

Benefits of Alaska's Growing Mariculture Industry

Mariculture has both environmental and economic benefits. Some are universal and others depend on the type of mariculture being practiced.

Environmental Benefits

★ Water Quality

In places with high levels of runoff from urban areas and agriculture, water filtration by shellfish farms draws down excess nutrients and improves overall water quality and decreases the risk of low or no oxygen zones.

Aquatic plants, including seaweed and kelp species, can help filter organic and non-organic nutrients in marine waterbodies.

★ Habitat Creation

Physical structures associated with aquatic farms may create three-dimensional midwater and surface habitat for wild species such as foraging fish and crustaceans, which may benefit their populations.

★ Buffer for Ocean Acidification

As seaweed and kelp species absorb carbon dioxide, they may buffer certain shell-forming creatures from the corrosive impacts of ocean acidification under certain oceanographic conditions.

Economic Benefits

★ Revenue Opportunity

Mariculture has the potential to bring increased revenue to coastal communities around Alaska. As this industry continues to grow there's never been a better time to get involved in mariculture in Alaska!

★ Commercial Value

In 2021, the commercial value of the mariculture industry in Alaska was estimated at just under \$3 million (Alaska Sea Grant, *State of Mariculture*). Currently, the majority of this commercial value is related to oyster cultivation. However, the seaweed industry alone has the potential to experience incredible growth over the next 20 years.

★ Compatible Seasons

Certain types of mariculture are compatible with Alaska's existing seafood industry in many ways including multi-purpose equipment and technologies. Another example of compatibility is that cultivation and growing seasons for kelp species often fit within the offseason of some Alaska fisheries.

You can get involved in mariculture in many ways; farming, processing, hatcheries, market and product development, and sales!

Want to learn more or get involved in mariculture? Visit us:

Alaska Mariculture Alliance

alaskamariculture.org

Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation

afdf.org/projects/current-projects/alaska-mariculture-initiative/

Alaska Department of Natural Resources

dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/aquatic/

NOAA Fisheries

fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/aquaculture/alaska-region-aquaculture

Want training on kelp or oyster farming? Or information on the application process for an aquatic farm lease?

Alaska Sea Grant

<https://alaskaseagrant.org/our-work/aquaculture/>

Alaska Aquaculture Permitting Portal

<http://akaquaculturepermitting.org/>

Alaska Mariculture Training & Research Center



amrtc.org



— ALASKA —
MARICULTURE
— ALLIANCE —