

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.



Texas Aquaculture



In 2006, Texas aquaculture produced approximately 30 million pounds of products worth an estimated \$45 million. Channel catfish and shrimp accounted for the greatest production, but hybrid striped bass, red drum, redfish, tilapia, and ornamental fish are also farmed in Texas.

Aquaculture in Texas includes commercial farming of fish and shellfish for human consumption; raising popular recreational fish in hatcheries; and providing necessary goods for veterinary care, equipment manufacturing, seafood processing and marketing, and local restaurants.

There are a number of growth potential areas for aquaculture in Texas, such as open ocean finfish farming and oyster restoration. Businesses, aquaculture experts, and farmers are evaluating opportunities in the Gulf of Mexico because of its potential to host pilot projects for open ocean marine aquaculture. Currently, there is one permitted open ocean aquaculture project in State waters, but production has not started.

Texas Aquaculture Opportunities For Growth

- Open ocean farming of marine finfish and scallops
- Restoration aquaculture for redfish and oysters
- Bait shrimp farming
- Hatchery supply for marine finfish fingerlings
- Pond and tank production of marine fish, shrimp, and sea urchins
- Seafood processing, cold storage, and marketing
- Employing idle fishing boats and fishermen in open ocean aquaculture production



Information Links

Texas Aquaculture Association
<http://www.texasaquaculture.org/>

Texas Sea Grant
<http://texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu/>

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>