



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

NOAA Announces Regions for First Two Aquaculture Opportunity Areas under Executive Order on Seafood

NOAA Fisheries sent this bulletin at 08/20/2020 01:00 PM EDT

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

AQUACULTURE

August 20, 2020

NOAA Announces Regions for First Two Aquaculture Opportunity Areas under Executive Order on Seafood

What is an Aquaculture Opportunity Area?

Aquaculture Opportunity Areas show high potential for commercial aquaculture. A science and community-based approach to identifying these areas helps minimize interference with other enterprises, account for current fishing patterns, and protect the ecosystem.

- AOAs will expand important economic opportunities in coastal and rural areas, and increase our nation's seafood security.
- AOAs use the best available science to find appropriate space for sustainable aquaculture. Farms in AOAs will still need to go through the permitting process and environmental reviews.
- AOAs minimize interactions with other users, such as shipping, fishing, and the military.

Assessment and Use of AOAs

Stakeholder input is essential in the design and location of AOAs and NOAA expects these areas will be shaped through a public process that allows constituents to share their community and stewardship goals, as well as critical insights. AOA size, exact location, and farm types will be determined through spatial analysis and public input to expand sustainable domestic seafood production while minimizing potential user conflicts.

Learn more: fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/aquaculture

Today, NOAA Fisheries announced the selection of federal waters off southern California and in the Gulf of Mexico as the areas of focused evaluation for the first two of ten Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in the United States. Establishing these Aquaculture Opportunity Areas are part of NOAA's responsibility under the May 2020 Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth. These two regions were selected based on the already available spatial analysis data and current industry interest in developing sustainable aquaculture operations in the region. NOAA envisions each AOA as a small defined geographic area that has been evaluated to determine its potential suitability for commercial aquaculture. While the regions for the first two AOAs have been selected, the exact locations and configuration will be shaped by a combination of spatial analysis and public input.

These AOAs are expected to support three to five aquaculture farm sites of varying types including finfish, shellfish, macroalgae, or some combination of these. To identify each AOA, NOAA will use a combination of powerful data-driven siting analysis using hundreds of types of data on ocean uses and public input. The synthesis of these two essential elements will highlight space that is environmentally, socially, and economically appropriate for commercial aquaculture.

Learn more about the AOA announcement and view additional material on the [NOAA Fisheries website](#).

[Visit our website](#)

POWERED BY

