



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.



Mississippi Aquaculture



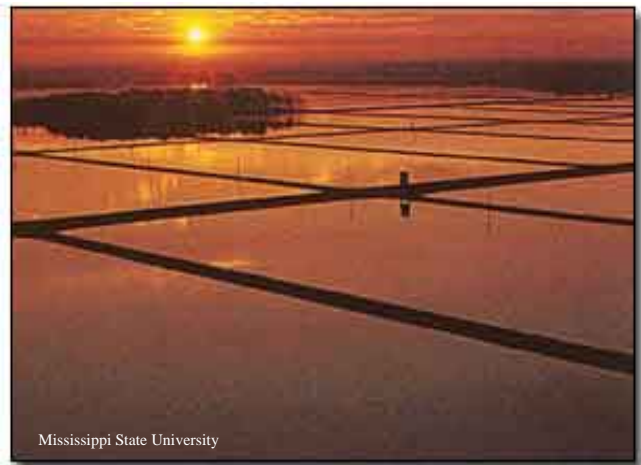
Mississippi ranks number one in the nation in the production of farm-raised catfish. The State's aquaculture industry also cultivates tilapia, hybrid striped bass, and crawfish. In addition, research institutes and private companies are developing marine aquaculture projects for coastal and offshore locations.

In 2005, Mississippi had 403 aquaculture farms with an estimated worth of \$249.7 million. With growing interest and investment, there are increasing opportunities for further expansion of marine aquaculture in Mississippi.



Mississippi Marine Aquaculture Opportunities for Growth

- Stock enhancement of red snapper and other marine fish
- Hatchery production of marine finfish for commercial grow out in Mississippi and elsewhere
- Offshore aquaculture of finfish (pilot projects)
- Bait shrimp production



Information Links

Mississippi—Alabama Sea Grant Consortium
<http://www.masgc.org/>

Gulf Coast Research Lab at
The University of Southern Mississippi
www.usm.edu/gcrl/site_map/flash.php