
Efforts to Develop a Responsible Offshore Aquaculture Industry
in the Gulf of Mexico:

A Compendium of Offshore Aquaculture Consortium Research

Edited by
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EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A RESPONSIBLE OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY IN THE GULF OF MEXICO: A COMPENDIUM OF OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE CONSORTIUM RESEARCH

Preface

"...to develop socially and environmentally acceptable offshore aquaculture models that are appropriate to all stakeholders in the Gulf of Mexico region." - OAC Goal from <http://www.masgc.org/oac/>

The contents of this book describe the collective journey of researchers involved with the Offshore Aquaculture Consortium (OAC) to determine the feasibility of offshore aquaculture in U.S. federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico. This initiative began in January 2000 and culminates with the production of this volume. Over its four-year life, the OAC received three awards from the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program's National Marine Aquaculture Initiative, totaling ~ U.S. \$880,000. The initial OAC proposal was a collaborative effort between six Principal Investigators and was valued at less than U.S. \$150,000. This initial proposal allowed a permitting review to conduct offshore aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico and the purchase/deployment of an Ocean Spar Sea Station cage. A second grant was awarded to conduct further regulatory research related to marine aquaculture zoning solutions for offshore aquaculture. Finally, our third grant was awarded over a two-year period to conduct engineering, genetic, environmental, economic, fish health management, and outreach research. This final grant equaled the balance of our total research funds at ~ U.S. \$650,000. This volume represents our final technical report to the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program and encompasses all research activities conducted by the OAC.

The challenge for the future will be to develop a sustainable—economic, social, and environmental—aquaculture industry that will be present for generations to come. As we progress and expand into this millenium, the global population must keep the principles of sustainability forefront in the development of aquaculture production systems. Throughout this book, I hope that we fully demonstrate to readers the breadth of research conducted by the OAC "to develop socially and environmentally acceptable offshore aquaculture models that are appropriate to all stakeholders in the Gulf of Mexico region."

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