

Alternative Development Pathways for Seaweed Aquaculture

Barry Antonio Costa-Pierce

Ecological Aquaculture International, LLC
bcp@oceanfoods.org

Professor II (20%)
Faculty of Biosciences & Aquaculture
Nord University
Bodø, Norway
barry.costa-pierce@nord.no



Honorary Doctorate (Doctor Honoris Causa) in Science
Faculty of Science
University of Gothenburg





**Seaweeds as Great Opportunities in Aquaculture's
"New Geographies"**



Some Seaweed Facts and Fantasies



Seaweed Aquaculture and Rural Fishing Livelihoods



**Seaweeds as Great Opportunities in Aquaculture's
"Geographies"**



Some Seaweed Facts and Fantasies



Seaweed Aquaculture and Rural Fishing Livelihoods

Accepted: 10 April 2023

DOI: 10.1111/jwas.12977

EDITORIAL

Journal of the
World Aquaculture Society
Open Access

WORLD
AQUACULTURE
SOCIETY

WILEY

A decadal outlook for global aquaculture

Mair, G.C., Halwart, M., Derun, Y., and B.A. Costa-Pierce (2023). A decadal outlook for global aquaculture. *Journal of the World Aquaculture Society* 54(2): 196-205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jwas.12977>

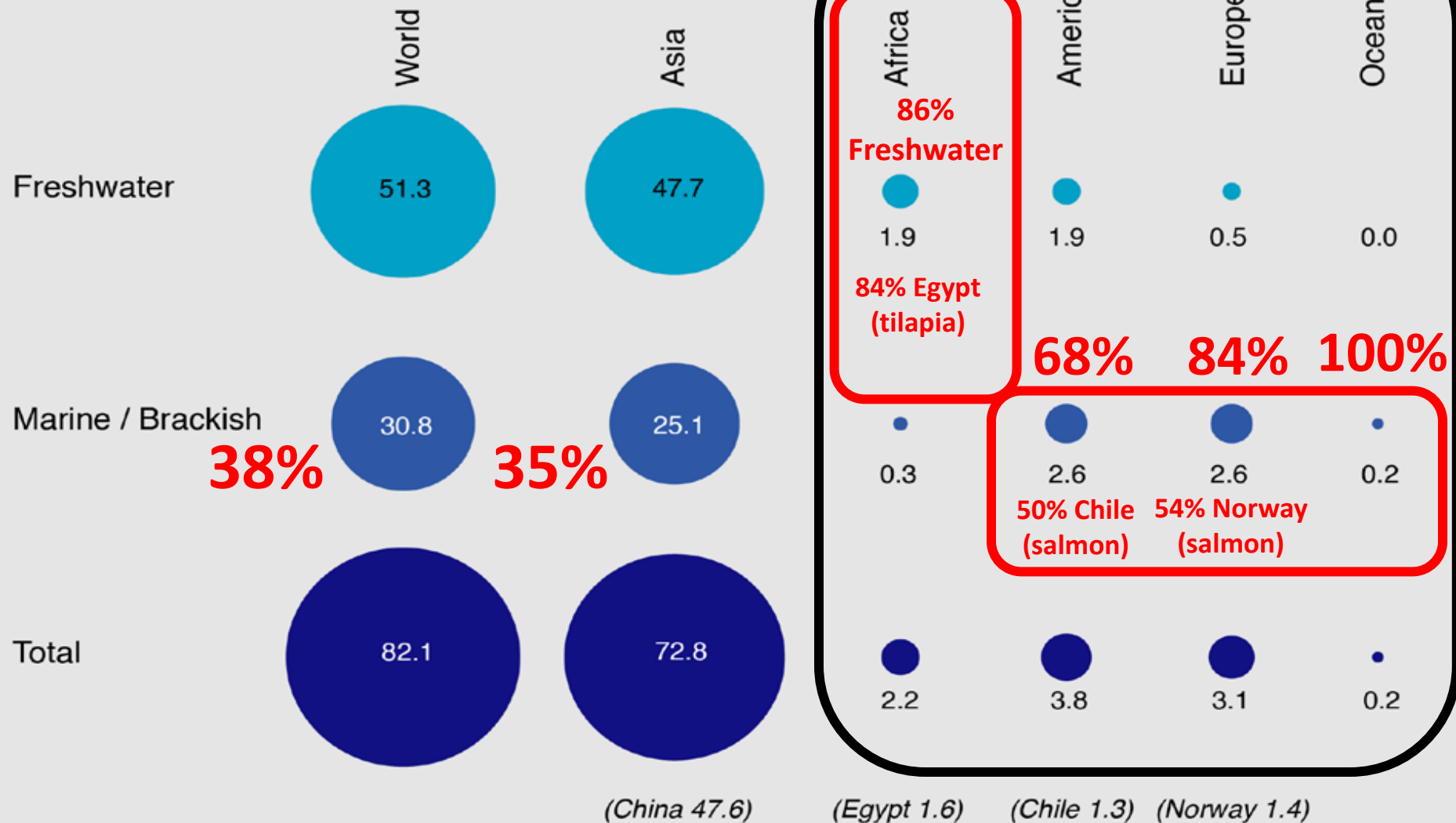
Costa-Pierce, B.A. and T. Chopin (2021). The hype, fantasies and realities of aquaculture development globally and in its new geographies. *World Aquaculture* 52 (2): 23-35.



Aquaculture Production by Regions and the Leading Producers

Numbers in million metric tons (MMT)

The New Geographies for Aquaculture



Inconvenient blue foods facts

- I. Asia dominates in every way...**STILL** 89%
- II. China is the world's leader.... **STILL** 58%
- III. Most is freshwater..... **STILL** 62%

“OLD Geographies”

China	18.5 (57.1)
Indonesia	9.3 (28.8)
Republic of Korea	1.7 (5.3)
Philippines	1.5 (4.6)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.5 (1.7)
Japan	0.4 (1.2)
Malaysia	0.2 (0.5)
China - Taiwan	0.1 (0.2)
Vietnam	0.0 (0.1)
Total Asian seaweed production	32.2 (99.5)
Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania	0.1 (0.3)
Chile	0.0 (0.1)
Other producers in the world	0.1 (0.1)
Total world seaweed production	32.4 (100)

<i>Saccharina japonica</i> (kombu)	11.4
<i>Eucheuma</i> spp.	9.4
Oysters	5.8
<i>Penaeus vannamei</i> (whiteleg shrimp)	5.0
<i>Ruditapes philippinarum</i> (Manila clam)	4.1
<i>Gracilaria</i> spp.	3.4
<i>Porphyra/Pyropia</i> spp. (nori)	2.9
<i>Salmo salar</i> (Atlantic salmon)	2.4
<i>Undaria pinnatifida</i> (wakame)	2.3
Scallops	1.9
<i>Kappaphycus</i> spp.	1.6
Mussels	1.6
<i>Sinovovacula constricta</i> (Chinese razor clam)	0.9
<i>Penaeus monodon</i> (giant tiger prawn)	0.8
<i>Anadara granosa</i> (blood cockle)	0.4
<i>Sargassum</i> spp.	0.3
<i>Apostichopus japonicus</i> (Japanese sea cucumber)	0.2

Numbers are in million metric tons live weight (FAO 2020); brown seaweeds in brown font, red seaweeds in red font.





New Geographies – North America and Europe

>90% of the seaweeds harvested annually from
North America and Europe
are from

SEAWEED FISHERIES, not aquaculture

Several white diagonal lines of varying lengths and thicknesses are positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, creating a modern, abstract graphic element.

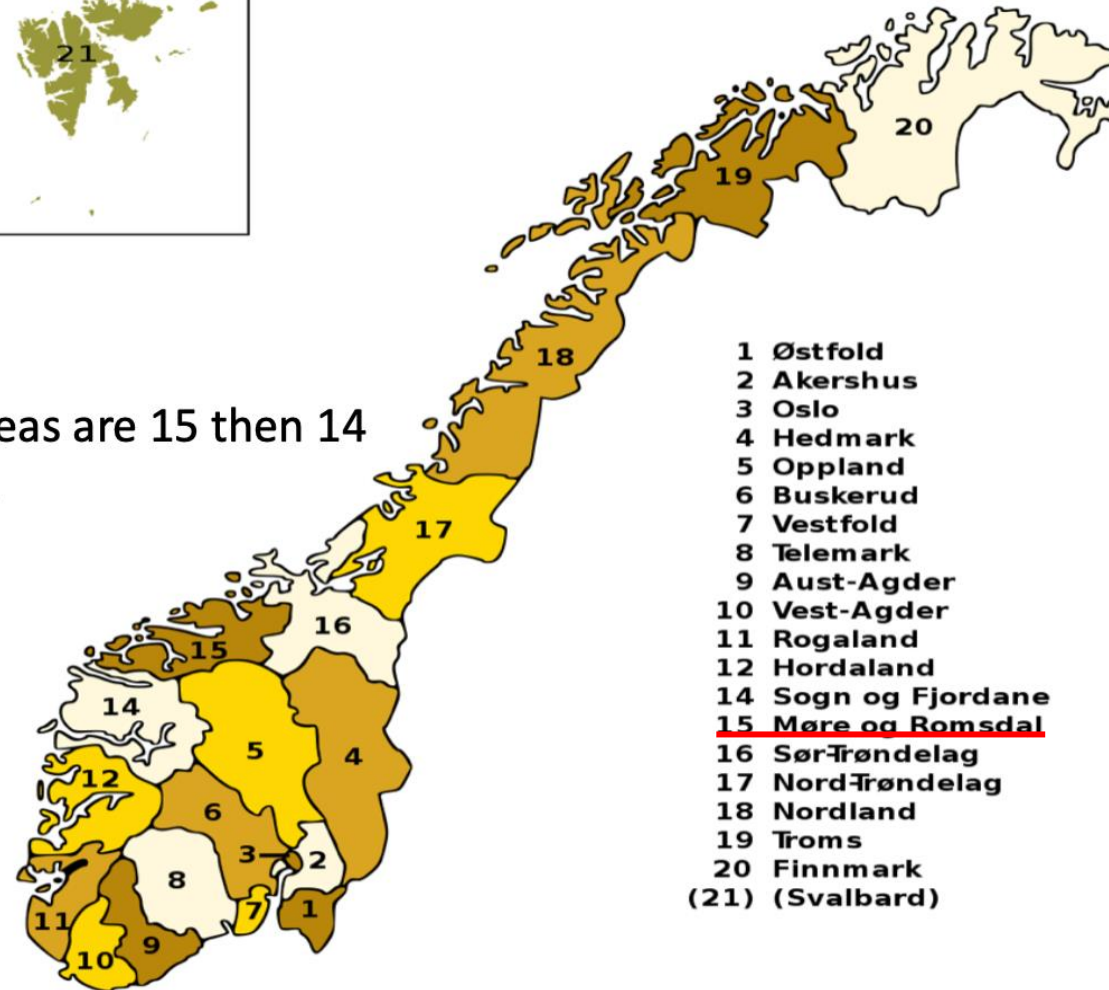
“New Geographies”

China	18.5 (57.1)
Indonesia	9.3 (28.8)
Republic of Korea	1.7 (5.3)
Philippines	1.5 (4.6)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.5 (1.7)
Japan	0.4 (1.2)
Malaysia	0.2 (0.5)
China - Taiwan	0.1 (0.2)
Vietnam	0.0 (0.1)
Total Asian seaweed production	32.2 (99.5)
Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania	0.1 (0.3)
Chile	0.0 (0.1)
Other producers in the world	0.1 (0.1)
Total world seaweed production	32.4 (100)

