Fact Sheet 2020

NOAA FISHERIES

Office of Aquaculture

New England & Mid-Atlantic Region Aquaculture

Growth of American marine aquaculture is an opportunity to support local seafood production, strengthen coastal community resilience, and ensure a safe, secure, and sustainable supply of seafood.

AQUACULTURE IN THE REGION

New England and the Mid-Atlantic, including the Chesapeake Bay, boast a vibrant commercial marine aquaculture industry supported by a world-class research and technology sector.

Throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic, the production of oysters, clams, mussels, Atlantic salmon, and kelp has increased substantially over the past decade. In terms of economic revenue, cultured oysters are now the third most valuable seafood product harvested in the region behind sea scallops and American lobster; there is still great potential for increasing sustainable aquaculture production in the region.

Along with providing a safe and sustainable source of seafood, marine aquaculture creates employment and business opportunities in coastal communities. Marine aquaculture can diversify U.S. seafood production and can expand and stabilize the domestic seafood supply in the face of environmental change and economic uncertainty. Some marine aquaculture activities, such as shellfish and seaweed aquaculture, can help further NOAA Fisheries' objectives for healthy ecosystems, by removing excess nutrients from our waterways and serving as habitat for marine and estuarine species. Hatchery-raised stocks and aquaculture techniques are also used to support commercial/recreational fisheries enhancement, and the restoration of marine habitats and protected species.

The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) supports increasing sustainable marine aquaculture production in New England and the Mid-Atlantic by coordinating agency resources and efforts toward the development of effective and efficient aquaculture permitting systems. The region's Northeast Fisheries Science Center is also providing the science and services necessary to ensure that marine aquaculture grows in a manner that is consistent with NOAA Fisheries' objectives related to the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities, and the conservation of fisheries habitat and protected species.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AQUACULTURE

U.S. marine aquaculture is an important industry. In fishing and coastal communities, it creates year-round jobs that support resilient working waterfronts and economic development.

In 2018, New England's marine aquaculture production sales totaled ~$132.3 Million; the Mid Atlantic's totaled ~$84.3 Million. Nationwide in 2017, aquaculture production was valued at $1.5 billion. The industry also supports sectors such as seafood processing, feed and equipment manufacturing, and food service.

SHELLFISH INITIATIVE

NOAA Fisheries is working to increase populations of bivalve shellfish in coastal waters—including oysters, clams, and mussels—through commercial production and conservation activities. NOAA recognizes the broad suite of economic, social, and environmental benefits provided by increasing shellfish populations, including:

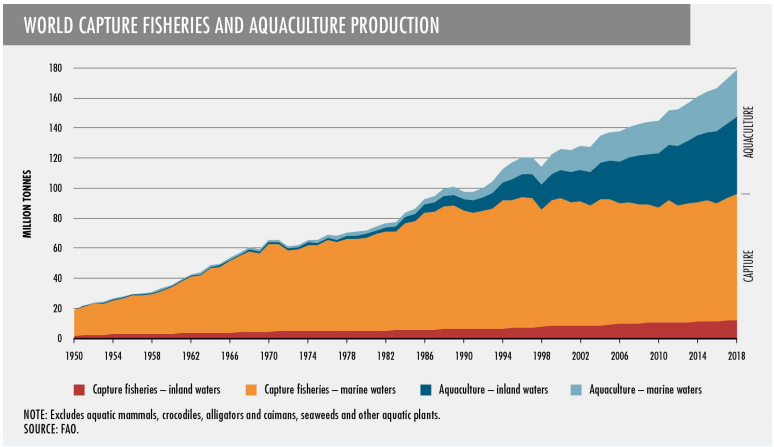
- Meeting a growing seafood demand
- Cleaner water and nutrient removal
- Shoreline protection
- Native shellfish restoration

NOAA collaborates with public and private partners to increase the efficiency of shellfish planning and permitting, advance environmental research, and improve restoration and farming techniques.

NOAA also coordinates with other federal agencies and participants from industry, restoration groups, academia, states, tribes, and other stakeholders to increase shellfish production around the nation. Currently the Greater Atlantic Region, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and North Carolina have active state Shellfish Initiatives.

AQUACULTURE BY THE NUMBERS

- Oceans cover over 70% of the Earth's surface, but account for only 2% of food production. With limited arable land and fresh water, the world is turning to the oceans for additional food as the global population is projected to increase to 9 billion by the year 2050.
- Nationwide aquaculture production is valued at ~$1.5 billion. In 2018, marine aquaculture production sales in the Greater Atlantic Region totaled ~$216.4 million.
- The U.S. aquaculture industry is currently focused on production of high-value food species. Thus, while the value of U.S. aquaculture production equals about 21% of the value of total U.S. seafood production, the volume equals about 7% of the total production.
- Globally, aquaculture supplies more than 50% of all seafood produced for human consumption–this percentage continues to rise.



For more information about aquaculture in the greater Atlantic, contact Regional Aquaculture Coordinators:

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