

## 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.



# Rhode Island Aquaculture



Rhode Island, a major producer of wild fish and shellfish, also has a long history of shellfish cultivation in Narragansett Bay. In 2004, the total acreage under cultivation in Rhode Island rose to 70 acres with a gross revenue of \$5.5 million dollars. The total contribution of aquaculture to the economic bottom line of the State was \$6 million dollars.

Today, the State's aquaculture industry is involved exclusively in shellfish production and the American oyster is the most common species farmed. Ninety-five percent of the aquaculture operations are in Narragansett Bay and nearby salt ponds. There are also three farms on Block Island, which is 12 miles offshore.



## Rhode Island Marine Aquaculture Opportunities For Growth

- Open ocean farming of mussels, marine finfish, and scallops
- Shellfish farming in coastal areas
- Aquaculture research and development in partnership with Rogers Williams University, University of Rhode Island, and others for commercial aquaculture and stock replenishment of important recreational and commercial species



## Information Links

Rhode Island Aquaculture Initiative  
<http://www.crmc.state.ri.us/riai/>

Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program  
<http://seagrants.gso.uri.edu/index.html>

East Coast Shellfish Growers Association  
<http://www.ecsga.org/>