LH Harvesting areas in Norway



Main harvest areas are 15 then 14
then 16 then 11



from Marine Biopolymers proposal to Iceland (2020)

Total laminaria hyperborea harvesting Norway

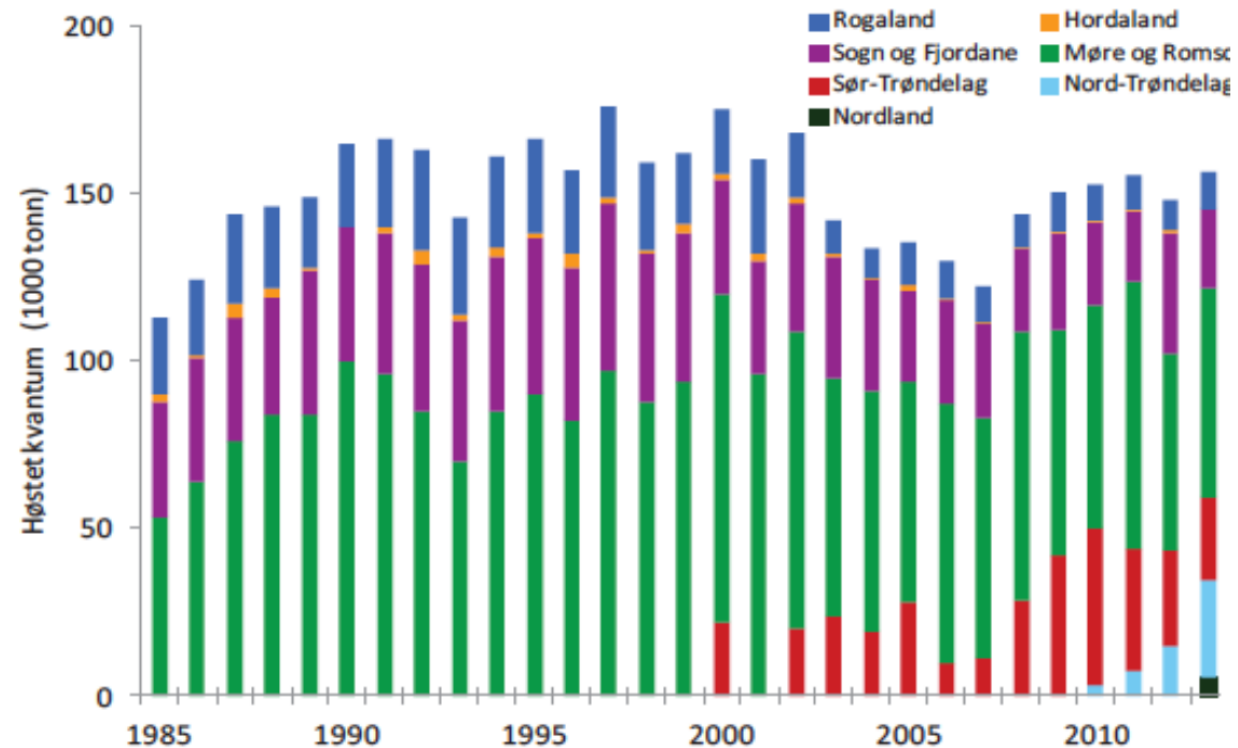


Figure 1. County quantity harvested (in thousand tonnes) of kelp (Laminaria hyperborea) in the period 1985-2013.





Thorverk Ltd. Reykhólar, Iceland

Breidafjörður fjord - harvest wild *Ascophyllum nodosum* (rockweed) and *Laminaria digitata* (oar kelp).

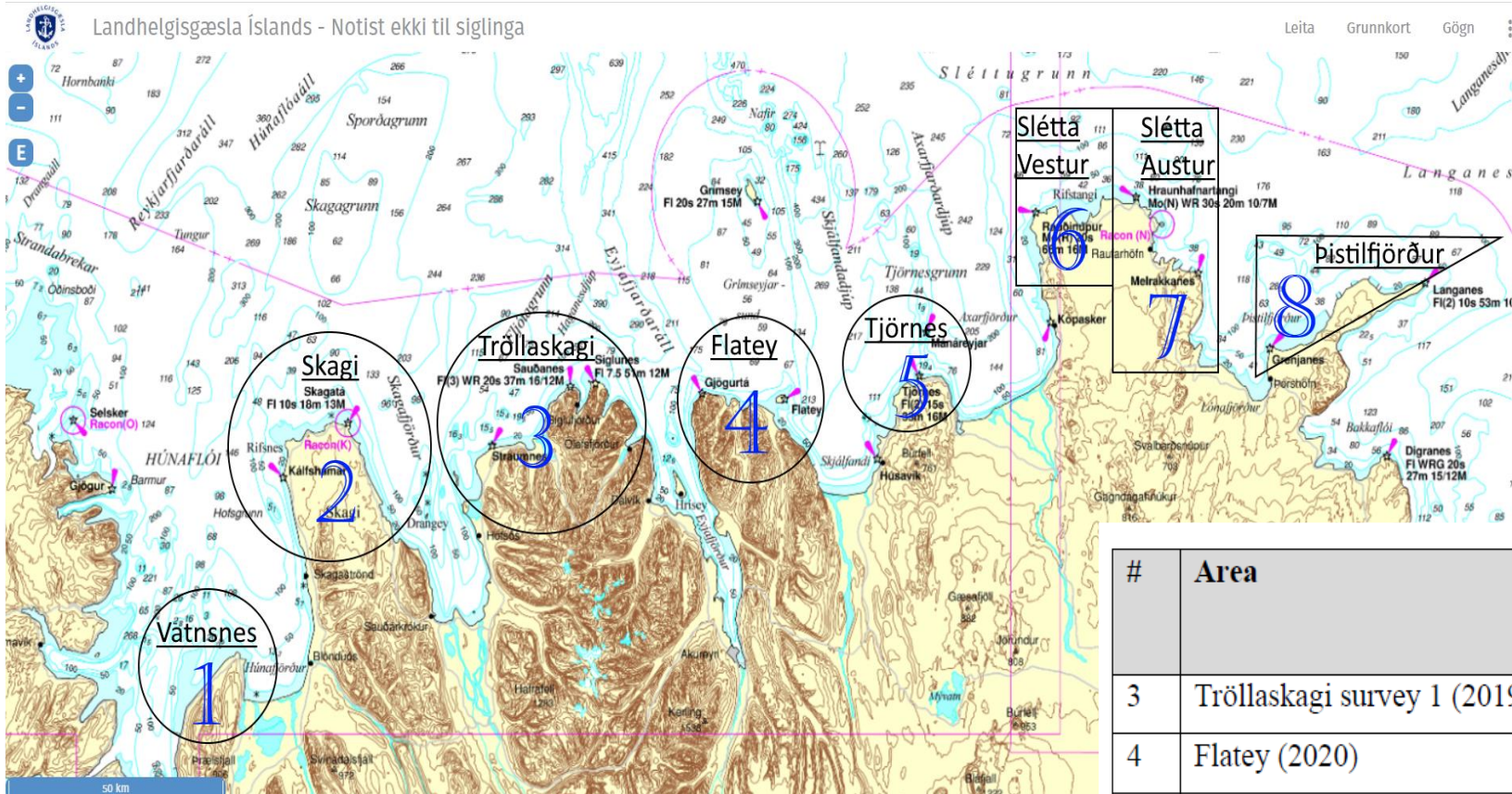
95% of Thorverk's products are exported (dried seaweed meal)

Most of Reykhólar's ~120 people are employed by the seaweed factory



Institute Marine Research

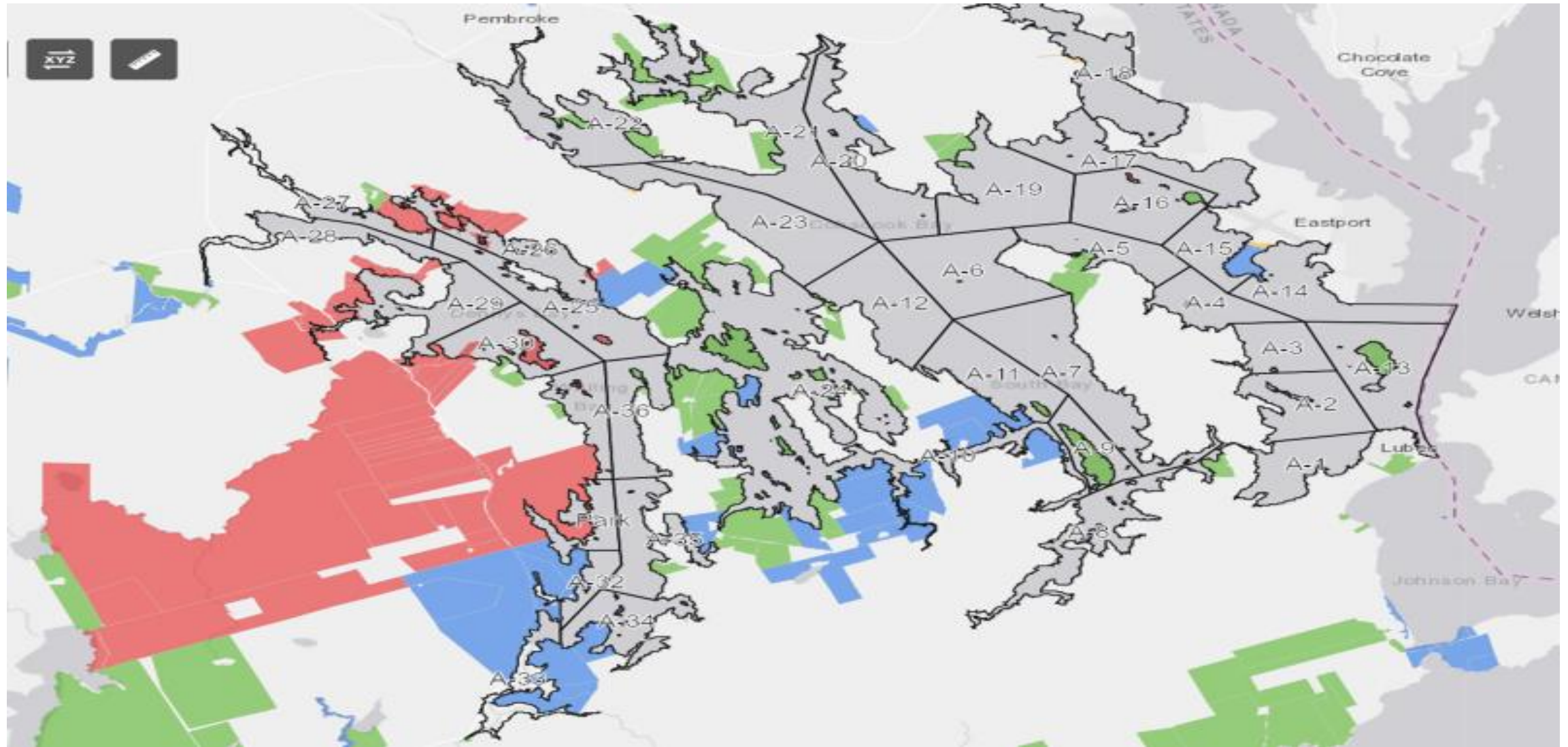




#	Area	Estimated Biomass (MT)	Surveyed Biomass to Date (MT)
3	Tröllaskagi survey 1 (2019)	125,000	125,000
4	Flatey (2020)	287,000*	191,800
5	Tjörnes (2020)	111,000	109,500
6/7	Sletta Vest/Astur (2021)	550,000	**
8	Pistilfjordour/Langanes West (2021)	389,000	**
3	Tröllaskagi survey 2 (2021)	165,000	**
2	Skagi (2021)	173,000	**
1	Vatnsnes (2021)	400,000	**
	TOTAL	2,200,000	



Seaweed Fisheries in North America...



