



# AAC Recommendations for the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

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The Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) welcomes the European Commission's Biodiversity strategy for bringing nature back into our lives (COM [2020], 380 final). The AAC has discussed the strategy, and the following recommendations summarise the AAC's position:

1. All initiatives should attain their objectives in the most effective and least burdensome way for farmers, who function mainly as SMEs and microenterprises.
2. Nature should be balanced with human needs.
3. The impacts of aquaculture both within and outside the EU should be monitored and compared; the AAC proposes a strategy to avoid 'exporting' biodiversity loss to countries outside the EU.
4. The gap between the consumption and the production of sustainable seafood in the EU must be closed; EU aquaculture production needs to be developed.<sup>1</sup>
5. Farmers must have access to land and water areas for growth in aquaculture, and any expansion must meet sustainability criteria, including the criteria for biodiversity. At the same time, any land and sea protection targets should be flexible enough to allow implementation, taking into account each country's precise conditions and opportunities and the rights of farmers, fishers, landowners and users.
6. The expansion of sustainable marine aquaculture (e.g. extractive aquaculture) could help alleviate land constraints relative to other animal-based foods and their associated emissions from land-use change.<sup>2</sup>
7. It is important to make use of the positive impacts of unfed aquaculture on biodiversity.
8. Biodiversity indicators should be included in existing aquaculture certification schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> Compassion in World Farming, Vissenbescherming and Eurogroup for Animals support sustainable aquaculture development—not growth.

<sup>2</sup> World Resources Institute (2019), *Creating a sustainable food future*, p. 297.

9. In order to reduce pressure on marine and terrestrial resources, fostering alternative feed materials —such as micro-organisms (e.g. algae) and by-products of the bioeconomy (e.g. trimmings)—is desirable.
10. Marine raw materials used in aquafeeds for aquaculture products consumed in Europe should be expected to meet standards based on responsible resource management; this should also apply to imported aquaculture products.
11. Administrative procedures on aquaculture activities carried out in Natura 2000 areas should be simplified whilst maintaining sustainability requirements; the guidance on 'Aquaculture and Natura 2000' should be updated; aquaculture habitats should be included in the European Nature Information System (EUNIS).
12. Greater animal welfare should be ensured throughout the life cycle, including breeding, rearing, transport and slaughter; initiatives to do so should be supported.
13. The ecosystem services that some types of pond fish and shellfish farming provide whilst minimising resource inputs, pollution and carbon emissions must be recognised and valorised.
14. Man-made wetland habitats created by pond aquaculture must be recognised as an important way of ensuring and improving biodiversity, as must the fact that decommissioning this type of fish farming has a negative impact on biodiversity; more consistent support for pond aquaculture is required.



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