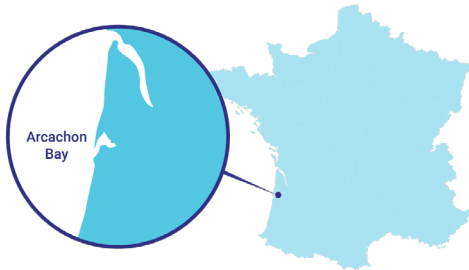


MULTI-USE BLUEPRINT

Aquaculture, Fishing, and Tourism
in the Bay of Arcachon, France

Location

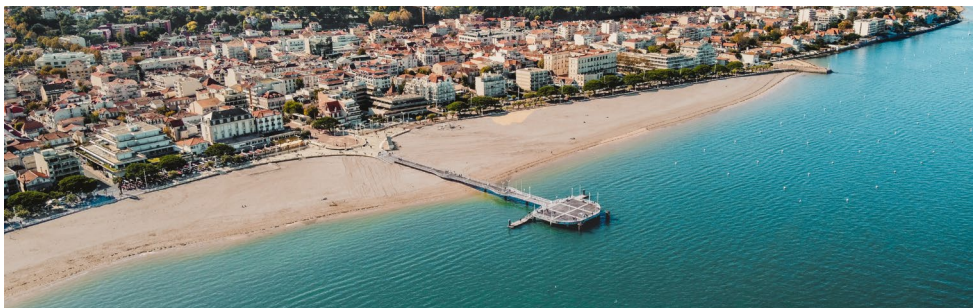
The Bay of Arcachon is located on the French Atlantic coast, in the Gironde Department, near the city of Bordeaux. It is a semi-closed basin covering approximately 150 km² of shallow waters between Cap-Ferret and Pyla-sur-Mer.



The local economy is driven by two activities: aquaculture and tourism. The bay is where oyster farming was first introduced in France in the 1860s. Nowadays, it is the most important shellfish production zone at the national level, with 37 000 tons of cupped oyster produced in 2012. Arcachon was also one of the first sea resorts of the French Atlantic coast established in the mid 19th century. By the 1960s, the Cap Ferret peninsula started attracting high-income, temporary residents, while the rest of the bay consolidated its position as a major tourism hotspot. In 2018, the Bay of Arcachon was, after Bordeaux, the second most visited area in Gironde with 10.8 million overnight stays and 76 millions euros of revenues.

Description

In the Bay of Arcachon, relationships between aquaculture and tourism are complex. On the one hand, the increasing number of tourists and secondary residences generate real-estate and development pressures. On the other hand, there are many synergies between tourism, aquaculture and, to a lesser extent, fishing. Oyster farming participated in shaping this territory, its landscapes, its identity and therefore constitutes a key touristic attraction. In return, tourism represents an opportunity for shellfish farmers and fishers to increase their revenues. Aquaculture-related tourism developed significantly over the last decade, as reflected by the growing number of restaurants selling oysters and seafood or tours around the bay and surrounding harbours. Since 2010, local shellfish farmers started to take tourists onboard so they can visit their farm and know more about their job. Even though this form of “pescatourism” is not as profitable as other tourist products, it provides short and long-term benefits to shellfish farmers: not only do visits generate direct revenues, but tourists usually become their clients and ambassadors.



Enabling conditions and tools

Common interests of local stakeholders

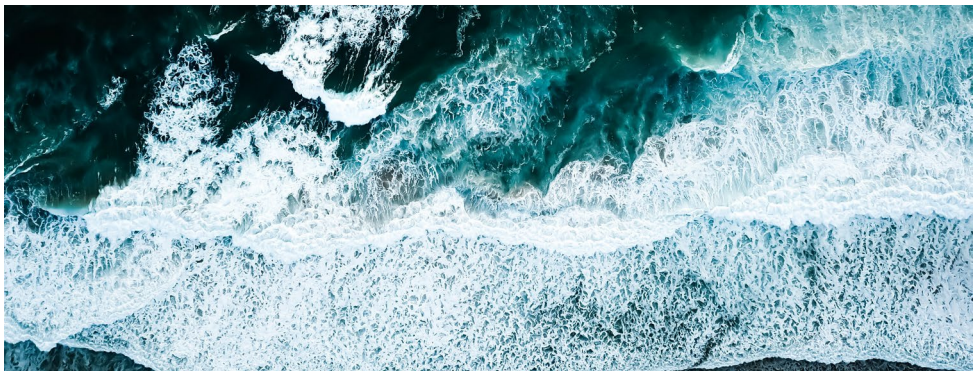
Aquaculture-based tourism in the Bay of Arcachon was enabled by a joint effort of local stakeholders to further involve oyster producers in tourism based on the pescaturism model. This multi-use was intended to reverse oyster production decline resulting from economic and environmental changes. The Fishing and Marine Breeding Committee and the Shellfish Farming Committee played an active role in representing and assisting oyster producers interested in diversifying their activity through tourism. The Intercommunal Association of Arcachon, a public authority representing the municipalities surrounding the bay, helped them to design, implement and promote a new touristic offer aiming at discovering oyster production sites, techniques and traditions. It launched in 2010 the initiative called “Embarquez avec les ostréiculteurs et les pêcheurs du bassin d’Arcachon” and integrated it into its local development strategy. Aquaculture-based tourism became a pillar of the ecotourism offer which developed together with the Marine Park created in 2014.

Financial and technical assistance

of the AGLIA and the European Union. Shellfish farmers received technical assistance and financial support of the AGLIA (Association of the Great Atlantic Coast) and the European Union. The AGLIA led a global analysis of the legal framework regulating pescaturism and assisted oyster producers in obtaining necessary permits and licenses. It also helped them to adapt their activity and businesses to tourism. The European Union also supported oyster producers financially through the FARNET program and the European Maritime Fund (EMF).

Impacts and positive changes

Nowadays, about 15 shellfish farmers and 3 professional fishers joined the initiative. Although the functional integration between oyster farming, fishing and tourism needs to be further developed, this multi-use fully achieved its goals. It strengthened the local economy and the regional identity while building new pathways towards sustainability. Nowadays, Arcachon Bay is the largest aquaculture-based tourism zone and a model of diversification through tourism which can inspire, like Italy and Greece, other coastal communities.





Links

- **Elody Etechegaray – Association du Grand Littoral Atlantique:**
elodie.etchegaray@aglia.fr
- **AGLIA report on pescatourism on the Atlantic coast**
https://www.aglia.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/40-4p_pecatourisme_1.pdf
- **AGLIA presentation of pescatourism in the Bay of Arcachon**
<https://www.aglia.fr/le-pescatourisme-presente-dans-le-cadre-du-projet-europeen-multi-frame/>
- **Webpage of the Shellfish Farming Committee of Arcachon**
<https://www.aglia.fr/le-pescatourisme-presente-dans-le-cadre-du-projet-europeen-multi-frame/>
- **Flyer presenting tours to the shellfish farms in Arcachon**
<https://bassin-arcachon.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/LIVRET-PESCA-TOURISME-MAJ-04-2021.pdf>

Imprint

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