Seaweed Fisheries in North America...





**Seaweeds as Great Opportunities in Aquaculture's
"Geographies"**



Some Seaweed Facts and **Fantasies**



Seaweed Aquaculture and Rural Fishing Livelihoods



Fantasy – Quick Fix for Climate?

Carbon - "Sequestration"

Methane - Cattle Burbs and Farts



BLUE WASHING?



dreamstime.com

Krause-Jensen, D. & Duarte, C. (2016)
Substantial role of macroalgae in marine carbon
sequestration. *Nature Geoscience* 9

Krause-Jensen, D. et al. (2018).
Sequestration of macroalgal carbon: the
elephant in the Blue Carbon room. *Biol. Lett.*
14: 20180236.



Costa-Pierce, B.A. and T. Chopin. 2021. The hype, fantasies and realities of aquaculture development globally and in its new geographies. *World Aquaculture* 52 (2): 23-35.

Gallagher, J.B. et al. (2021). Missing the forest for the trees: Do seaweed ecosystems mitigate atmospheric CO₂ emissions? bioRxiv doi: 10.1101/2021.09.05.459038

Troell et al. (2022). Farming the Ocean – Seaweeds as a Quick Fix for the Climate? *Reviews in Fisheries Science & Aquaculture* doi: 10.1080/23308249.2022.2048792

Chopin et al. (2024). Deep-ocean seaweed dumping for carbon sequestration: Questionable, risky, and not the best use of valuable biomass. *One Earth* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2024.01.013>

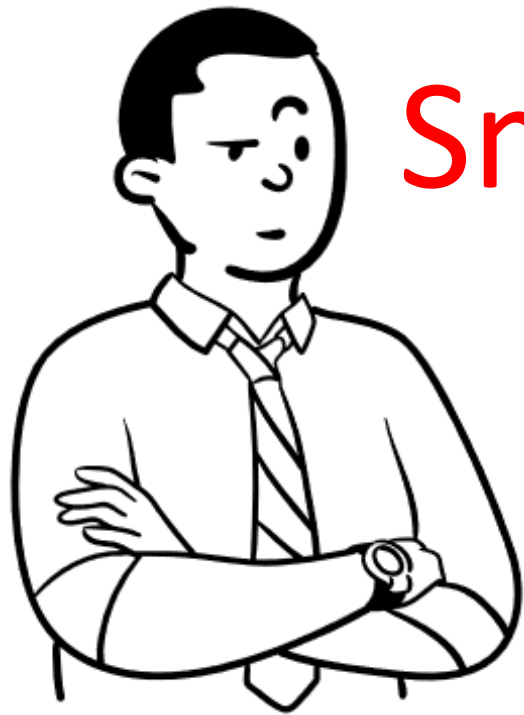




TABLE 1. Extrapolated ecosystem services from 500 million tons (dry weight) of seaweeds.

Ocean area required	500,000 km ²	Based on average annual yield of 1,000 dry tons/km ² under current best practice. Equals 0.03% of the ocean surface area.
Protein for people and animals	50,000,000 tons	Assumes average protein content of 10% dry weight. Estimated value \$28 billion. Could completely replace fishmeal in animal feeds.
Algal oil for people and animals	15,000,000 tons	Assumes average lipid content of 3% dry weight. Estimated value \$23 billion. Could completely replace fish oil in animal feeds.
Nitrogen removal	10,000,000 tons	Assumes nitrogen content 2% of dry weight. Equals 18% of the nitrogen added to oceans through fertilizer.
Phosphorous removal	1,000,000 tons	Assumes phosphorous content 0.2% of dry weight. Represents 61% of the phosphorous input as fertilizer.
Carbon assimilation	135,000,000 tons	Assumes carbon content 27% of dry weight. Equals 6% of the carbon added annually to oceans from greenhouse gas emissions.
Bioenergy potential	1,250,000,000 MWH	Assumes 50% carbohydrate content, converted to energy. Equals 1% of annual global energy use.
Land sparing	1,000,000 km ²	Assumes 5 tons/ha average farm yield. Equals 6% of global cropland.
Freshwater sparing	500 km ³	Assumes agricultural use averages 1 m ³ water/kg biomass. Equals 14% of annual global freshwater withdrawals.

“Only” 0.03% of ocean space



Small?

18% of N as fertilizers

61% of P as fertilizers

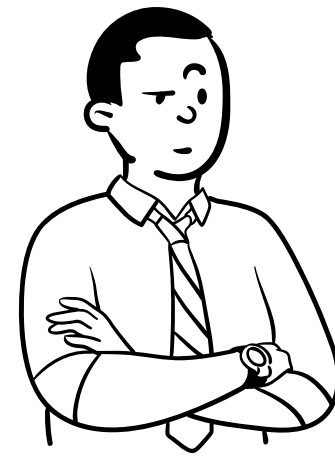
6% of C added to oceans ←

1% of global energy use

Spares 6% global cropland

Spares 14% of global water
withdrawals

“Only” 0.03% of Ocean Space **SMALL?**



Big! 500,000 km² Dry to WW 5-10X
2.5 to 5 million km²

ONLY
6% of C?

Dry ~Size of Spain or France

~Size of All Canada's Agricultural Lands

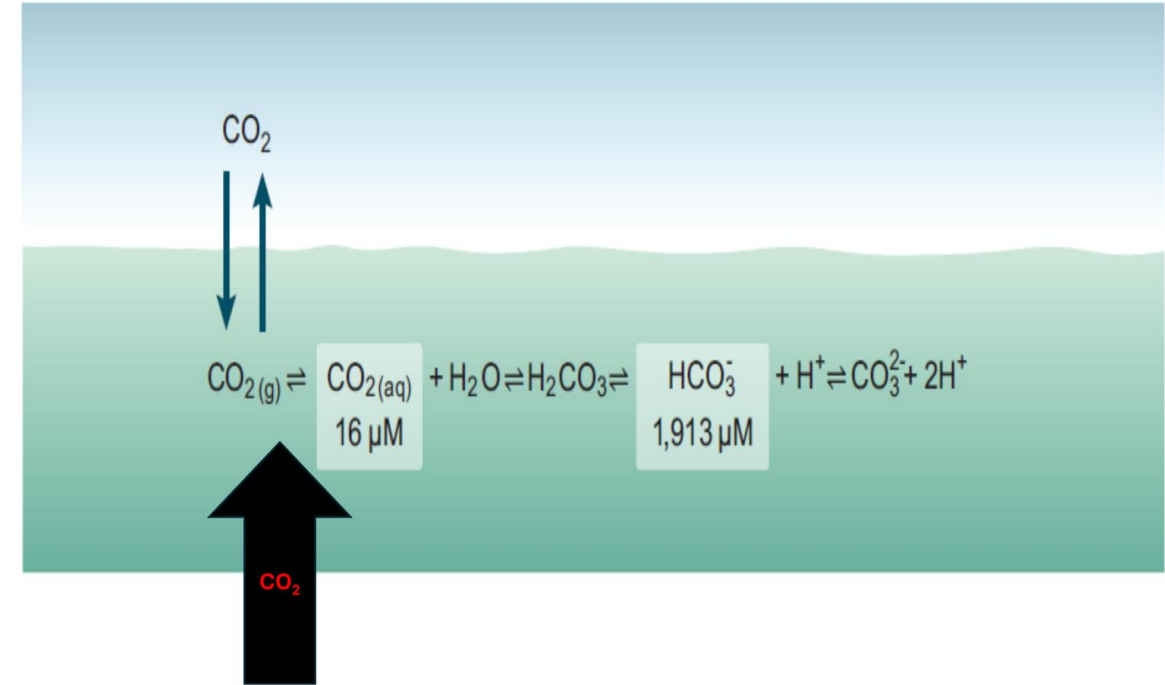
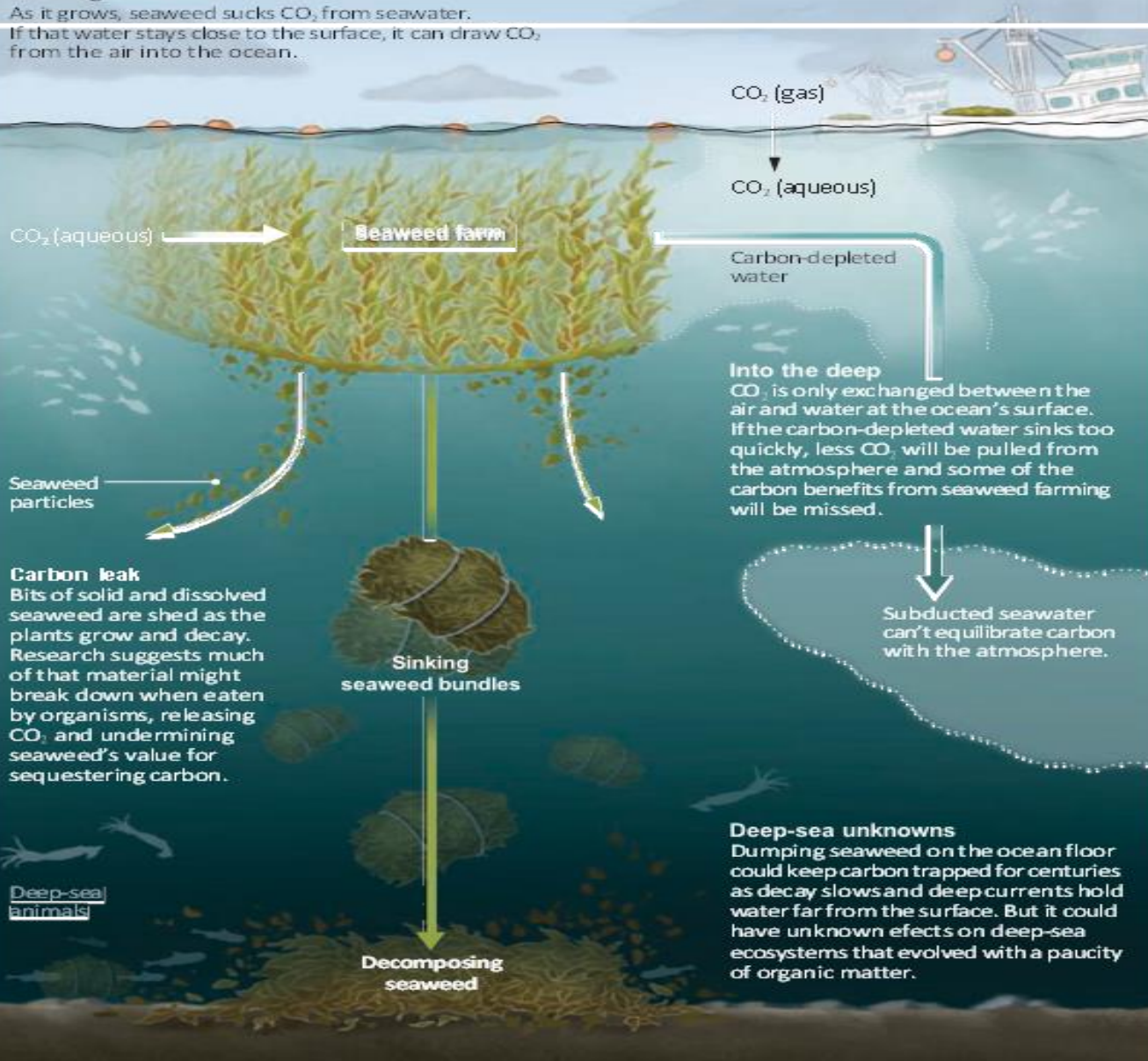
Wet ~Size of Australia

A climate savior?

