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How productive can Nigeria's aquaculture sector become?

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

University of Stirling researcher looks into the country's constraints and models solutions

A University of Stirling researcher says Nigeria – Africa's second-largest fish producer – needs access, promotion and planning to sustainably grow the aquaculture sector.

Analyzing how the country could meet its fish production target of 2.5 million metric tons (MT), a University of Stirling researcher says their work using scenario analysis could provide similar insights in other countries. Suleiman Yakubu, Ph.D. said Nigeria has a long way to catch up to continental aquaculture leader Egypt.

"We still have some way to go before we can achieve the 2.5 million [MT] aquaculture potential estimated by the government," he said in a university release. We wanted to answer the question, is this achievable by 2035? And if so, how can it be done in a sustainable way?"

Current aquaculture production in Nigeria sits at about 300,000 MT a year, according to the University, with 80 percent of fish farming in Nigeria conducted in small-scale ponds in urban and peri-urban areas.



A University of Stirling researcher says Nigeria – Africa's second-largest fish producer – needs access, promotion and planning for aquaculture growth.

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The researchers conducted stakeholder interviews to identify four priority constraints: cost and availability of fish feed; land use; policy intersection and research investment. They then used scenario analysis – a mix of qualitative and quantitative modelling principles – to assess what combinations of factors would put Nigeria on track towards its target.

The determinations included improving farmers access to quality feeds; promoting the sector as responsible land use and increase monitoring; including aquaculture planning with other crucial policy areas like importation, land use and poverty alleviation; and investing in research to improve productivity and yield.

"Our modelling shows that if things continue as they are, Nigeria will see only marginal development of its aquaculture sector in comparison to where it aspires to be," Yakubu said.



Eat the whole fish: A discussion of culture, economics and food waste solutions

The Big Fish Series explored the logistical and cultural challenges in front of greater whole-fish consumption and how much seafood is being wasted.



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Professor Trevor Telfer, Ph.D. supervisor on the research, said: "Aquaculture is expanding rapidly, as is the world's population, and can offer a sustainable, low-input way of feeding people. Using data in this way to model scenarios offers an innovative method for governments and industry to plan collaboratively for the sustainable expansion of complex sectors such as aquaculture."

To read the full report in *Aquaculture Reports*, "Scenario analysis and land use change modeling reveal opportunities and challenges for sustainable expansion of aquaculture in Nigeria," **[visit this link](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352513422000679)** (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352513422000679>).

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Author



RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD ADVOCATE

editor@globalseafood.org (<mailto:editor@globalseafood.org>).

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