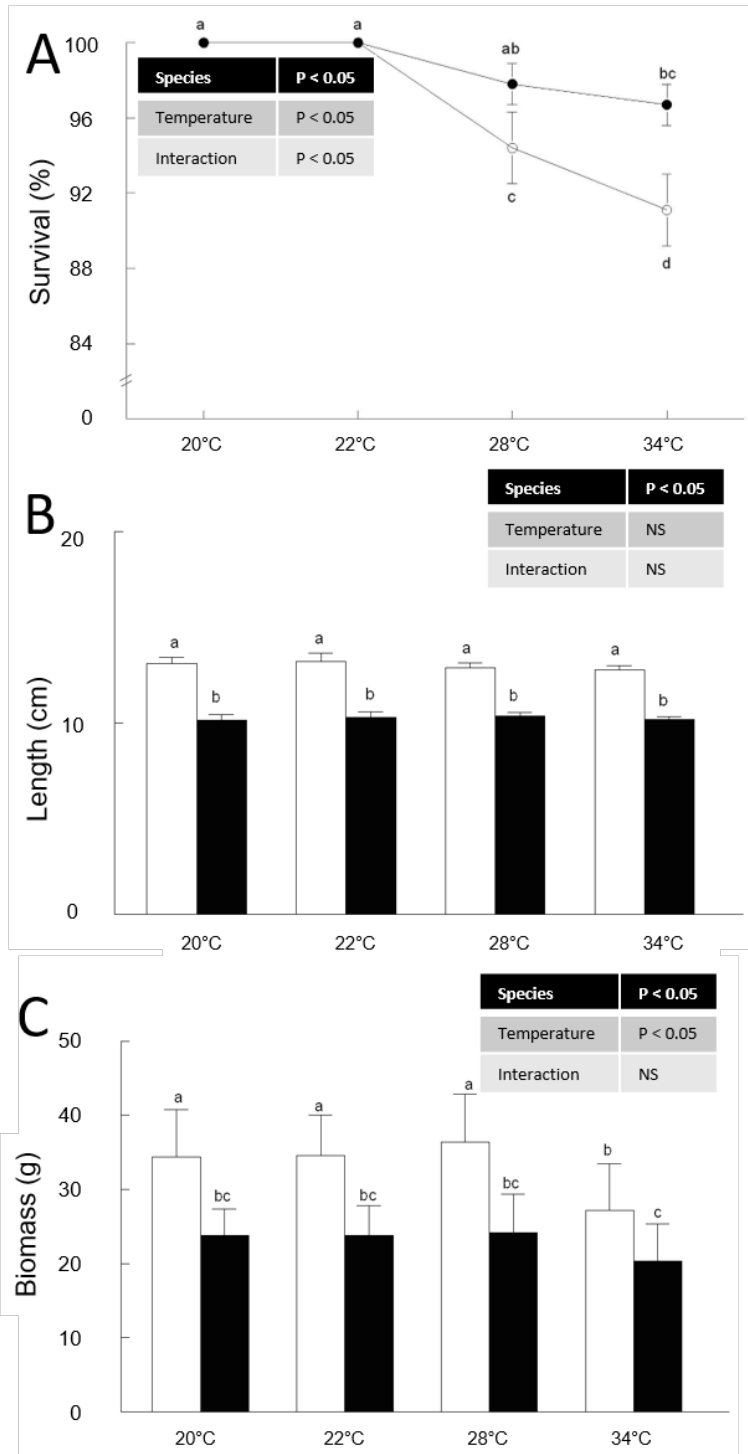
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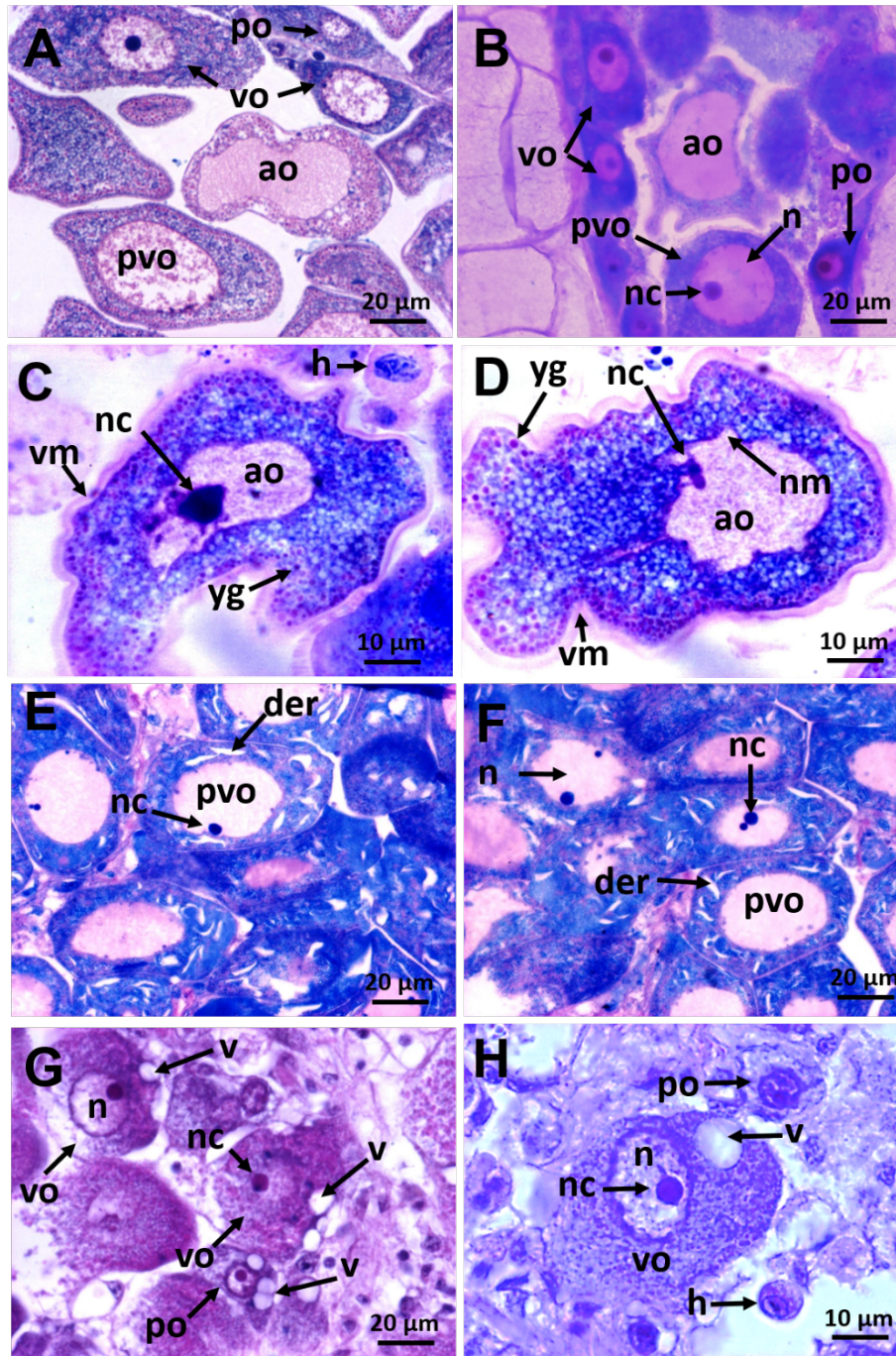
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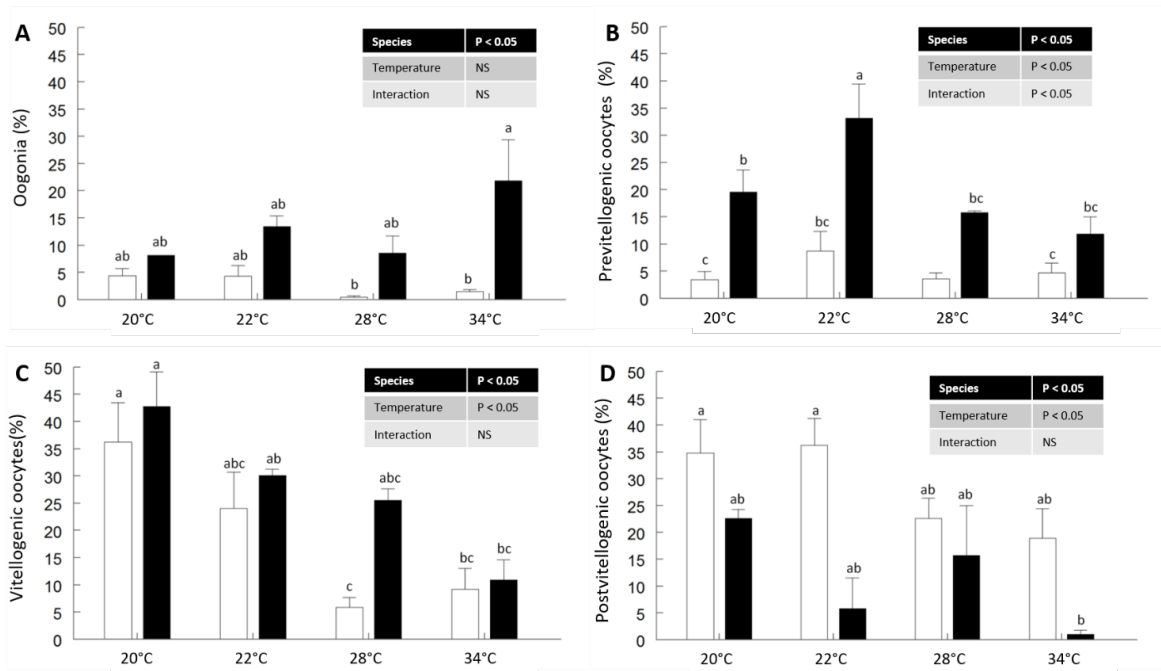


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723 **Figure 1.** A) Survival rate; B) Length, and C) Biomass of *Crassostrea gigas* (n = 23; white  
 724 circles or bars) and *Crassostrea corteziensis* (n = 11; black circles or bars) exposed to a  
 725 controlled increase in temperature. The data (mean ± SE) were analyzed using the  
 726 temperature (4 levels) and species (two levels) as independent variables in a two-way  
 727 ANOVA. Different letters denote statistically significant differences after a multiple means  
 728 comparison Tukey-HSD test (significance at  $P < 0.05$ ).