To help solve the climate crisis, some companies want to create enormous seaweed farms in the open ocean that could draw carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere without consuming fresh water or land. Carbon trapped in the seaweed would then be sunk to the ocean floor. Skeptics, however, contend that the process may not capture as much carbon as some imagine and could cause ecological mayhem.

Farming for carbon

As it grows, seaweed sucks CO₂ from seawater.
If that water stays close to the surface, it can draw CO₂ from the air into the ocean.



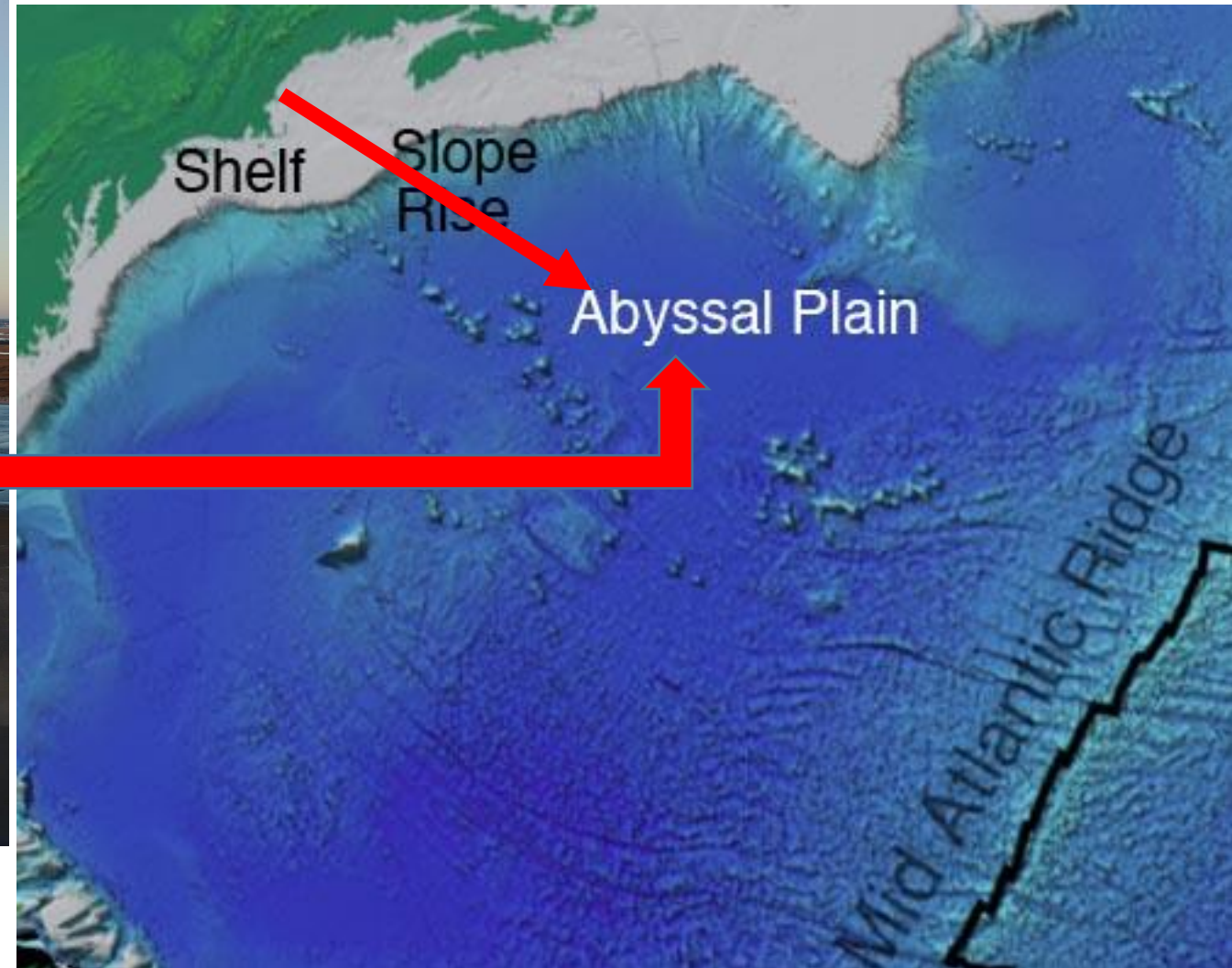
Hurd et al. (2023). Air-sea carbon dioxide equilibrium: Will it be possible to use seaweeds for carbon removal offsets? *J. Phycology*. 2023;00:1–11.

Cornwall, W. (2024) *Science* 385(6712):924-927.

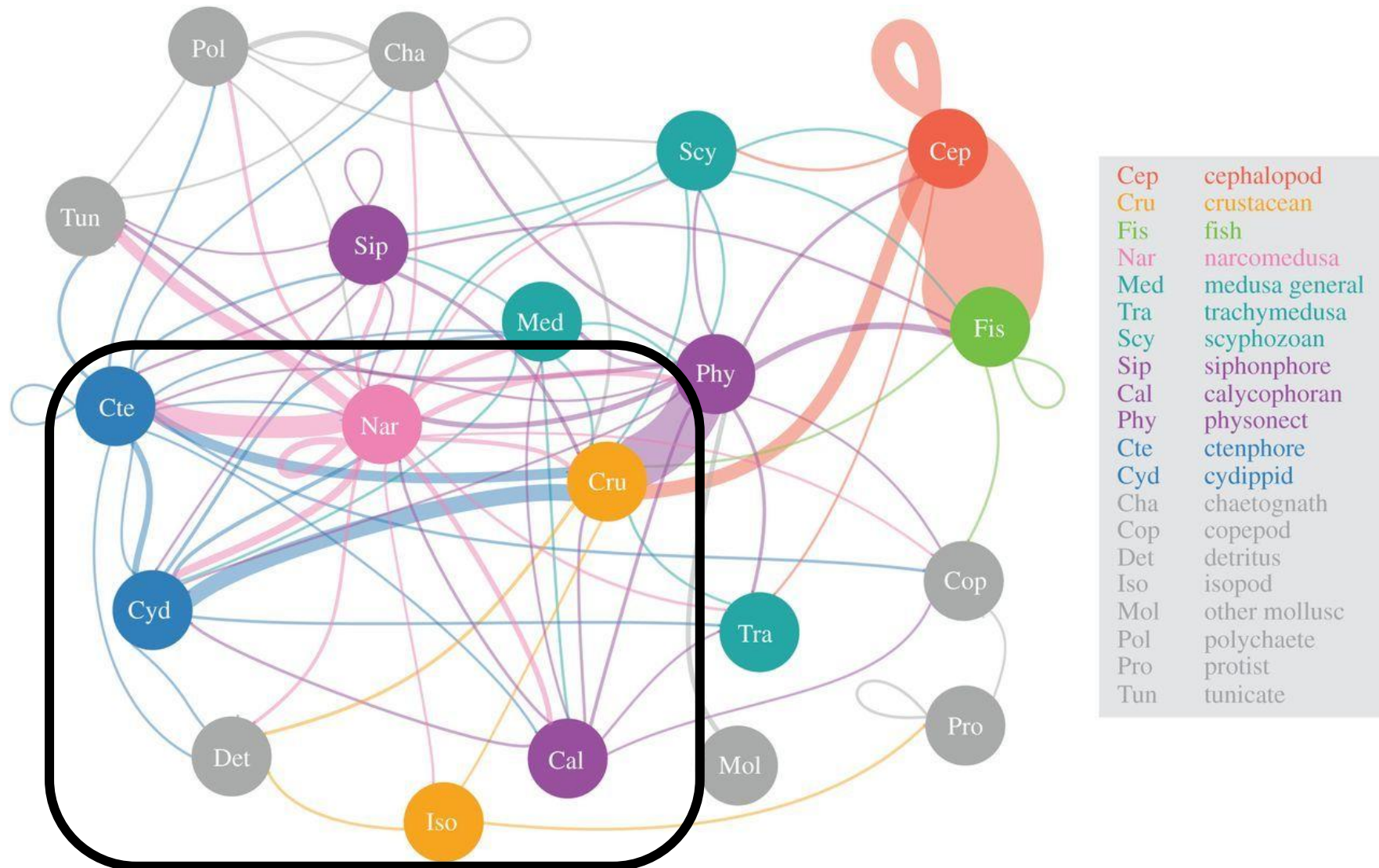
Law of Conservation of Mass

“Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed.”

Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier (1743-1794)



Choy, C.A. et al. (2017). Deep pelagic food web structure as revealed by in situ feeding observations. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. 284: 20172116, doi: 10.1098/rspb.2017.2116



For Nearshore Oceans **It's NITROGEN**

“The forgotten element of
CLIMATE CHANGE”



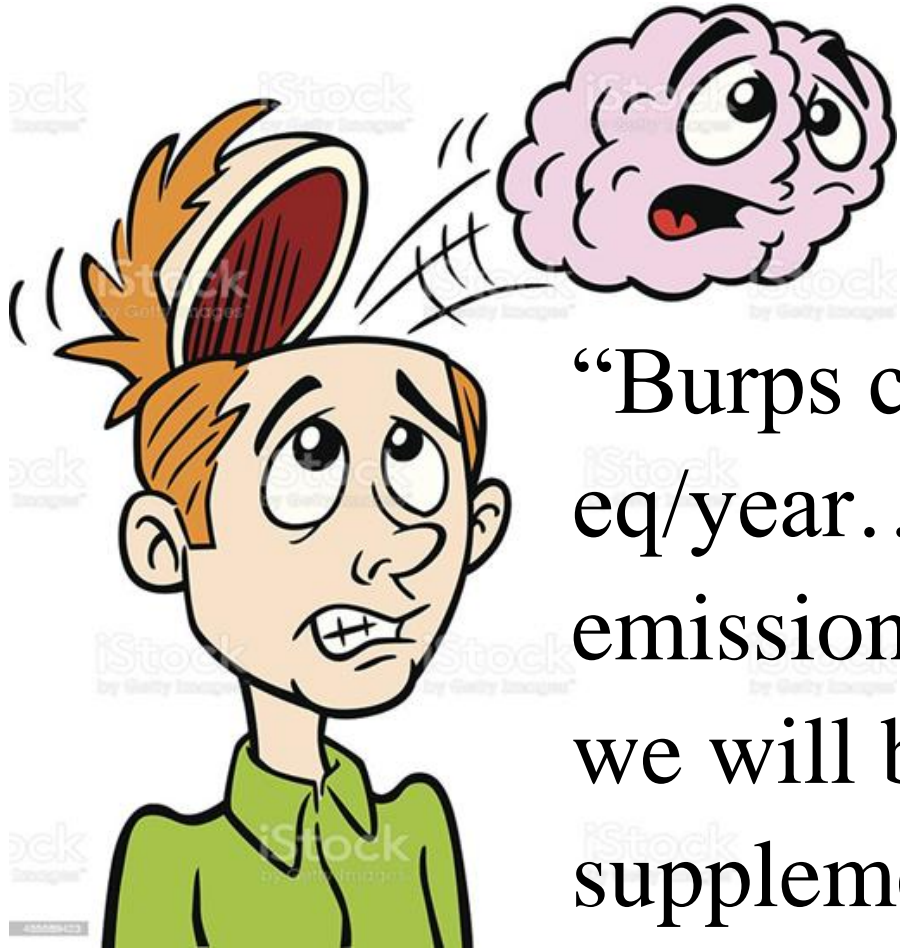




*Asparagopsis
taxiformis*







“Burps contribute ~2 billion tonnes of CO₂ eq/year...more than 4% of all greenhouse emissions globally. By the end of this decade, we will be growing enough of our seaweed to supplement **all 100 million cattle in the US, all on a plot of land that is smaller than Chicago’s O’Hare airport (7200 acres)**”



