

USC SEA GRANT IN AQUACULTURE



Scan here to learn more about the South Central LA Sustainable Seafood Hub



The University of Southern California (USC) Sea Grant, one of 34 programs within the National Sea Grant Network, is actively invested in supporting aquaculture to help support and maintain sustainable and safe local seafood across the Greater Los Angeles region. Read below to learn about one of our current initiatives in aquaculture.

Pilot Project: Improving equitable access to locally farmed seafood through the South Central Los Angeles Sustainable Seafood Hub

THE PROBLEM

Most Americans do not eat enough seafood to receive health benefits. The greatest deficits are among low-income and food-insecure communities. Few assessments of seafood preferences and barriers for low-income/food insecure consumers exist. There is a critical need to identify community-relevant opportunities to improve public health through expanded education and access to seafood and to determine the role of local marine aquaculture industries in supporting these efforts.



THE SOLUTION

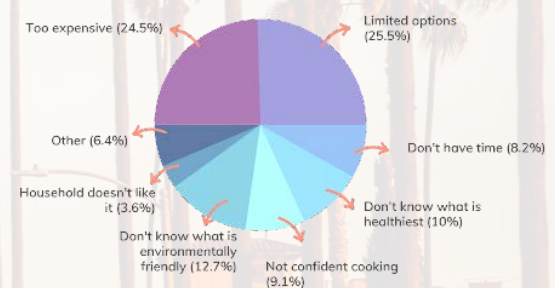
USC Sea Grant joined the Southern California-based aquaculture producers Holdfast Aquaculture and Santa Barbara Mariculture, along with the community organization Community Services Unlimited, to develop "The South Central LA Sustainable Seafood Hub". This Hub aims to ensure equitable access to mussels, an incredibly nutritious and sustainable source of protein. A pilot of the Hub was launched in 2020 to create space for trusted community-based intermediaries to deliver sustainable seafood directly to residents of South Central Los Angeles, a neighborhood impacted by systemic barriers that perpetuate high rates of food insecurity, poverty, and disease risk.



THE OUTCOMES

Through this pilot project, the partners conducted an exploratory community seafood survey to inform efforts, understand what seafood is currently being consumed, and understand community-identified obstacles to seafood consumption (the most common obstacles are shown to the right). The Hub hosted a live-streamed mussel cooking demonstration and DIY mussel shell fertilizer workshop, distributed flyers, and held a live Q&A session. Next steps include expanding engagement with other L.A. based community organizations, sustainable seafood producers, and other parts of the seafood supply chain to expand the Hub model to subsidize costs for low-income consumers and build community trust in local sustainable seafood across Los Angeles.

OBSTACLES TO DESIRED SEAFOOD CONSUMPTION



Most common obstacles Identified by 57 respondents.

This pilot was made possible with support from USC Good Neighbors, Holdfast Aquaculture, and USC Sea Grant.