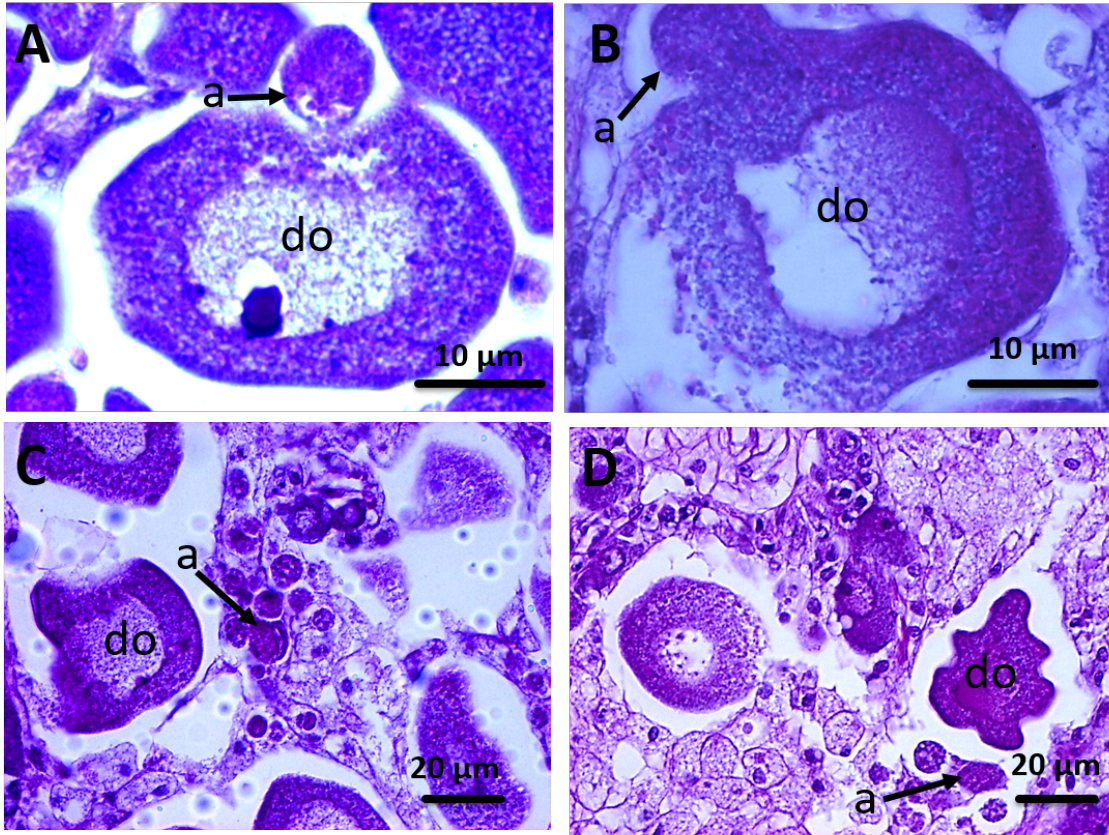


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 731 **Figure 2.** Microphotographs of histological sections of gonads of *Crassostrea gigas* A), C),  
 732 E), G) and *Crassostrea corteziensis* B), D), and F) exposed to a controlled increase in  
 733 temperature. H); po, previtellogenic oocytes; vo, vitellogenic oocytes; opv, postvitellogenic  
 734 oocytes; ao, atretic oocytes; n, nucleus; nc nucleolus; vm, vitelline membrane; yg, yolk  
 735 granules; nm, nuclear membrane; distended endoplasmic reticulum (der); v, vacuoles. A-F)  
 736 Resin sections (1  $\mu$ m, Polychromium staining). G-H) Paraffin cuts (4  $\mu$ m, hematoxylin and  
 737 eosin staining).

