

Aquaculture: an Ecologist's Perspective

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It is with relief that I notice an increasing environmental approach in aquaculture. However, the human world population will probably stabilize around 10 billion within the next few decades. This assumes human population growth will follow the logistic growth curve, like every other living organism. Thus, the push toward more ecologically (and economically) viable aquaculture cannot come soon enough or forceful enough. To preserve many of our beautiful natural ecosystems and their organism, we need to scale back humans' impacts. New aquaculture research into eliminating fish meal from feeds, the use of recirculating systems and polycultures are steps in the right direction. We need to tirelessly search for new products, like algae and cottonseed

meals, which can replace fish meal without sacrificing on food conversion rates of aquaculture populations. Investigate tirelessly how to tightly recycle water and nutrients with minimal waste production and create innovative integrated systems, involving microbes, plants, and animals. Conduct tireless inquiries into what polyculture species combinations are most productive and able to fill all available ecological benthic and pelagic niches within the artificial aquaculture system. Perhaps, in developing viable alternatives to how we currently use natural resources, our planet will continue to support *Homo sapiens*. And our innovative approaches might in turn support the recovery of the place we call home, Earth.

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