Kinley et al. (2016) Experiments done *in vitro* (in artificial rumens) not *in vivo*. **There was no real cow rumen** absorbing one gram of the red seaweed *Asparagopsis taxiformis*



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Algal Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/algal



Review article

Benefits and risks of including the bromoform containing seaweed *Asparagopsis* in feed for the reduction of methane production from ruminants

Christopher R.K. Glasson^a, Robert D. Kinley^b, Rocky de Nys^c, Nick King^d, Serean L. Adams^d, Michael A. Packer^d, Johan Svenson^d, Charles T. Eason^{d,1,2}, Marie Magnusson^{a,*}

^a University of Waikato, Te Aka Mātūatua - School of Science, Environmental Research Institute, Tauranga 3110, New Zealand

^b Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Agriculture and Food, Townsville, QLD 4811, Australia

^c James Cook University, Centre for Macroalgal Resources and Biotechnology, and College of Science and Engineering, Townsville, QLD 4811, Australia

^d Cawthron Institute, Nelson 7010, New Zealand



A. taxiformis (and *A. armata*) are small red seaweeds, not ubiquitous, and have complex life histories. They can be produced with great care in academic settings...but not be easy to produce at the large biomass levels necessary to feed a **global cattle population ~1 billion head (2020)**

~ 60% of the world's cattle are not in feedlots but ranched in free-range pastures *where they are encountered infrequently*, mainly when counted or branded.

Even in countries where feedlots are common, cattle normally remain in a feedlot for **only 3-5 months of their 36-month average production cycle.**

Costa-Pierce, B.A. and T. Chopin. 2021. The hype, fantasies and realities of aquaculture development globally and in its new geographies. *World Aquaculture* 52 (2): 23-35.



Can we now all
eat guilt-free
burgers" ??



**Seaweeds as Great Opportunities in Aquaculture's
"Geographies"**



Some Seaweed Facts and Fantasies



Seaweed Aquaculture and Rural Fishing Livelihoods

Scale is one of the most controversial
aspects of aquaculture today

Scaling issues play a central role in the
political and regulatory obstacles to
advancing aquaculture

Most aquaculture development occurs
in rural areas

 **SCALING OUT, NOT ONLY UP** 

Frontiers Research Topic (frontiersin.org) 82 authors in 10 articles

Barry Antonio Costa-Pierce, USA & PORTUGAL

Helgi Thor Thorarensen, NORWAY

Åsa Strand, SWEDEN

“Ocean/Aquatic Food Systems: Interactions with
Ecosystems, Fisheries, Aquaculture, and People”

FOUR RECURRING THEMES

“Promotion of **diverse aquaculture scales** may allow development of new ecological and social synergies for **smaller farms to achieve economic viability at regional scales**”

#1 IMPORT SUBSTITUTION

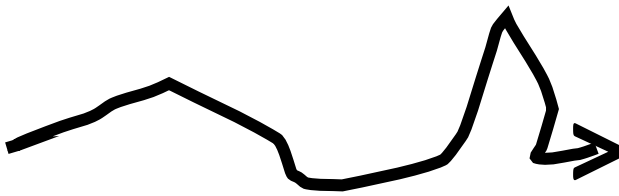
U.S. farm harvests only

~454,000 kg (2019)

Imports **8.6 million kg**

edible seaweeds from Asia

>50% from China, South Korea

New Technology  **New Markets**

Market-Driven Technology Development

**Existing
Markets**



**Appropriate
Technology
Development**

Edible Seaweed Market Analysis

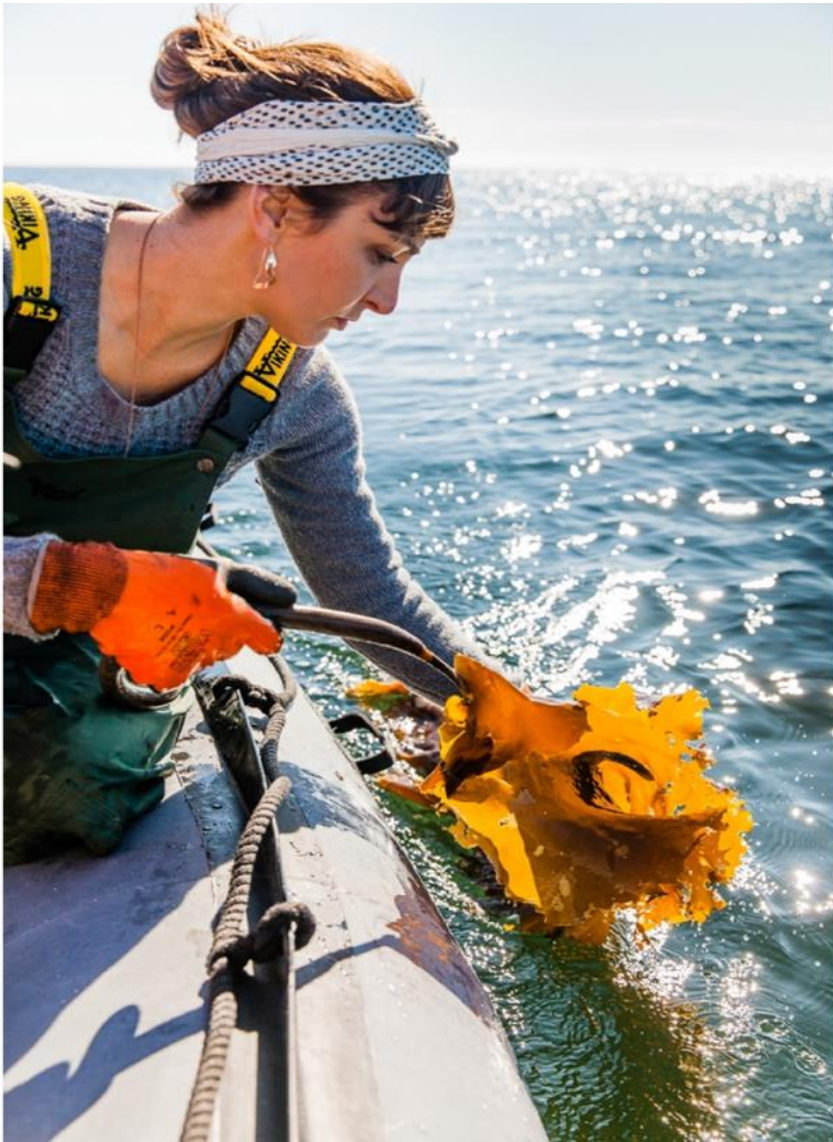


ISLAND
INSTITUTE

Growing and harvesting the primary farmed edible seaweed species (sugar/skinny kelp and alaria) is a relatively low cost, easily implementable process that can deliver supplemental revenue and asset utilization. For most harvesters that lack processing capabilities, edible seaweed provides supplemental revenue rather than their primary source of revenue.

The annual revenue potential for harvesters varies significantly depending on lease acreage and processing practices. Harvesters without processing capabilities can expect to realize approximately \$0.40 – \$0.70 per wet pound for bulk unprocessed seaweed. For these harvesters, securing access to processing capabilities prior to initiating the growing process, either via established contracts with processors or investing in first stage processing (typically drying) capabilities, is critical to success. Maine infrastructure requirements to support continued growth include:

- Expanded processing capacity
- Value-added product development
- Distribution network expansion
- Brand building/consumer awareness



Atlantic Sea Farms

**Successful “Scaling Out”
Model of Seaweed
Farming – most ~2 ha**

- *27 independent ASF partner farmers, primarily fishing families who already have boats/gear
- *Trains/Provides free seed/Contracts to buy harvests

Make US\$ 40,000 to \$110,000/season as supplemental income



#2 Community Scale

“Grant cycles live and die. Business doesn’t. The world is ready for seaweed. It doesn’t need to be subsidized.”

Brianna Warner
CEO
Atlantic Sea Farms

#3 PARTNERSHIPS WITH APPLIED ACADEMIA

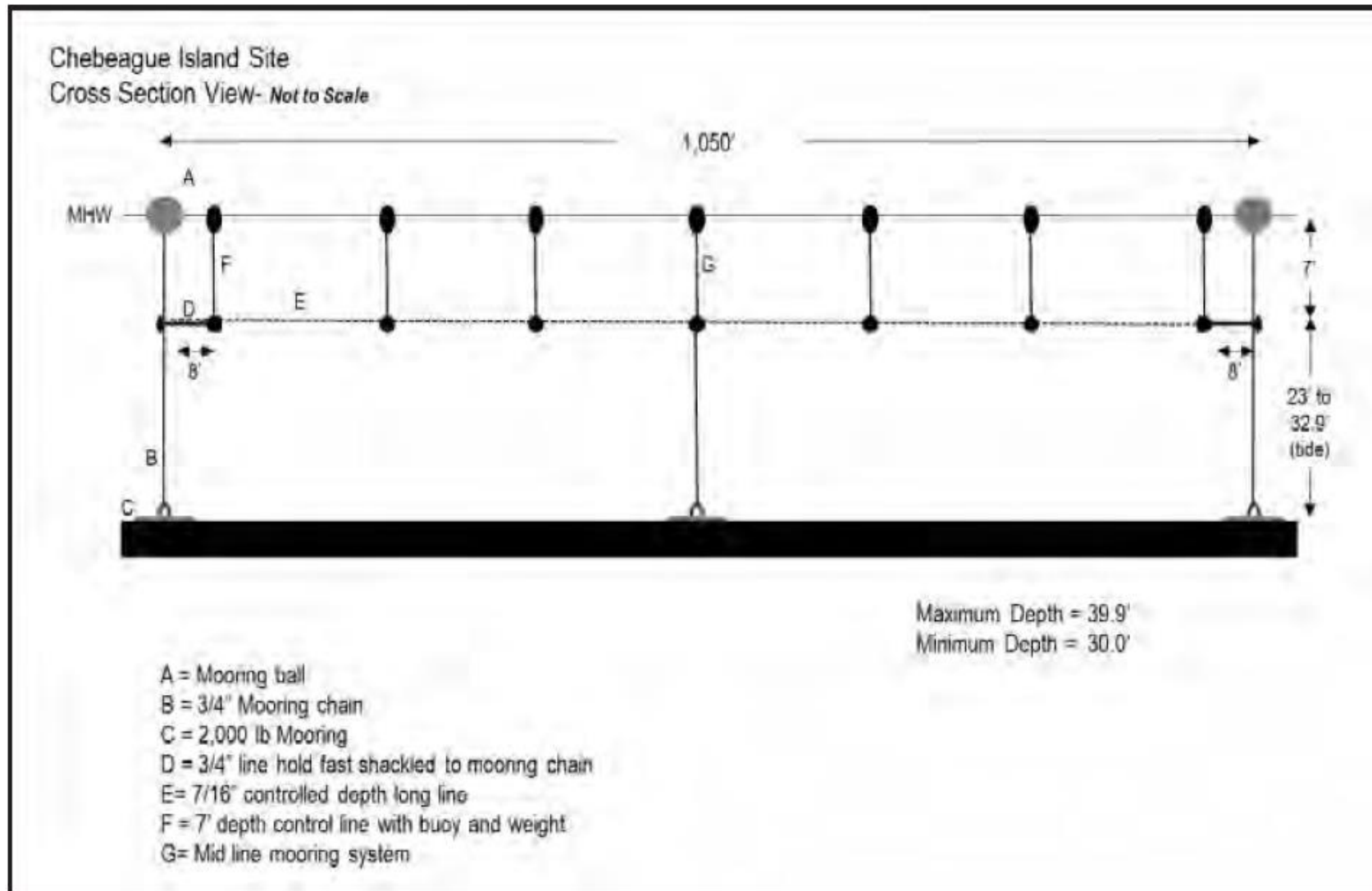
Science Based DESIGN CRITERIA...SURVIVABLE, SOPHISTICATED ENGINEERING BUT VERY LOW COST