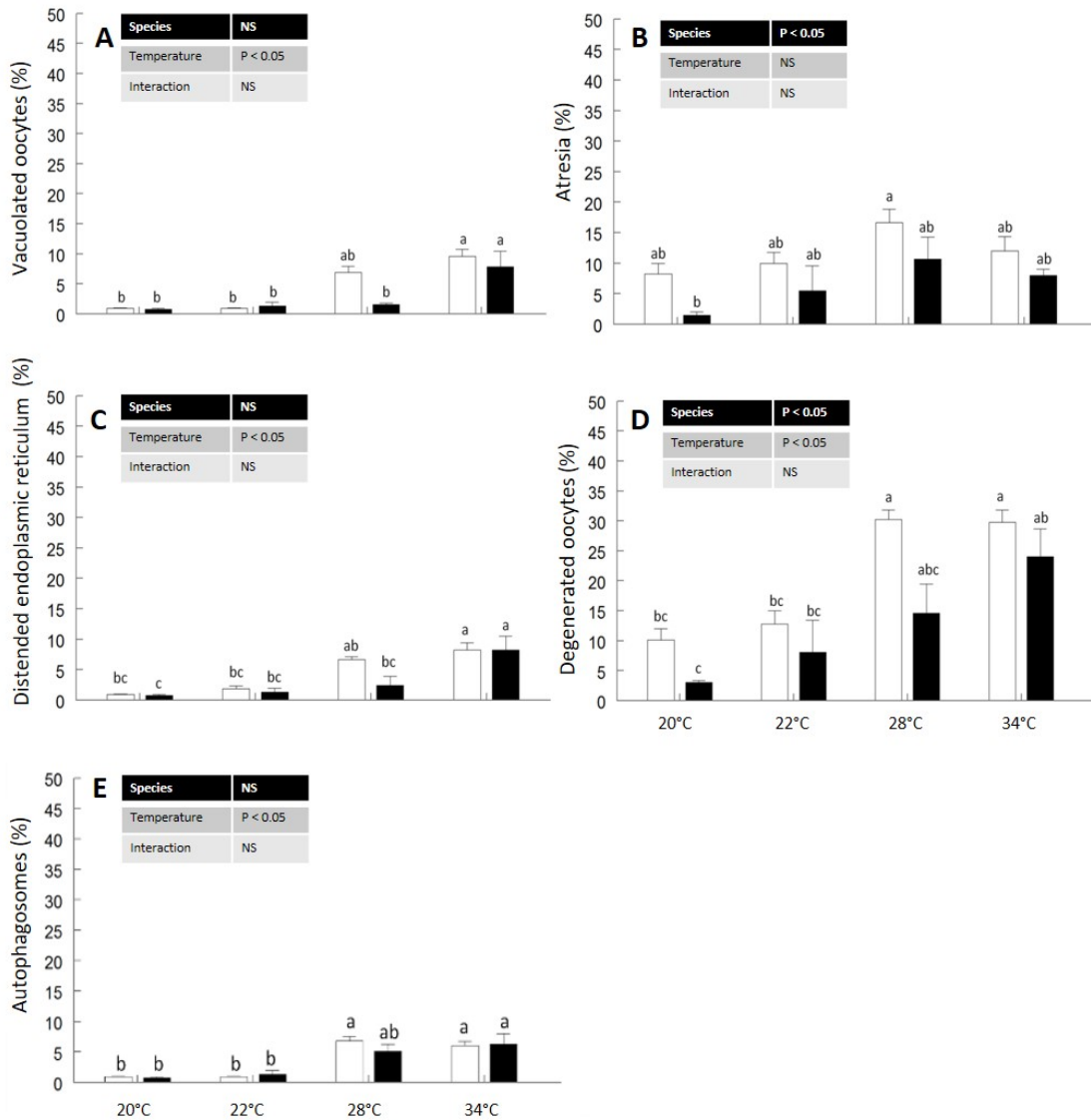


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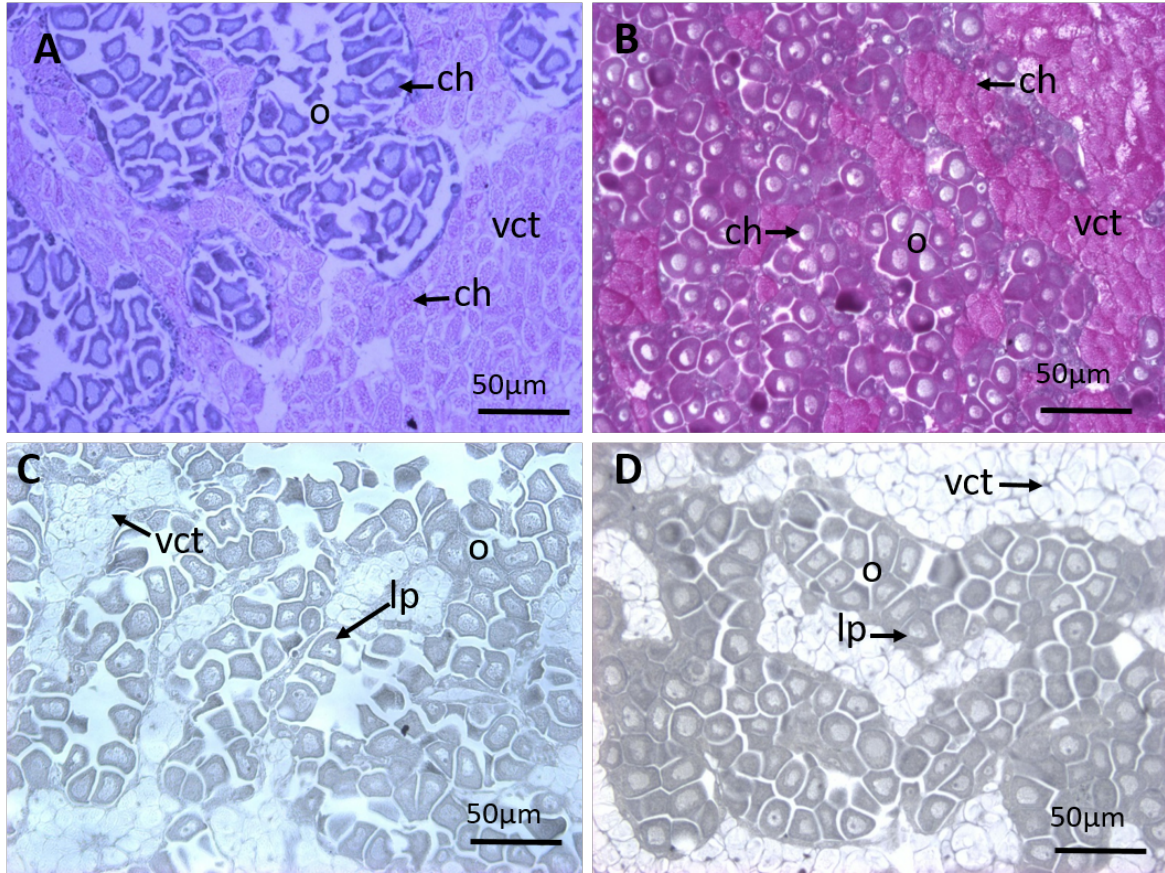
740 **Figure 3.** Relative frequencies of oocytes in female gonads of *Crassostrea gigas* (n = 23;  
 741 white bars) and *Crassostrea corteziensis* (n = 11; black bars) exposed to a controlled  
 742 increase in temperature. A) Oogonia; B) Previtellogenic oocytes; C) Vitellogenic oocytes;  
 743 D) Postvitellogenic oocytes. The data (mean ± SE) were analyzed using the temperature (4  
 744 levels) and species (two levels) as independent variables in a two-way ANOVA. Different  
 745 letters denote statistically significant differences after a multiple means comparison Tukey-  
 746 HSD test (significance at  $P < 0.05$ ).



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 748 **Figure 4.** Microphotographs of histological sections of gonads from oysters exposed to a  
 749 controlled increase in temperature with oocytes in autophagy. A) and C) *Crassostrea gigas*;  
