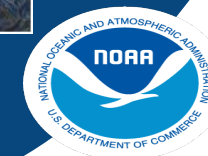


NOAA Fisheries Aquaculture Opportunity Area Updates



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Drivers

- **Human Health:** Federal nutrition guideline: eat 2x more seafood (~6m tons more per year)
- **Environmental Health:** Sustainable aquaculture is low impact and low GHG protein growth
- **Climate Change:** Increase and diversify seafood production and expand and stabilize seafood supplies
- **Global population increase:** Global demand for seafood is growing- need additional 40m tons in 20 years
- **Economic Opportunity:** Jobs, especially in coastal fishing communities and creating inclusive opportunities for SMEs



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Executive Order 13921

Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth

Section 7: Aquaculture Opportunity Areas

- The Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with other appropriate Federal officials, appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, and in coordination with appropriate State and tribal governments, shall:
 - Within 1 year of date of E.O., identify at least two geographic areas containing locations suitable for commercial aquaculture.
 - Within 2 years of identifying each geographic area, complete a PEIS for each to assess the impact of siting aquaculture facilities there.
 - Each of following 4 years, identify two more geographic areas and complete PEIS within 2 years.

* A decision on what areas are AOAs happens at the end of the PEIS process.



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What have we done since May 7, 2020?

June 2020



Now: October 2021

Happening soon!

What:

Selected Gulf of Mexico and Southern CA as first two regions

Q&A, National and Regional rollouts; presentations & outreach

NCCOS data collection and modeling for siting analysis

RFI in October 2020; 5 listening sessions (3 national, 2 regional)

NCCOS draft Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas; peer review

Considering selection of third region, timing, resources

Gulf of Mexico and Southern CA Atlases publish this fall

Combine public input, results of Atlas, and other information to identify NEPA alternatives

NOI to prepare PEIS, with preliminary AOA alternatives to consider

Begin stakeholder outreach and coordination in third region; RFI



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Round 2: Comments in Support

- Interest in four areas
- 1-2 comments each in support of AOA in Western Pacific, USVI and Puerto Rico, Florida
- 11 comments in support of AOA for shellfish and seaweed mariculture in Alaska (state and federal waters); Governor support and invitation into state waters
- Regional Offices described opportunities and challenges of AOA in their region



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Next Steps: Round 2

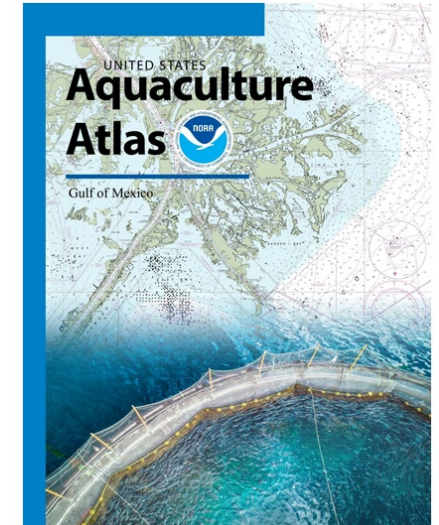
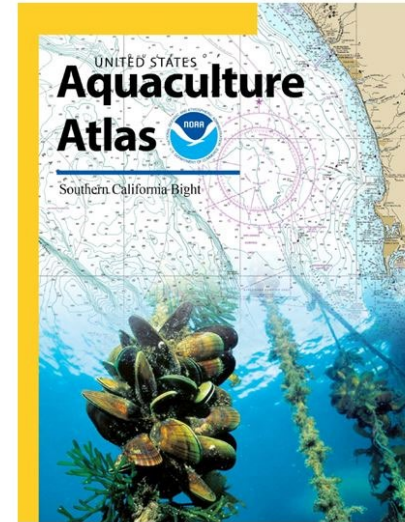
- Determine resource availability and timing
- Announce third region
- Begin stakeholder outreach and coordination
- Begin NCCOS data collection
- Work with state agencies to prepare RFI
- Plan for public comment period



AOA Atlases

Fall 2021

- Atlas publications for Southern California and Gulf of Mexico
- Stakeholder engagement
- Communications and outreach



- Atlases provide the most comprehensive marine spatial analyses ever developed for any U.S. ocean space.
- Each Atlas utilized spatial modeling with over 200 data layers that characterize ocean neighborhoods and identified approximately 10 areas, or “options” in each region.
- The aquaculture suitability models, worked to identify the areas that have the least conflict with the other ocean uses.
- Reviewed by NMFS Center for Independent Experts

AOA NEPA PEIS

- Goal: Facilitate permitting efficiency through upfront environmental review
- Regionally led, HQ coordinated
- PEIS areas based on sources including:
 - Atlas
 - Protected Resources, Sustainable Fisheries, and Habitat Conservation coordination
 - Public input
- Use the best available science and public input to evaluate the beneficial and adverse impacts of siting aquaculture in a given area



Next Steps: Round 1

- NCCOS publish Atlases for southern California and Gulf of Mexico
- NOAA Fisheries publish Notices of Intent (NOI) to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) and begin public comment period



Regional Coordination with Councils

Specific points of Regional Office & NCCOS coordination with Councils:

- When NCCOS is gathering data for spatial analysis
- During public comment for Request for Information (RFI)
- When NCCOS Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas is published
- When Notice of Intent to prepare PEIS publishes with preliminary alternatives
- When draft PEIS publishes for public comment
- When final PEIS publishes to present selected alternative(s)



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National Coordination with Councils or CCC

- National coordination on general process or future AOA's
- HQ or NCCOS updates at CCC meetings
- Presentations to Councils as requested, by regional office or HQ



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