

Shrimp farming is considered especially promising. The government has been promoting a method which consists of capturing live larvae and hatching and raising the shrimp in captivity. Foreign investment has played a large role in the expansion of this subsector.

Recent investments have created a small but growing industrial aquaculture sector based on ocean resources. Abalone, oysters, crab, squid and shrimp are growing in importance, notwithstanding the Gulf Coast cholera epidemic in 1991 to 1992 which severely cut oyster production. About 29 percent of all aquaculture production now consists of oysters and shrimp. The government hopes to develop more saltwater aquaculture projects, including inland salt-water ponds as well as offshore cage technologies, sometimes known as "mariculture." Technology for this approach has been tested in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Alabama state, but not, so far, in Mexico.

Mexico's Fisheries Secretariat is now part of the *Secretaría del Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca (Semarnap)*, Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries. With the mariculture objective in mind, the Fisheries Secretariat launched a major development program called the *Desarrollo de Acuacultura en México (DAM)*, Mexico Aquaculture Project, in 1994. It is supported by US \$300 million in World Bank funding, US \$150 million from the Government of Mexico, and another US \$50 million from private companies. Activities include sponsoring private research projects designed to develop aquaculture technologies and management of coastal resources in seven states. They include Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Baja California Sur, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Oaxaca and Chiapas.

Four types of aquaculture are being developed under separate programs:

- *Commercial aquaculture projects* are those with substantial export potential for high-value products. This includes shrimp, oyster and abalone in coastal areas and trout in freshwater operations. The government has created 9 aquaculture parks, similar to industrial parks, that provide infrastructure and other supports to commercial operations.
- *Rural aquaculture projects* are those designed to provide income and nutrition in the poorer regions of the country. The project is providing technical and financial assistance, including matching communities with investors.
- *Repopulation projects* are designed to repair the damage done by overfishing and environmental degradation. Depleted species will be replenished by stocking and environmental improvements. These efforts aim to improve the viability of certain fisheries, especially those which native populations depend upon.
- *Species management projects* are designed to protect endangered species for environmental rather than commercial reasons. An example includes a project to save the sea tortoise from extinction. Turtle eggs will be collected on the beaches of Tamaulipas, incubated and raised for up to one year, and then returned to the ocean.