

AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES IN THE GULF REGION

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

76th Annual Meeting

October 27-30, 2025



GULF AQUACULTURE PILOTS 2016-2019

In 2016, the Gulf Commission began a cooperative effort with NOAA's Office of Aquaculture to develop and manage a small grants program to develop aquaculture in the region.



GULF OYSTER CONSORTIUM 2019-2025

In 2018, NOAA changed the program support to a multiyear approach for oyster research moving forward and provided \$840,000 for the first year.

The SALT (Selection of Aquaculture Lines with improved Traits) Consortium focuses research on genetics, disease, environmental interactions, regulatory challenges and, economic modeling as well as classifying and preserving natural genetic variation in oysters.

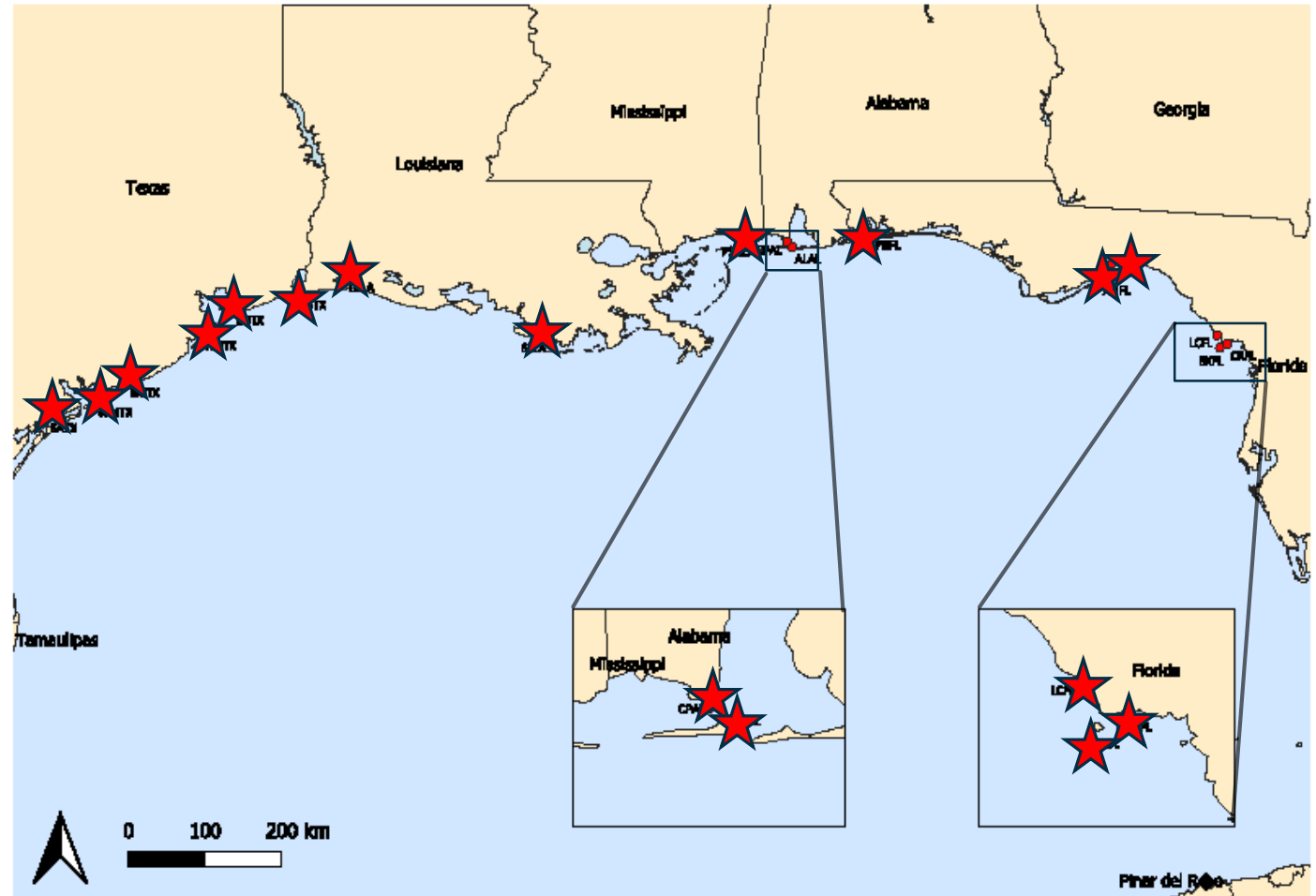


GULF OYSTER CONSORTIUM

2019-2025

The Consortium includes the University of Southern Mississippi's TCMAC, the Auburn Shellfish Lab, the University of Florida's Shellfish Laboratory, Louisiana State University/LA Sea Grant, and Texas A&M at Corpus Christi.

To date, the Consortium has received \$5.17M and is in YR5.



INTEGRATED MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE (IMTA) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

In 2022, NOAA Office of Aquaculture providing funding for a project to work on multi-species aquaculture in state waters.

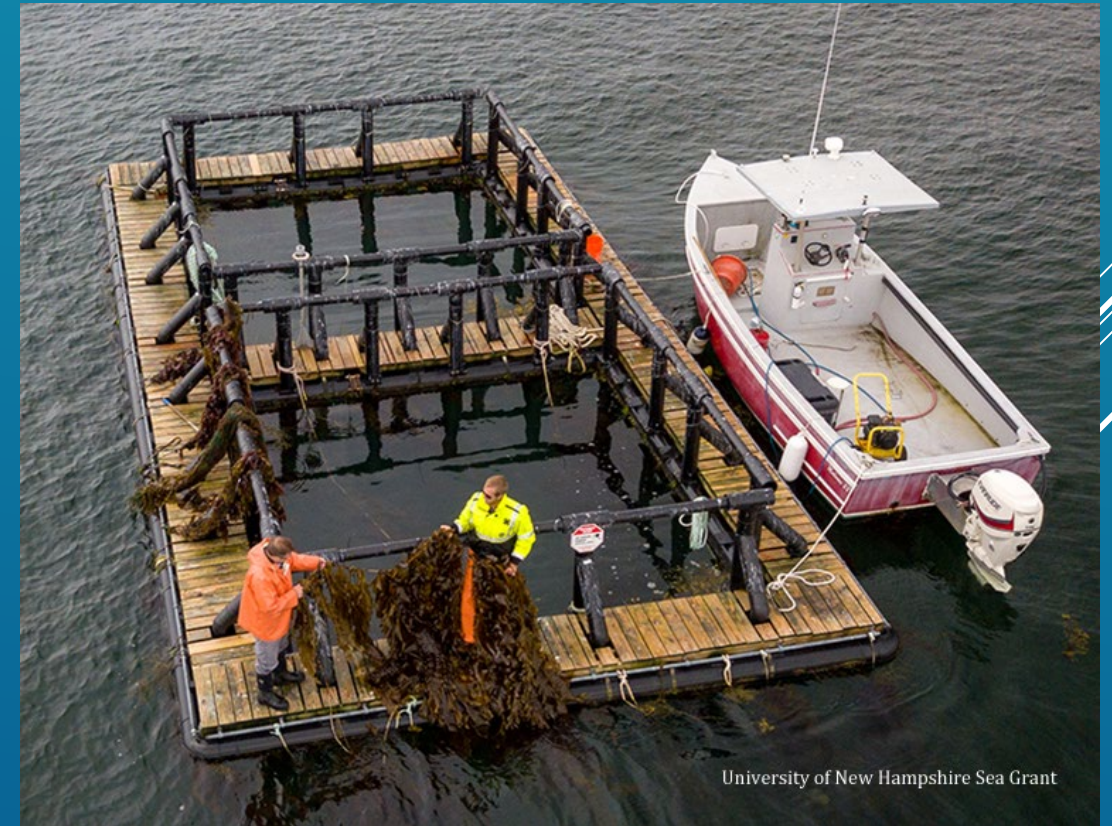
This project was intended to traverse the permit process for finfish aquaculture and test the Aquafort technology in the Gulf.



