

Current state and present perspectives of the shrimp industry in Ecuador

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Ecuador has been a shrimp-producing country for over forty years. The 1960's was the decade in which the incipient industry began to flourish and it developed with such intensity that it wasn't long before the country became the world's largest aquacultural producer of this crustacean. However, in its initial developmental trajectory, many factors contributed to the industry's disorganized and unsystematic growth. Lack of foresight, as well as overabundance of post-larvae and wild adult shrimp, along with the richness of Ecuadorian land yielded to overproduction that was not properly directed; thus, the industry grew unsystematically.

The rise of the shrimp industry grew so exponentially that it became the country's most important exporter, aside from oil and bananas. During this booming expansion, several diverse pathogens afflicting the shrimp were successfully subdued. Nonetheless, the "White Spot," gave way to a national catastrophe in the industry at the end of the 20th century; it decimated the economic stability of producers and forced a re-establishment of their businesses. Approximately six years later, Ecuador is showing an almost complete recovery of its areas of production and has seen a reemergence in global shrimp markets.

This has enabled the sector to re-invent itself in an orderly fashion, to create legal precedents in production, and to develop new and cutting edge production techniques.