- **Minimalist approach to gear**
 - **low capital...use existing fishing assets**
 - **highly mobile**
 - **easily deployed**
 - **easily permitted**
- **Submerged technology**
- **No conflicts with the "fishing/tourism summers"**
- **Cash on harvests**
- **High education value = easy tech transfer**

Design Charette

**Transdisciplinary - Formed a
Ecological Engineering, Social-
Ecological
Research Team**

OLD - Dead Weight Moorings, Vertical Mooring Line Design

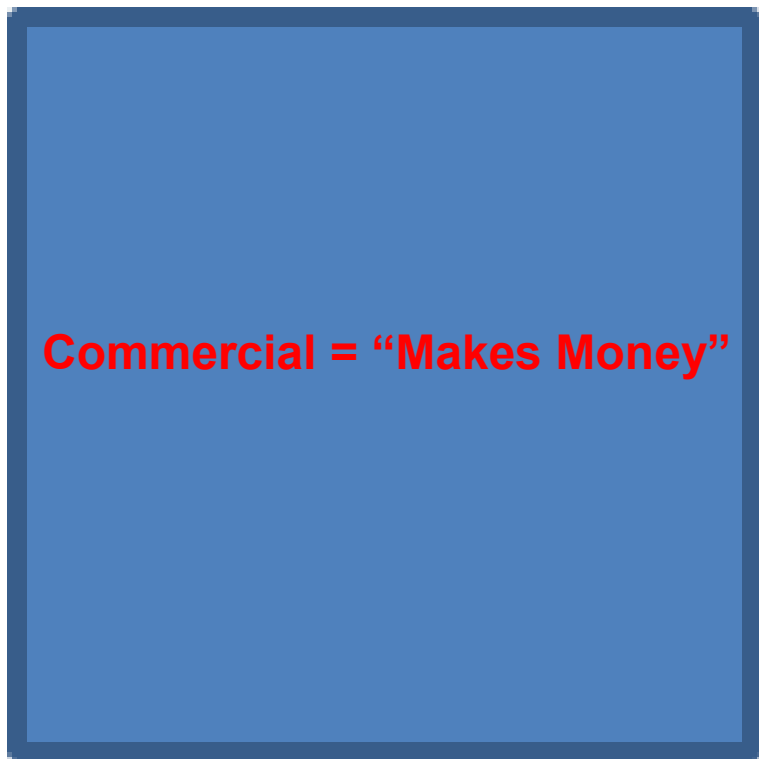


- Expensive Moorings
- Cumbersome to Deploy
- Permanent Installation
- Large Buoys
- Slack System
- Requires Large Boats = \$\$

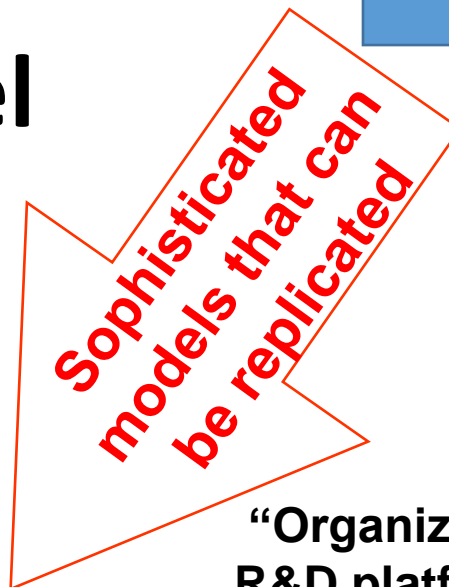
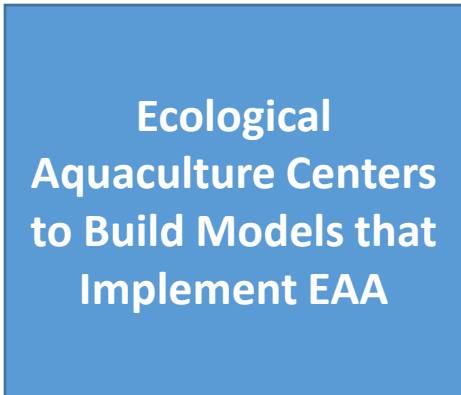
The Usual Model



Development Models for
Scaling Aquaculture



The Social Ecological EAA Model



"Organize international
R&D platforms involving
countries active or
intending to initiate
development
projects"



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Aquacultural Engineering

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/aque



Frontiers in Marine Science

TYPE Original Research
PUBLISHED 17 May 2023
DOI 10.3389/fmars.2023.1178548

Hydrodynamic characteristics of a full-scale kelp model for aquaculture applications

David W. Fredriksson^{a,*}, Tobias Dewhurst^b, Andrew Drach^c, William Beaver^d,
Adam T. St. Gelais^{e,f}, Kathryn Johndrow^e, Barry A. Costa-Pierce^{e,f}

^a Department of Naval Architecture and Ocean Engineering, United States Naval Academy, 590 Holloway Road, 11D Annapolis, MD 21402 USA

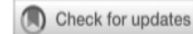
^b Kelson Marine Co., Scarborough, Maine 04074 USA

^c University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712 USA

^d Hydromechanics Laboratory, United States Naval Academy, 590 Holloway Road, 11D Annapolis, MD 21402 USA

^e Graduate Program in Ocean Food Systems, School of Marine & Environmental Programs, University of New England, 11 Hills Beach Road, Biddeford, Maine 04005

^f School of Marine and Environmental Programs, University of New England, 11 Hills Beach Road, Biddeford, Maine 04005 USA



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY

Zhao Yunpeng,
Dalian University of Technology, China

REVIEWED BY

Hung-Jie Tang,
National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan
Peter M. J. Herman,
Delft University of Technology,
Netherlands

*CORRESPONDENCE

David W. Fredriksson

✉ David.Fredriksson@unh.edu

RECEIVED 02 March 2023

ACCEPTED 24 April 2023

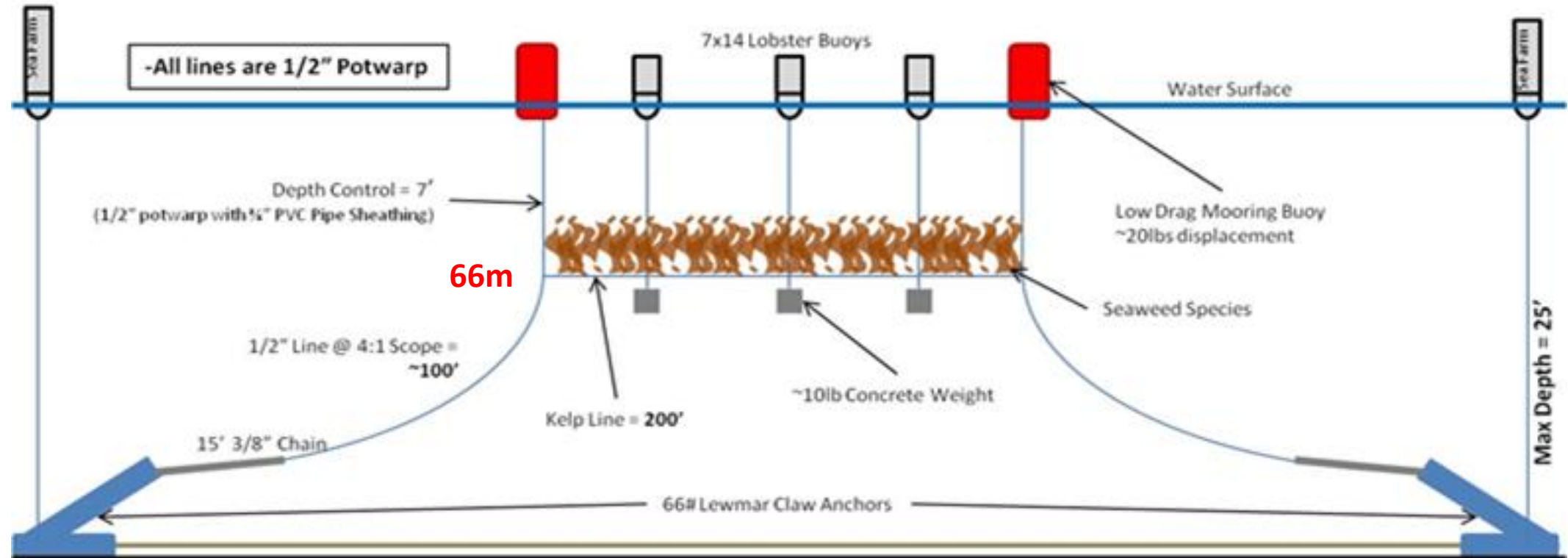
PUBLISHED 17 May 2023

Mooring tension assessment of a single line kelp farm with quantified biomass, waves, and currents

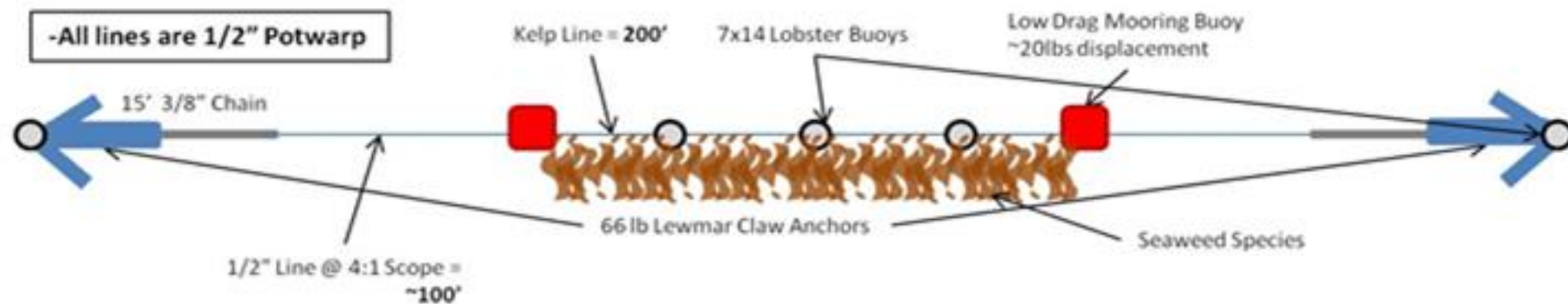
David W. Fredriksson^{1*}, Adam T. St. Gelais², Tobias Dewhurst³,
Struan Coleman⁴, Damian C. Brady^{2,4} and
Barry Antonio Costa-Pierce^{5,6}