 750 B) and D) *Crassostrea corteziensis*; a, autophagosomes; do, degenerated oocyte. Paraffin  
 751 sections (4 μm, hematoxylin and eosin staining).

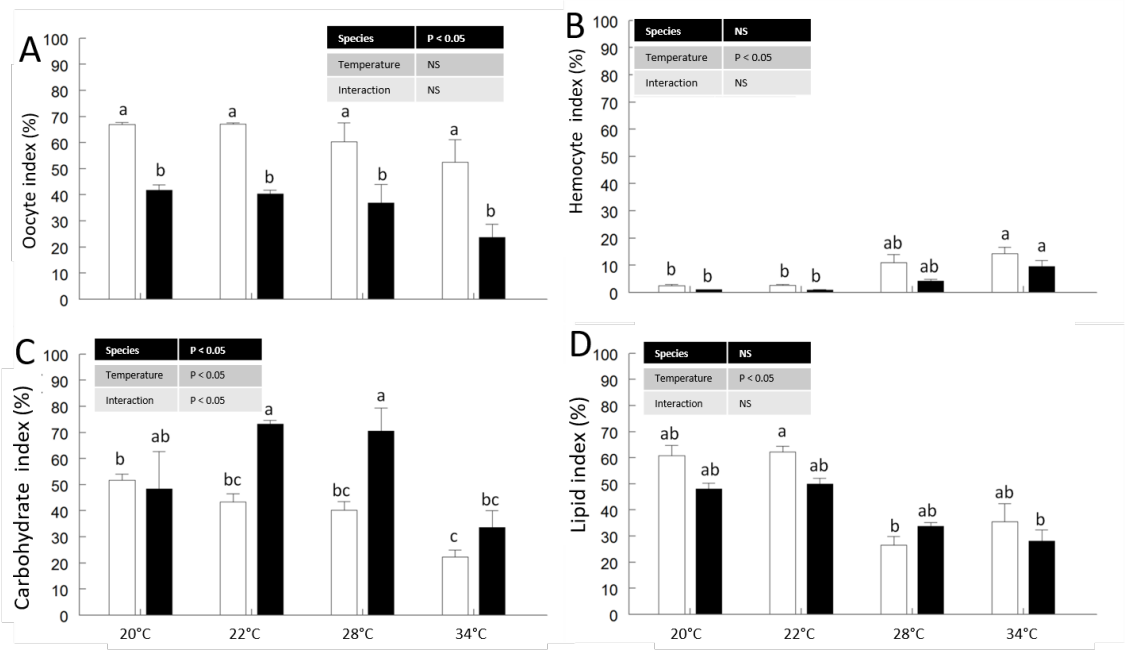
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755 **Figure 5.** Relative frequency of degenerated oocytes and autophagosomes in *Crassostrea*  
 756 *gigas* (n = 23; white bars) and *Crassostrea corteziensis* (n = 11; black bars) exposed to a  
 757 controlled increasing temperature. A) Vacuolated oocytes; B) Atresia; C) Oocytes with  
 758 distended endoplasmic reticulum; D) Degenerated oocytes; E) Autophagosomes. The data  
 759 (mean ± SE) were analyzed using the temperature (4 levels) and species (two levels) as  
 760 independent variables in a two-way ANOVA. Different letters denote statistically  
 761 significant differences after a multiple means comparison Tukey-HSD test (significance at  
 762  $P < 0.05$ ).



