

## **NOAA:** Coastal ocean aquaculture can be environmentally sustainable

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This shows net pen aquaculture in deep coastal waters. Credit: NOAA

Specific types of fish farming can be accomplished with minimal or no harm to the coastal ocean environment as long as proper planning and safeguards are in place, according to a new report from researchers at NOAA's National Ocean Service.

The study, led by scientists at National Ocean Service's National Centers



for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), evaluated the environmental effects of finfish <u>aquaculture</u>, including interactions with water quality, benthic habitats, and marine life across various farming practices and habitat types.

"We did this study because of concerns that putting marine finfish farms in the coastal ocean could have adverse effects on the environment," said Dr. James Morris, NCCOS ecologist. "We found that, in cases where farms are appropriately sited and responsibly managed, impacts to the environment are minimal to non-existent."

"This report provides coastal and farm managers with a global perspective on a range of potential environmental effects and their relative intensity," said Dr. Michael Rubino, director of NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture. "It is a tool that can be used when evaluating proposed or operational farming sites and gives them a factual basis to make decisions."

In the report, scientists said that continued development of regional bestmanagement practices and standardized protocols for environmental monitoring are key needs for aquaculture managers. As aquaculture development increases in the coastal ocean, the ability to forecast immediate or long-term environmental concerns will provide confidence to coastal managers and the public.

"This <u>report</u> contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting marine aquaculture as a sustainable source of safe, healthy and local seafood that supports jobs in coastal communities," said Sam Rauch, acting assistant NOAA administrator for NOAA Fisheries.

Provided by NOAA Headquarters



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