¹School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, United States, ²Aquaculture Research Institute, University of Maine, Darling Marine Center, Walpole, ME, United States, ³Kelson Marine Co., Portland, ME, United States, ⁴School of Marine Sciences, Darling Marine Center, University of Maine, Walpole, ME, United States, ⁵Faculty of Biosciences and Aquaculture, Nord University, Bodø, Norway, ⁶Ecological Aquaculture Foundation, LLC, Biddeford, ME, United States

Cross Section



Overhead





Farm in a Box

200' (66 m) culture lines

18' (6 m) Maritime Skiff

Crew of 2...Total deployment time < 0.5 hour

Mobile gear all removed during high fishing season

Supplies and materials - All locally available and familiar to commercial fisheries

Total cost < \$600 REUSABLE

- Five Years of Success
- Cash on harvests...
- High education value = Easy tech transfer

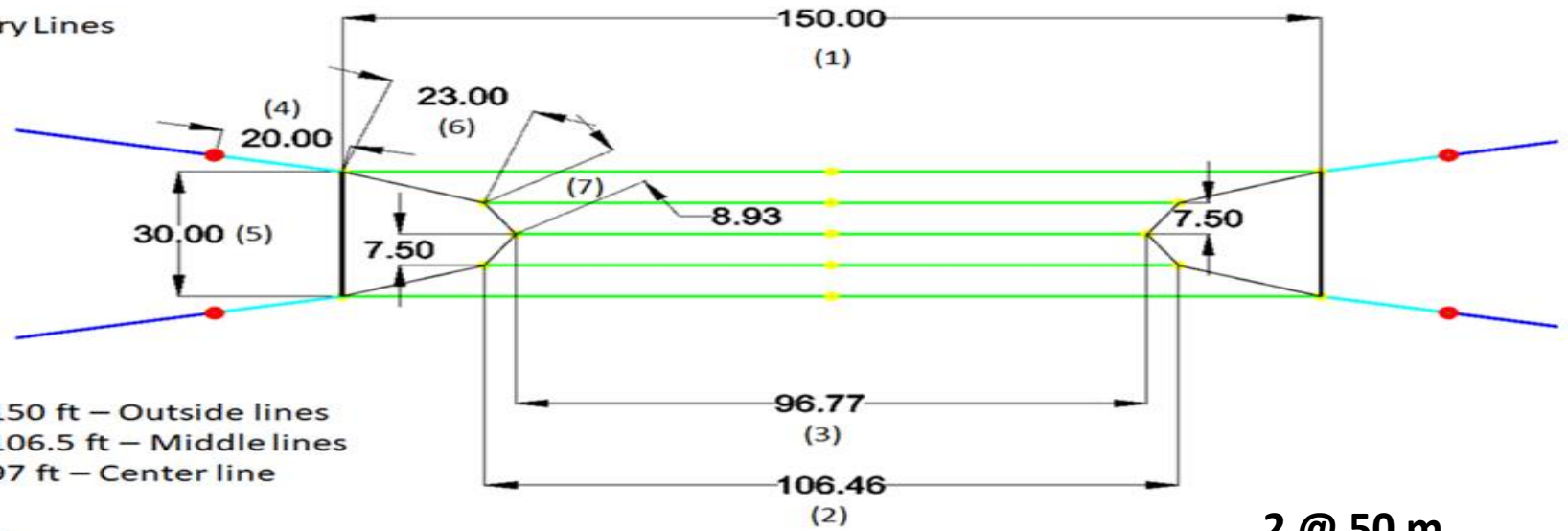
Produces ~ 1000
kg wet wt/line
~15-16 kg/m of
Sugar Kelp



Farm in a Truck



a) Grow out and Catenary Lines



Green Grow-out Lines

1. (2) 1" nylon at 150 ft – Outside lines
2. (2) 1" nylon at 106.5 ft – Middle lines
3. (1) 1" nylon at 97 ft – Center line

Light Blue Load-cell lines

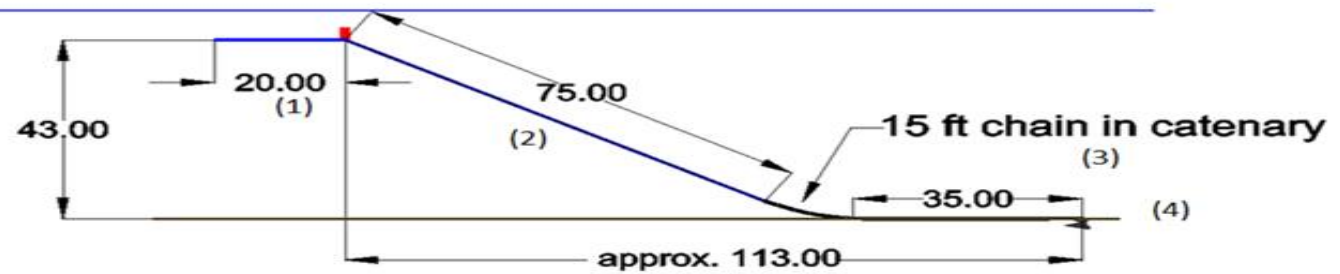
4. (4) 1" nylon at 20 ft

Black Catenary Lines

5. (2) 1" nylon at 30 ft – Open span lines
6. (4) 1" nylon at 23 ft – Outside catenary lines
7. (4) 1" nylon at 9 ft – Inside catenary lines

2 @ 50 m
2 @ 35 m
1 @ 33 m

b) Anchor leg components



Anchor leg components

1. (4) 1" nylon at 20 ft – Load-cell lines
2. (4) 1" nylon at 75 ft – Anchor lines
3. (4) 5/8" longlink chain at 50 ft
4. (4) 110# claw anchor



OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:

Sudheer Srivastava,
Benares Hindu University, India

Reviewed by:

Mark Flaherty,
University of Victoria, Canada
Tim Gray,
Newcastle University, United Kingdom

Engineering A Low-Cost Kelp Aquaculture System for Community-Scale Seaweed Farming at Nearshore Exposed Sites *via* User-Focused Design Process

Adam T. St-Gelais^{1*}, David W. Fredriksson², Tobias Dewhurst³, Zachary S. Miller-Hope¹, Barry Antonio Costa-Pierce^{1†} and Kathryn Johndrow^{1†}

A dramatic, high-contrast image of a stormy ocean. Dark, heavy clouds fill the upper half of the frame, with a bright light source breaking through near the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the white foam of a large wave in the foreground. The water is a deep, turbulent blue.

FINAL COMMENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

Seaweeds as a precious diverse gift to Humanity.

Seaweeds are Treasures. **They are not Trash.**

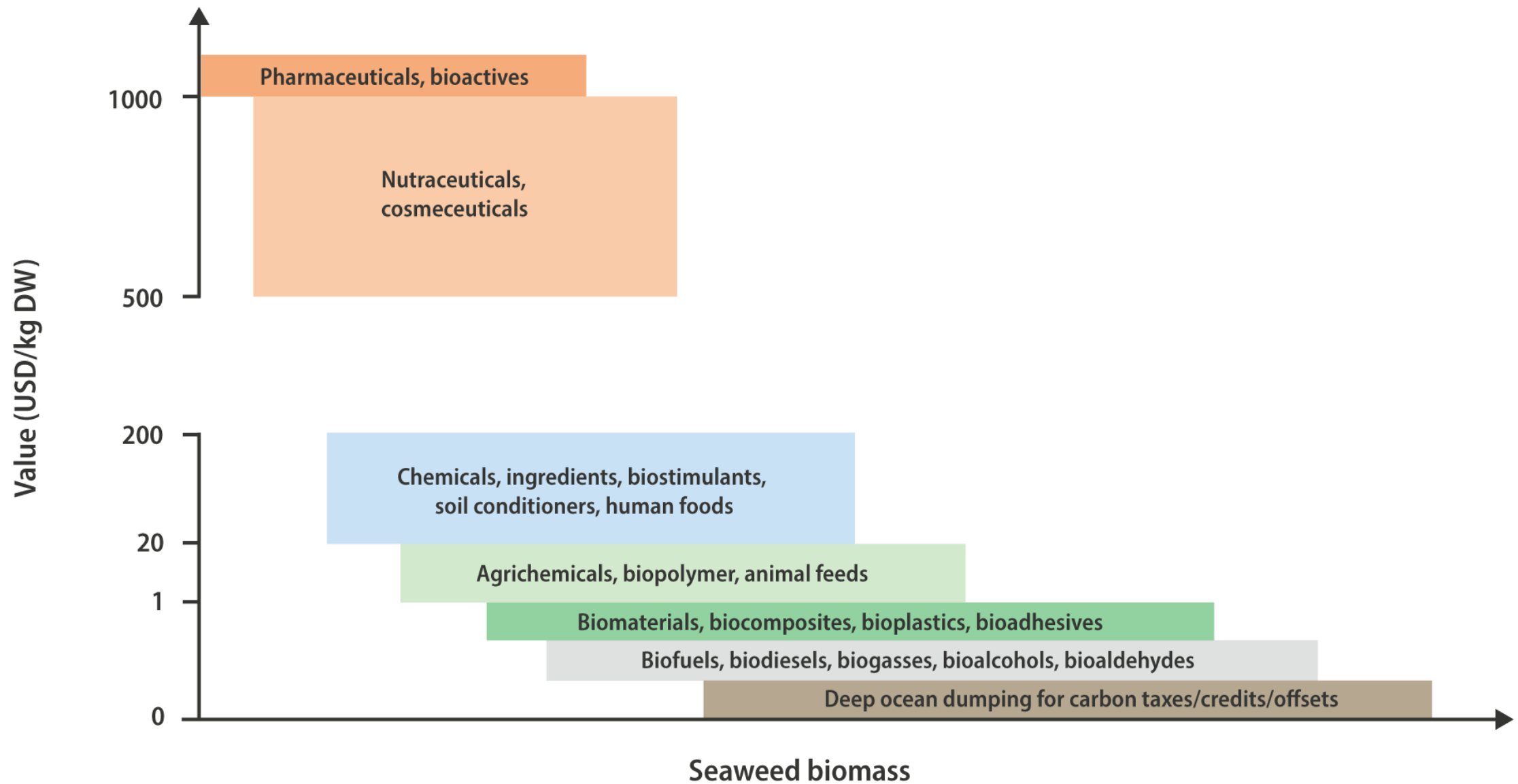
Seaweeds are ***not easy***.

“You better know their biology, ecology, physiology, biochemistry, etc. before trying to cultivate them”.

