



## U. S. Aquaculture

### Why Is Aquaculture Important For The United States?

- More than 80% of the seafood Americans consume is imported.
- Almost half of seafood imports are farmed.
- Americans consume between 6 and 7 million tons of wild and farmed seafood a year.
- Demand continues to grow as more Americans seek the health benefits of eating seafood.
- The United States may need to import as much as 4 million tons of seafood by 2025, based on demand and population growth projections.
- Even with production from wild capture fisheries at fully sustainable levels, increased aquaculture production from domestic or foreign sources will be required to meet demand.
- Growing demand for seafood creates an enormous opportunity for economic growth and new jobs in the U.S. aquaculture industry.

The United States needs both wild and farmed seafood products to meet future demand for seafood. Working together, the federal and state governments, research institutions, the aquaculture industry, and coastal communities are exploring options for increasing aquaculture production in the United States.

### What Is Aquaculture?

**Aquaculture** is the breeding, rearing and harvesting of plants and animals in all types of water environments, including ponds, rivers, lakes and the ocean. Similar to agriculture, aquaculture can take place in the natural environment or in a manmade environment.

**Marine aquaculture** is the culturing of saltwater aquatic species, such as oysters, clams, mussels, shrimp, and salmon in ocean waters. It also includes stock enhancement, which is the release of hatchery raised fish and shellfish to restore populations in the marine environment.



# Alaska Aquaculture



## Alaska Marine Aquaculture Opportunities For Growth

- Shellfish farming
- Stock replenishment of king crab

**A**quaculture in Alaska is dominated by hatchery production of salmon for stock enhancement. Approximately 40% of the annual commercial salmon catch was initially released as smolts by nonprofit regional aquaculture associations that operate salmon hatcheries.

Alaska is also looking at other hatchery based stock replenishment options. One innovative research program involves the collaboration of regional fishermen, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, NOAA Fisheries, the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery, Chugach Region Resources Commission, and the University of Alaska at Fairbanks investigating options for hatching and rearing red and blue king crabs for use in pilot restoration projects at Kodiak Island and the Pribilof Islands. Pathology and genetic tests are being conducted to ensure that stocks are disease free and can be genetically identified when future offspring are released into the wild.

Alaska's commercial aquaculture industry is largely comprised of marine shellfish operations. The majority of the Alaska operations culture Pacific oysters, with littleneck clams accounting for the second largest share. Freshwater aquaculture and farming of marine finfish are prohibited in the state. In 2005, sales of aquaculture products from Alaska totaled \$826,000.



## Information Links

- Alaska Sea Grant  
<http://seagrant.uaf.edu/>
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
<http://www.adfg.state.ak.us/>
- Alaska Mariculture Coordinator  
<http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/geninfo/enhance/maricult/maricult/php>
- Pacific Seafood Processors Association  
<http://www.pspafish.net/>