



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

## Office of Aquaculture

Growth of American marine aquaculture is an opportunity to support local seafood production, strengthen coastal community resilience, and ensure a safe, secure, and sustainable supply of seafood.

# Southeast Region Aquaculture



## **AQUACULTURE IN THE REGION**

The Southeast Region (Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic states, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands) focuses on stock enhancement to supplement wild populations, seafood production, research, and restoration efforts. Species cultured in the region include oysters, clams, shrimp, red drum, almaco jack, spotted seatrout, summer flounder, snook, pompano, black seabass, and algae.

While most marine aquaculture in this region occurs on land in recirculating systems or ponds or in state waters, there is growing interest in culturing finfish in federal waters at both the pilot and commercial scale. Additionally, many states in the region are expanding off-bottom oyster cultivation for the growing half-shell market.

## **ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AQUACULTURE**

U.S. marine aquaculture is an important industry. In many fishing and coastal communities, it creates year-round jobs that support resilient working waterfronts and economic development.

The U.S. aquaculture industry produced \$1.5 billion worth of seafood in 2017, with 39% of that value coming from the Atlantic region. The industry also supports sectors such as seafood processing, feed and equipment manufacturing, and food service.

### SHELLFISH INITIATIVE

NOAA Fisheries is working to increase populations of bivalve shellfish in coastal waters—including oysters, clams, and mussels—through commercial production and conservation activities. NOAA recognizes the broad suite of economic, social, and environmental benefits provided by increasing shellfish populations, including:

- Meeting a growing seafood demand
- Cleaner water and nutrient removal
- Shoreline protection
- Native shellfish restoration

NOAA collaborates with public and private partners to streamline marine planning and permitting, environmental research, restoration and farming techniques, and innovative financing. NOAA also coordinates with other federal agencies and participants from industry, restoration groups, academia, states, tribes, and other stakeholders to increase shellfish production around the nation. Inspired by the national effort, the Gulf of Mexico region launched its own shellfish initiative to promote the development of shellfish aquaculture.



For more information about aquaculture in the Southeast, contact Senior Regional Aquaculture Coordinator Jess Beck-Stimpert ([jess.beck@noaa.gov](mailto:jess.beck@noaa.gov)), or Regional Aquaculture Coordinator Andrew Richard ([andrew.richard@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.richard@noaa.gov)).

### AQUACULTURE BY THE NUMBERS

- Oceans cover over 70% of the Earth’s surface, but account for only 2% of food production. With limited arable land and fresh water, the world is turning to the oceans for additional food as the global population is projected to increase to 9 billion by the year 2050.
- The U.S. aquaculture industry produced \$1.5 billion worth of seafood in 2017, with 39% and 22% of that value coming from the Atlantic region and the Gulf of Mexico, respectively.
- The U.S. aquaculture industry is currently focused on production of high-value food species. Thus, while the value of U.S. aquaculture production equals about 21% of the value of total U.S. seafood production, the volume equals about 7% of the total production.
- Globally, aquaculture supplies more than 50% of all seafood produced for human consumption—the percentage continues to rise.