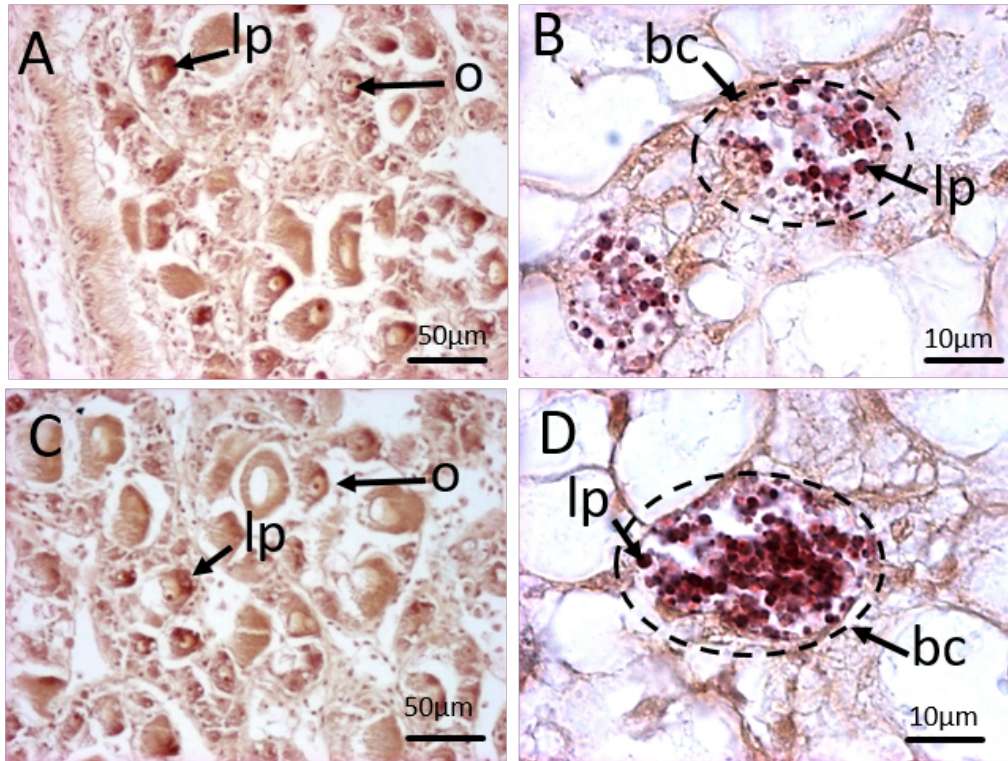
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764 **Figure 6.** Microphotographs of energy substrates stored in female gonads of oysters exposed  
 765 to a controlled increase in temperature. A) Carbohydrates in *Crassostrea gigas*; B)  
 766 Carbohydrates in *Crassostrea corteziensis*; C) Lipids in *C. gigas*; D) Lipids in *C.*  
 767 *corteziensis*; ch, carbohydrates; lp, lipids; o, oocytes, vct, vesicular connective tissue.  
 768 Paraffin sections (4 µm); A) and B) PAS staining. C) and D) Sudan black staining.



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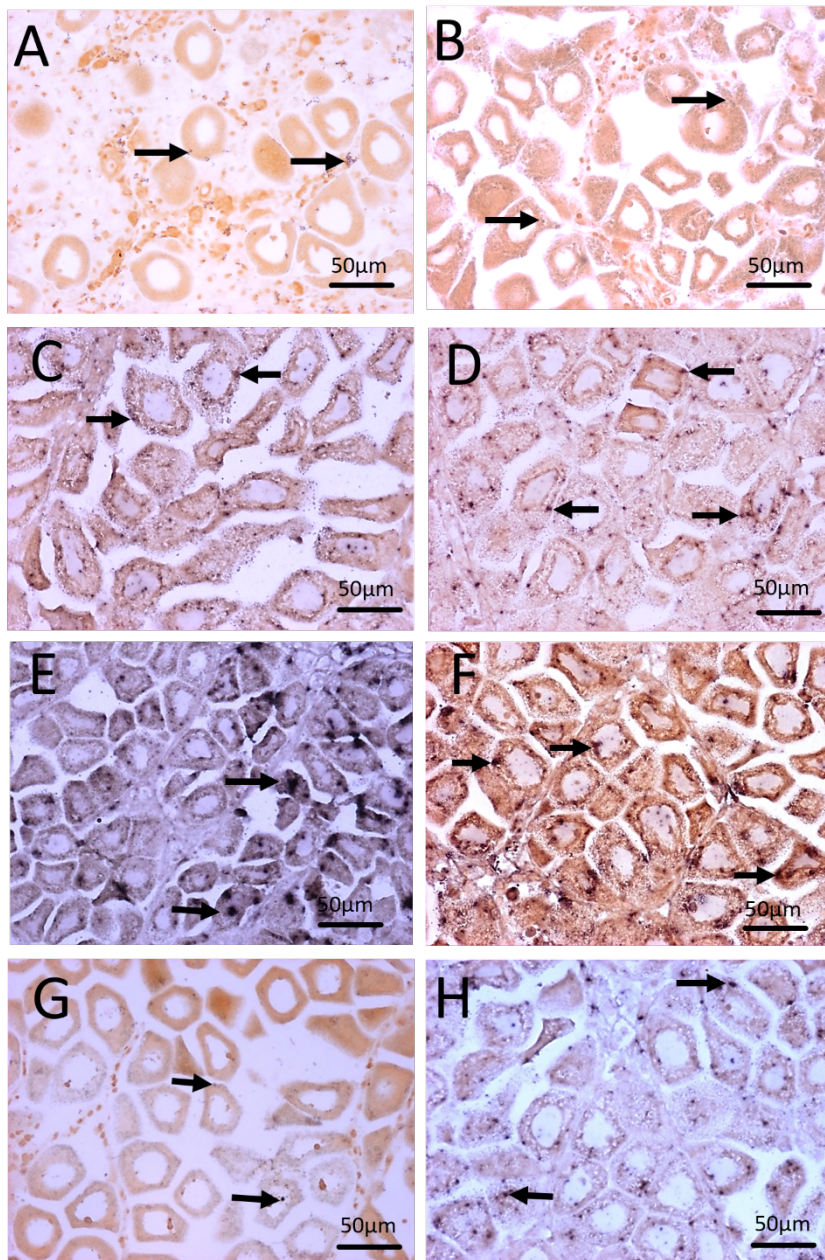
**Figure 7.** A) Oocyte index (OI); B) Hemocyte index (HI); C) Carbohydrate index; D) Lipid index in gonads of *Crassostrea gigas* (n = 23) white bars and *Crassostrea corteziensis* (n = 11) black bars exposed to a controlled increase in temperature. The data (mean ± SE) were analyzed using the temperature (4 levels) and species (two levels) as independent variables in a two-way ANOVA. Different letters denote statistically significant differences after a multiple means comparison Tukey-HSD test (significance at  $P < 0.05$ ).



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782 **Figure 8.** Microphotographs of lipofuscins in female gonads of A) *C. gigas*; B)  
