

INTRODUCTION

Aquaculture can be defined as the cultivation of aquatic organisms using artificial reproduction methods and husbandry techniques. The main forms of aquaculture dealt with in this report are finfish and mollusc aquaculture. In finfish aquaculture, juvenile fish are reared from eggs in hatcheries and grown to maturity in land-based tanks or net-cages immersed in water. Mollusc aquaculture includes the production of oysters and mussels by suspending seedstock in the water column from longlines or setting it on underwater leases. (Illustrations of these aquaculture techniques are provided on the following pages) The many other forms of aquaculture include the production of marine plants and lobster holding techniques, both of which are carried out in Canada. It is not the intention of this report to review every type of aquaculture activity carried out in Canada or abroad; it is rather to present an overview of the current status of the Canadian industry and provide guidance for its future development including its extension to other species.

The Committee on Fisheries and Oceans supports aquaculture development in Canada because of the significant benefits this growing industry can provide. It can contribute to the economic development of rural areas, to the creation of jobs and wealth through Canadian and foreign investment, to R&D activities and spin-offs in related service and export industries not the least of which is the traditional fishing industry.

To obtain these benefits, however, aquaculture has a number of requirements, such as private sector financing, public sector support and the infrastructure development. Also required is the elimination of a number of constraints such as lack of clearly defined federal and provincial responsibilities and conflict between the aquaculture industry and other resource user groups.

This Report highlights the opportunities and problems, constraints and requirements of Canadian aquaculture development. Its major objective is to bring forth recommendations to facilitate the rational development of the Canadian aquaculture industry in context of the total Canadian fish production system.