



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Office of Aquaculture



Share your thoughts at one of three virtual public meetings:

Wednesday, June 8, 2022, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. CDT/7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. EDT

Follow this webinar link to view the meeting presentation:

<https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=PWXW2739185&p=9612327&t=c>

To listen and provide comments, dial 800-857-5095 and use participant passcode: 9612327

Thursday, June 16, 2022, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. CDT/6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. EDT

Follow this webinar link to view the meeting presentation:

<https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=PWXW2739198&p=9612327&t=c>

To listen and provide comments, dial 800-857-5095 and use participant passcode: 9612327

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. CDT/7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. EDT

Follow this webinar link to view the meeting presentation:

<https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=PWXW2739199&p=9612327&t=c>

To listen and provide comments, dial 800-857-5095 and use participant passcode: 9612327

For more information on these meetings and submitting comments, visit



Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (Gulf of Mexico)



Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

What is Happening

Aquaculture is an increasingly important source of safe, nutritious, and sustainable seafood for consumers. Seafood farming, when done responsibly, is recognized as one of the most environmentally sustainable ways to produce food and protein.

One way NOAA Fisheries is helping to support domestic aquaculture in the United States is by using a combination of best available science and stakeholder input to identify [Aquaculture Opportunity Areas](#) (AOAs) in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

NOAA Fisheries is conducting public scoping for a programmatic environmental impact statement to consider identifying one or more AOAs in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The programmatic environmental impact statement will evaluate the impacts and benefits associated with siting aquaculture in those locations, which could occur through future proposals and project level review. Public scoping is an opportunity for the public to provide input on the range of issues to be addressed in the programmatic environmental impact statement. This is a planning effort and no specific aquaculture-related activities or individual aquaculture projects are being proposed at this time.

How to Get Involved

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment from **Wednesday, June 1, 2022 through Monday, August 1, 2022** to inform the scope of the programmatic environmental impact statement. [Here too](#) is more on *How to Get Involved* in the process.

Submit comments electronically by going to: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and entering "NOAA-NMFS-2022-0044" in the search box. Click on the "Comment" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. Enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous.

Submit comments by mail to Andrew Richard, Regional Aquaculture Coordinator, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Please include "Gulf AOA PEIS" on the envelope.

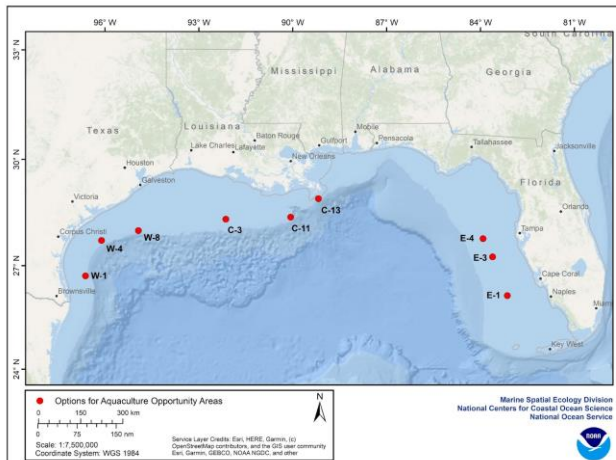
There will be another opportunity for public comment when NOAA Fisheries publishes the draft programmatic environmental impact statement.

Preliminary Options for AOA Locations

Published in November 2021



An Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas for the U.S. Gulf of Mexico (see QR code or visit <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/33304>) identifies nine potential options for AOA locations in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. These nine locations may be considered in the draft programmatic environmental impact statement, along with a “no action” alternative.



Map of nine AOA options from the Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas for the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, each shown as a red dot: three off the coast of Texas, three off the coast of Louisiana and three off the west coast of Florida. To see each of these locations in greater detail, (see QR code)

Public Scoping Information Needs

During public scoping, NOAA Fisheries is interested in data, comments, views, information, analyses, alternatives, or suggestions on:

- Scope of NEPA analysis and range of alternatives
- Type of aquaculture (e.g., finfish, shellfish, seaweed, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture) to be considered
- Ecologically, economically and socially suitable species and gear for aquaculture to be considered
- Monitoring and reporting requirements for owners and operators of aquaculture facilities that could mitigate impacts
- Potential adverse, beneficial, neutral and/or cumulative impacts to biological, physical and ecological resources
- Potential adverse, beneficial, neutral and/or cumulative impacts to the social, economic, and cultural environment
- Promotion of environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion when considering alternative AOA locations
- Underserved communities and underrepresented groups that could either benefit from or be adversely impacted by the siting of AOAs in the Gulf of Mexico
- The impact of climate change and/or changing environmental conditions on siting and other aspects of aquaculture
- Current or planned activities in or near the nine AOA options