INTEGRATED MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE (IMTA) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The project is led by the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, in collaboration with USM, MS/AL Sea Grant, and the University of New Hampshire, began working on the project to grow multiple species together in a single, offshore floating cage system.

The Aquafort is a small, two pen system that floats in relatively shallow, near-shore areas, is easily accessible from shore and provides both production and education to fishermen and the public.



University of New Hampshire Sea Grant

INTEGRATED MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE (IMTA) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

While the project began in 2022, it has taken until August 2025 to be fully permitted. Gear will be in the water in November and animals introduced in December.

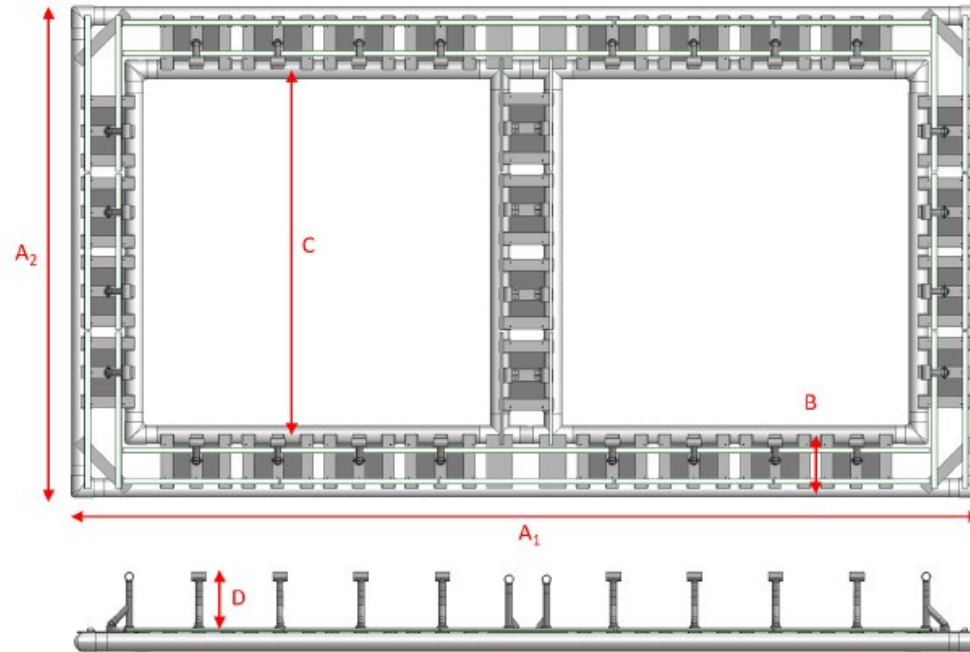
The Aquafort site is two miles off the beach south of Fort Morgan, Alabama.



INTEGRATED MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE (IMTA) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The structure includes two 20X20ft nets that extend down 15ft.

Four sea anchors and moorings extend roughly 250ft from all four corners.



- A. Overall Dims = 52.4 x 28.2 ft. [15.97 m x 8.60 m]
- B. Inner to Outer Pipe Spacing (C – C) = 36.75 in [0.9335 m]
- C. Bay Pipe Width (C – C) = 21.06 ft [6.42 m]
- D. Railing Height from Billet = 39.4 in [1.0 m]

INTEGRATED MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE (IMTA) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The structure was received at Dauphin Island along with the copper net last week.

Assembly is underway and is expected to be towed to the site in November.

Animals will be introduced in December.

Harvest will be just prior to hurricane season and the Aquafort will be towed back to DISL.

It will be redeployed in November.



INTEGRATED MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE (IMTA) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Outreach has begun and the recruiting of fishermen to work on the project is underway.

Several short videos are being developed for use by the Alabama and Mississippi Aquariums.

The PIs expect to have three years of winter deployment and are already looking at future funding to keep the demonstration project going after the NOAA support ends.



The Gulf Commission has enjoyed working with all our grant recipients and the NOAA Office and Aquaculture over the last nine years. We look forward to continued coordination of the oyster work in the region as well as expansion of these potential fishery-related industries in our region in the future.

QUESTIONS?

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