783 lipofuscins within brown cells of *Crassostrea gigas*; C) lipofuscins in female gonads of  
784 *Crassostrea corteziensis*; D) lipofuscins within brown cells of *C. corteziensis* exposed to  
785 a controlled increase in temperature; o, oocyte; lp, lipofuscins; bc, brown cell. Paraffin  
786 sections (4 µm, Kinyoun Carbol Fuchsin staining).





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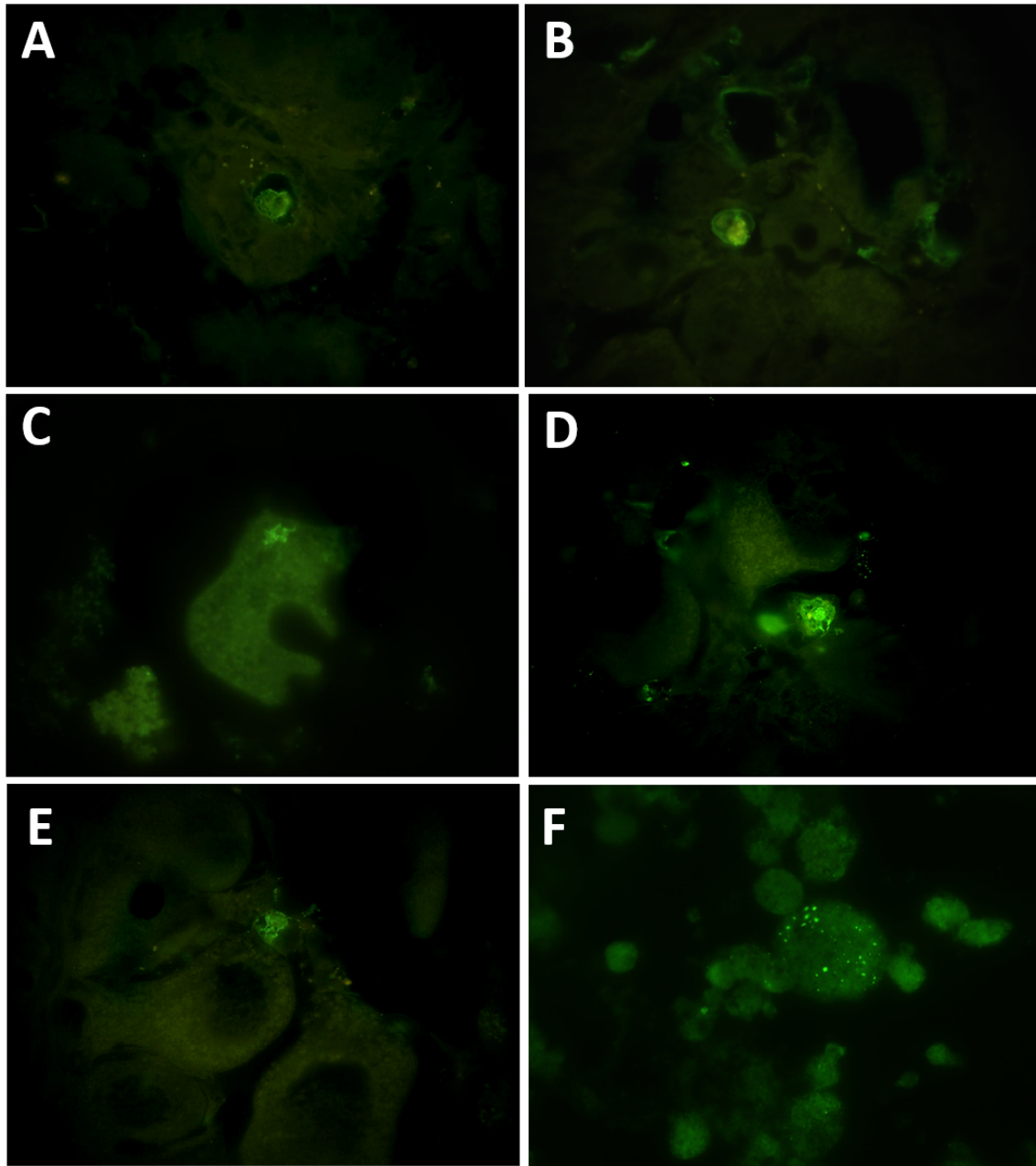
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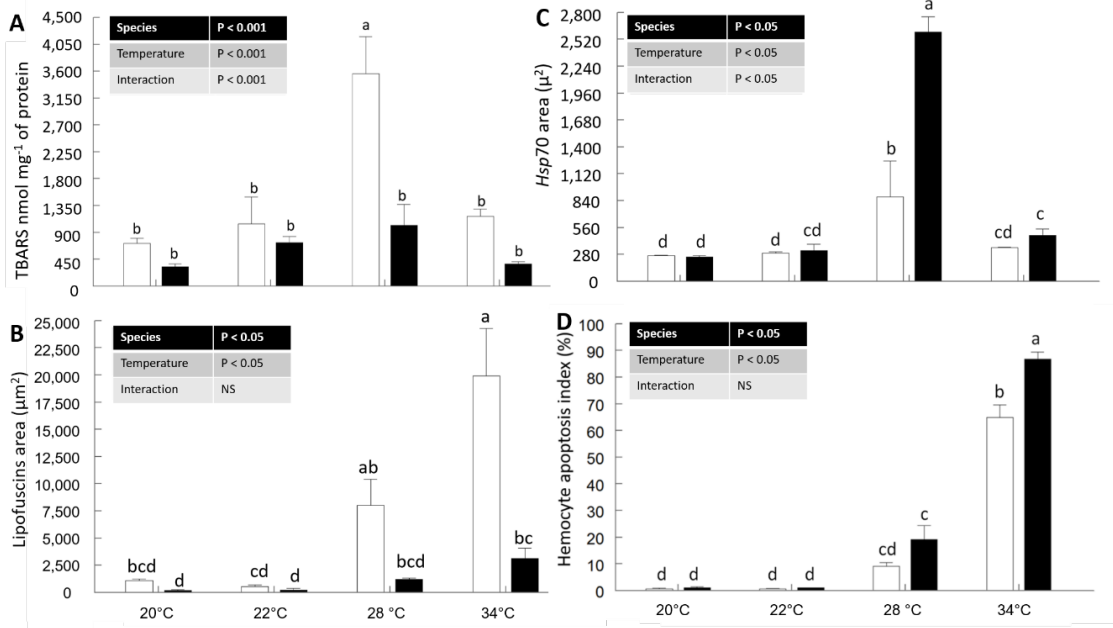
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**Figure 9.** Localization of *Hsp70* transcript signal by ISH in ovaries from oysters exposed to a controlled increasing temperature (arrows). Positive hybridization of *Hsp70* antisense probe in oocytes A) *Crassostrea gigas* and B) *Crassostrea corteziensis* at 20 °C. C) *C. gigas* and D) *C. corteziensis* at 22 °C. E) *C. gigas* and F) *C. corteziensis* at 28 °C. G) *C. gigas* and H) *C. corteziensis* at 34 °C. Paraffin sections (4 μm).



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**Figure 10.** Microphotographs of apoptotic cells in gonads from oysters exposed to an experimental temperature of 34 °C. A) Hemocytes undergoing apoptosis within a *Crassostrea gigas* oocyte; B) Hemocytes undergoing apoptosis within a *Crassostrea corteziensis* oocyte; C) Apoptotic hemocyte into oocyte with fragmented DNA; D) Hemocytes undergoing apoptosis on one side of an atretic oocyte; E) Hemocytes undergoing apoptosis on one side of a degenerating oocyte; F) Apoptotic bodies in female gonads. Paraffin sections (4 μm, TUNEL technique).



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**Figure 11.** A) Peroxidized lipids TBARS; B) Lipofuscin coverage area; C) *Hsp70* transcript signal area (μm<sup>2</sup>); D) Hemocyte apoptosis index in gonads of *Crassostrea gigas* (n = 23; white bars) and *Crassostrea corteziensis* (n = 11; black bars) exposed to a controlled increase in temperature. The data (mean ± SE) were analyzed using the temperature (4 levels) and species (two levels) as independent variables in a two-way ANOVA. Different letters denote statistically significant differences after a multiple means comparison Tukey-HSD test (significance at P < 0.05).