Seaweeds ***can be integrated*** with many aquaculture, agriculture and treatment systems

Seaweeds can have major roles in carbon & nitrogen absorption
TRANSFORMATION...NOT SEQUESTRATION

Seaweeds have tremendous potential in human health, agriculture (food Production in general) and rural economic development. ***Replace Your Imports! Scale Out! Benefit Your Fishermen/Farmers!***



Chopin et al. (2024)

SUPERFOOD Seagreens

A Guide to Cooking with
POWER-PACKED SEAWEED

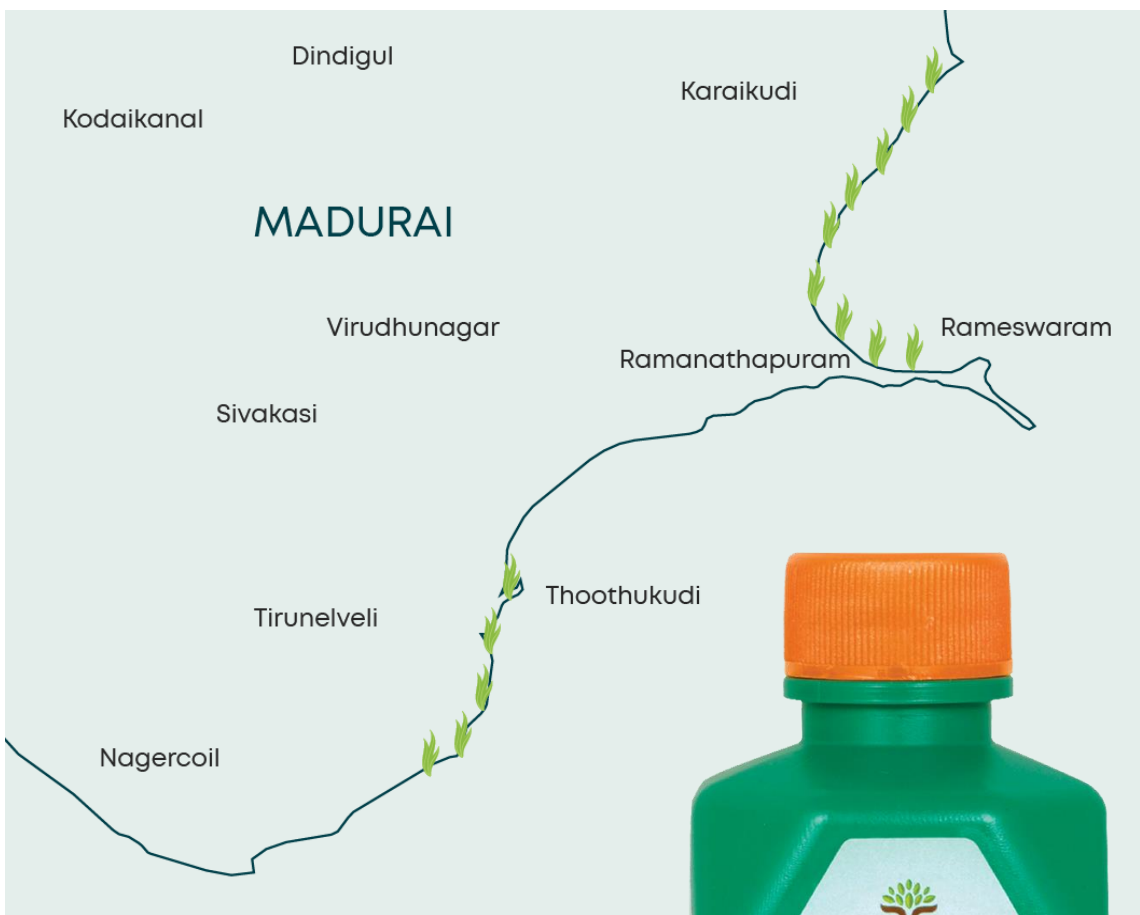
BARTON SEAVER

MORE THAN
75 DELICIOUS
RECIPES
FOR OPTIMAL
HEALTH

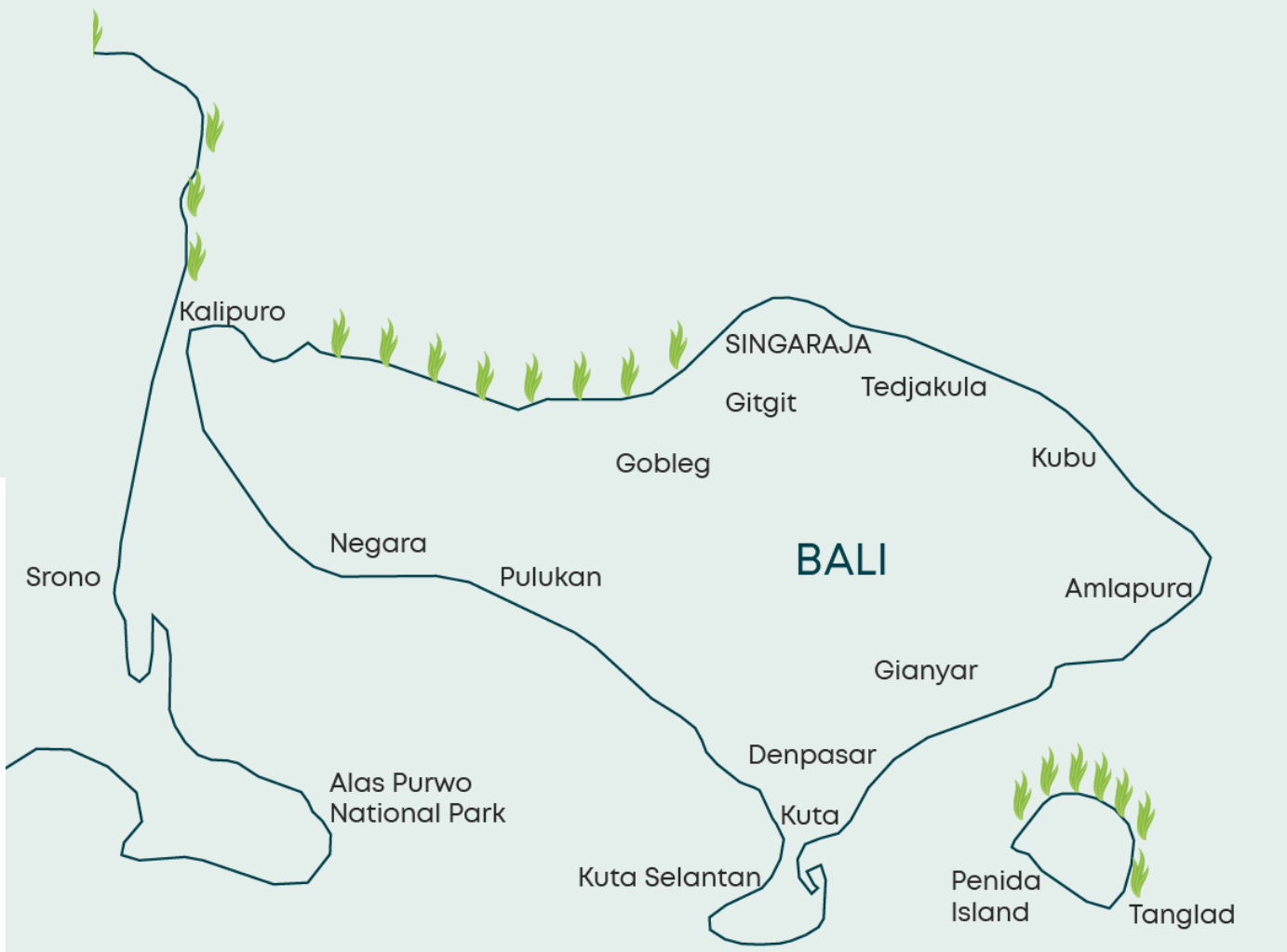
OMEGA-3S • CALCIUM • PROTEIN • FIBER • IODINE

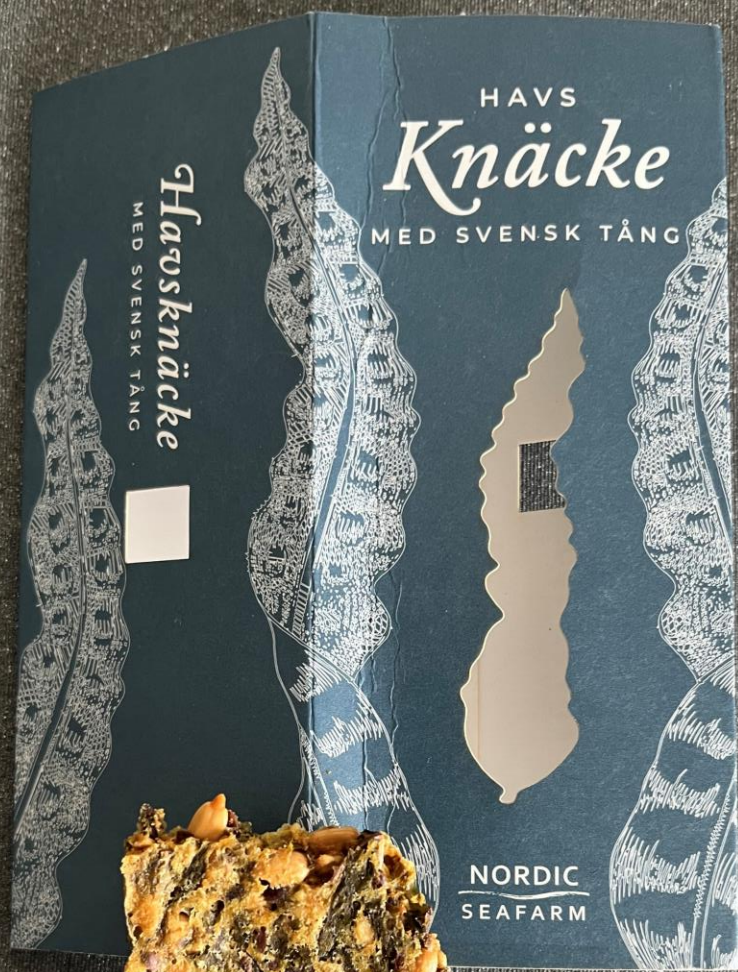






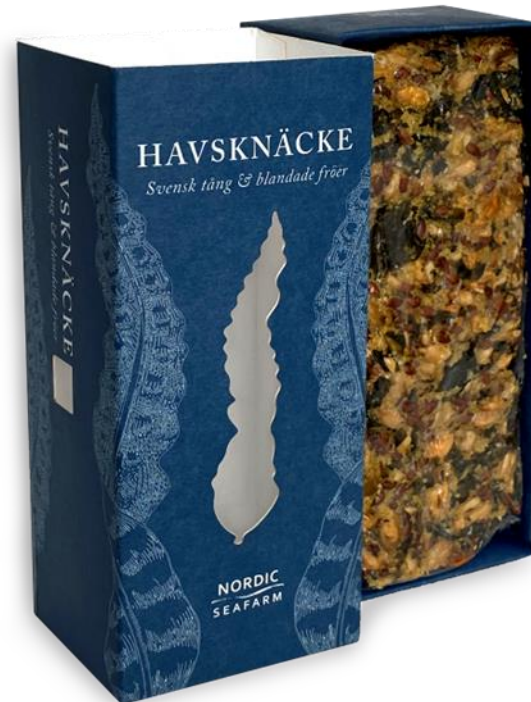
Bangalore, India
Bali, Indonesia





NORDIC SEAFARM

<https://nordicseafarm.com/>



Foods
Biomaterials
Animal feeds
Fertilizers

EU-funded project SEABIOPLAS

Seaweeds from sustainable aquaculture as feedstock
for
biodegradable bioplastics



More Opportunities

- Genetic Improvement – NIBIO Norway
- Systems Ecology – Fisheries/Aquaculture
Social Ecological Systems



P. Dobbins, WWF

Aquaculture Fishery??





CELEBRATE!



Have FUN!

