



NOAA
FISHERIES

Office of Aquaculture



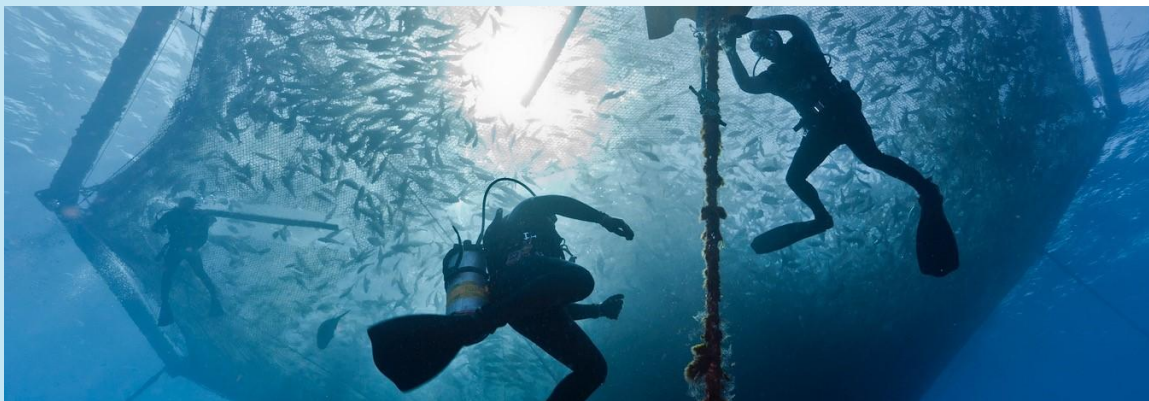
Our mission is to provide science, services, and guidance to foster the expansion and sustainability of U.S. marine aquaculture.

Aquaculture is one of a range of technologies needed to meet increasing global demand for seafood, support commercial and recreational fisheries, and restore species and marine habitat.

Growing a domestic aquaculture industry here in the U.S. will support healthy people, a healthy planet, and a healthy economy.

Learn more:
fisheries.noaa.gov/aquaculture

Regulation of Marine Aquaculture



Divers inspect a finfish net pen for any needed repairs. Photo courtesy of Blue Ocean Mariculture.

Aquaculture is a National Priority

The National Aquaculture Act of 1980 established aquaculture as a national policy priority for the United States, and created the Interagency Working Group on Aquaculture under the National Science and Technology Council in the Executive Office of the President. Now referred to as the Subcommittee on Aquaculture (SCA), through this group, NOAA coordinates with other federal agencies on aquaculture priorities and activities.

Other federal agencies responsible for regulating aquaculture include:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine
- FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Each SCA agency serves a distinct and complementary role that when combined, increases the overall effectiveness and productivity of federal aquaculture efforts. Subcommittee members are committed to supporting cutting-edge science and research as well as federal policy making needed to foster sustainable aquaculture in the U.S. and expand its social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Under the SCA, proposed actions to increase regulatory efficiency are not intended to compromise, but rather to be undertaken in the context of, environmental stewardship, human health, and other federal requirements. NOAA is currently working with SCA partner agencies to identify opportunities for improving efficiencies in aquaculture permitting and authorization programs using existing federal authorities and refining and disseminating tools for aquaculture regulatory management.



WHY FARM SEAFOOD?

Today, the United States imports between 70-85% of the seafood we eat by value—more than any other country. Global and domestic demand for seafood continues to grow. Even as we maintain and rebuild our wild harvest fisheries, we cannot meet increasing domestic demand for seafood through wild-caught fisheries alone.

Marine aquaculture provides a domestic source of economically and environmentally sustainable seafood that complements and supports our wild fisheries production.

Learn more:

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KEY LAWS THAT APPLY TO AQUACULTURE

U.S. marine aquaculture operates within one of the most comprehensive regulatory frameworks in the world. For operations in federal waters, existing regulations govern a multitude of environmental concerns, including disease management, water discharge, siting of gear, seafood safety, use of medication, feed ingredients, consistency with state laws, and the protection of marine mammals, fish habitat, and threatened and endangered species. Some statutes that apply to aquaculture projects in which NOAA has a role include:

- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (1976)
- Endangered Species Act (1973)
- Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972)
- National Marine Sanctuary Act (1972)
- Coastal Zone Management Act (1972)
- National Environmental Policy Act (1969)
- National Historic Preservation Act (1966)
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (1934)

Under these laws, NOAA is responsible for considering, preventing, and/or mitigating the potential adverse environmental impacts of planned and existing marine aquaculture facilities through the development of fishery management plans, sanctuary management plans, permit actions, proper siting, and consultations with other regulatory agencies at the federal, state, and local level.

NOAA FISHERIES AQUACULTURE POLICY AND CONSULTATIONS

Using NOAA's world-class science capabilities, the NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture addresses regulations and policies that relate to marine aquaculture in the United States. The purpose of these efforts is to enable domestic aquaculture production within the context of NOAA's marine stewardship responsibilities, which include the protection of the marine environment while balancing multiple uses of coastal and ocean waters. NOAA's responsibilities related to aquaculture include:

- Consulting with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers on permitting
- Consulting with the Environmental Protection Agency on endangered species, fish habitat, and marine mammal protection
- Collaborating with the Regional Fishery Management Councils and marine fishery commissions on developing aquaculture in federal waters
- Increasing regulatory efficiency in both state and federal waters, while maintaining environmental stewardship responsibilities

