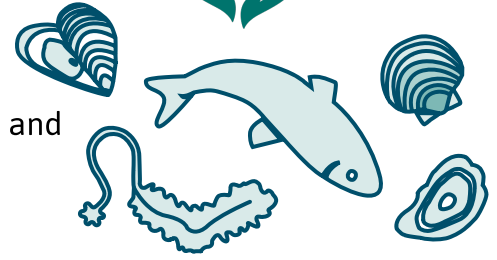


# Maine Aquaculture 101



## What is being farmed in Maine?

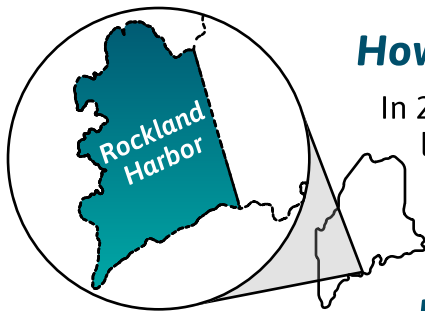
The most commonly cultivated species in Maine aquaculture include eastern oysters, blue mussels, kelp/other sea vegetables, sea scallops, and Atlantic salmon. A few operations have been experimenting with hard clams and sea urchins.



## Types of commercial aquaculture leases in Maine:

Marine aquaculture leases in Maine are issued and regulated by the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR).

Lease Type	Duration	Can Renew?	Size Limit	Application Requirements
Limited Purpose Aquaculture (LPA)	1 year	Yes	max. 400ft <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>requires signature from a harbormaster or municipal official</li><li>each person may hold up to 4</li><li>designed to help farmers get into aquaculture</li></ul>
Experimental Lease	3 years	No	max. 4 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>scoping session is at DMR's discretion.</li><li>public hearing must be held if 5(+) people request a hearing</li><li>applications must meet lease decision criteria (see below)</li></ul>
Standard Lease	up to 20 years	Yes	max. 100 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>each person may hold up to 10</li><li>applicants must notify landowners within 1,000 feet of the proposed site, meet with municipal officials, and host a public scoping session &amp; public hearing adjudicated by DMR</li></ul>



## How big is aquaculture in Maine?

In 2023, less than .04% of state waters in Maine were occupied by aquaculture leases (1,626 out of 3.5 million total acres of state waters). To put that into context, all of Maine's existing aquaculture leases put side by side could fit inside of the Rockland breakwater with room to spare.

## Maine Aquaculture by the Numbers

**700+**

year-round employees across 200 farms

**99%**

of Maine sea farms are family owned

**2%**

average growth rate over last 20 years

**\$85-\$110**

million a year in sales

**1 in 6**

Maine sea farmers also holds a commercial lobstering license

Maine aquaculture produces among the lowest carbon footprint of any animal protein

**25**

diverse species of finfish, shellfish, and sea vegetables are farmed in Maine

## What criteria are used by DMR in issuing an aquaculture lease decision?

In evaluating the proposed lease, the commissioner shall consider the **number and density of existing aquaculture leases** in an area and may grant the lease if the proposed lease meets the following conditions as defined by rule:

- **The lease will not unreasonably interfere with:**
  - **the ingress and egress of riparian owners**
  - **navigation**
  - **fishing or other uses of the area**
  - **significant wildlife habitat and marine habitat**
  - **public use or enjoyment within 1,000 feet** of a beach, park or docking facility owned by the Federal Government, the State Government or a municipal governmental agency or certain conserved lands
- The applicant has demonstrated that **there is an available source of organisms to be cultured for the lease site**
- For standard leases:
  - The lease will **not result in unreasonable impact from noise or light at the boundaries of the lease site**
  - The lease **must be in compliance with visual impact criteria** adopted by the commissioner relating to color, height, shape, and mass

## How can towns engage with aquaculture in Maine?

These laws offer municipalities additional opportunities to provide feedback, granting them **elevated status above and beyond other stakeholders**. Each type of aquaculture lease or license provides an opportunity for municipal review and input.

### a) Pre-Application Meeting:

Before an applicant can submit a draft standard lease application, they must hold a pre-application meeting with the DMR and municipality to present their proposed plan and receive feedback.

### b) Scoping Session

A scoping session is an opportunity for the applicant to present their proposal to the public and other stakeholders, including the municipality, prior to submitting a final application. Notice of a scoping session is provided to the municipality.

### c) Harbormaster Questionnaire

The Harbormaster Questionnaire (HMQ) requests local information about how the proposed site may affect navigation, fishing, and other considerations related to the lease decision criteria. The HMQ is included in a notice of the completed application that is sent to the municipality.

### d) Intervenor Status

For leases which require a public hearing, the hearing notice will be provided to the municipality, which includes information on the opportunity to intervene or to provide testimony. A municipality is granted intervenor status upon written request.

### e) Public Hearing

At a public hearing, municipal officials, members of the public, and other stakeholders who register to participate in the proceeding are given the opportunity to present testimony and evidence about the proposed lease site.

