

## WOMEN IN AQUACULTURE: STORIES FROM THE FIELD

### Bonnie Waycott

The Fish Site, 5M Publishing

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**Bonnie Waycott** was born in the United Kingdom, grew up in Japan for five years as a child and became interested in marine life when her father taught her to snorkel on the Sea of Japan coast near her mother's hometown. After graduating from the University of Cardiff with a degree in Japanese and French, she returned to Japan in 2006 and worked as an NHK narrator until 2017 on News 7, NewsWatch 9 and Today's Close Up.

More recently, Ms. Waycott received an M.Sc. in Sustainable Aquaculture from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Her thesis (with distinction) focused on aquaculture recovery after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and how Japan may serve as an example to other countries that are vulnerable to natural disasters.

Today, having brought together her extensive media experience and interest in marine life, she serves as an aquaculture and fisheries writer for aquaculture magazines and websites including The Fish Site in the UK.



## ABSTRACT

Today, most of the world's capture fisheries are thought to be fully or overexploited (Finegold, 2009), while climate change and population growth are becoming increasingly significant issues that are likely to impact future global food security. Amidst this, aquaculture is seen as an innovative and sustainable way of producing more food and meeting the rising demand for fish.

As aquaculture continues to grow further, the need to manage its possible impacts (e.g. ecological, social) will become even more important. One way for aquaculture to make a positive impact is to involve more female scientists. According to a 2015 report published by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) titled "The Role of Women in the Seafood Industry," women make up half of the seafood industry's total working population worldwide and are essential contributors with key roles in fisheries, aquaculture, seafood processing and other related services. However, in the case of aquaculture, although 70% of the global workforce is female, some women have limited access to opportunities and resources (Monfort, 2015).

In order to promote women in the aquaculture industry, The Fish Site, an aquaculture and fisheries website in the UK, started a new series called Women in Aquaculture in January 2018, to shed light on the participation of women. A number of women from various countries and backgrounds have been interviewed over the past few months, including a catfish farmer in Nigeria (Lilian Elekwachi), a women's group in the UK (the Aquagettes), a minnow farmer and bait delivery driver in the USA (Margie Saul) and a specialist in the early detection of ciliate parasites in Singapore (Dr. Giana Gomes).

The vital roles that women play in aquaculture are no surprise to those already in the industry. However, with seafood a key source of nutrition worldwide, an increase in gender equality and an awareness of the roles women play in aquaculture could be crucial for food security. Through its series, The Fish Site aims to give women in aquaculture a platform to share their insights and encourage more women to join the sector. It also hopes to increase awareness among business leaders, enlarge their knowledge about the value that women bring to aquaculture and encourage more women to be considered in new projects or policies. The Women in Aquaculture series will be discussed in more detail during the presentation, with examples of stories, roles and responsibilities in the field.

### KEYWORDS

Aquaculture, Female scientists, Gender equity, Promotion of women, Website series

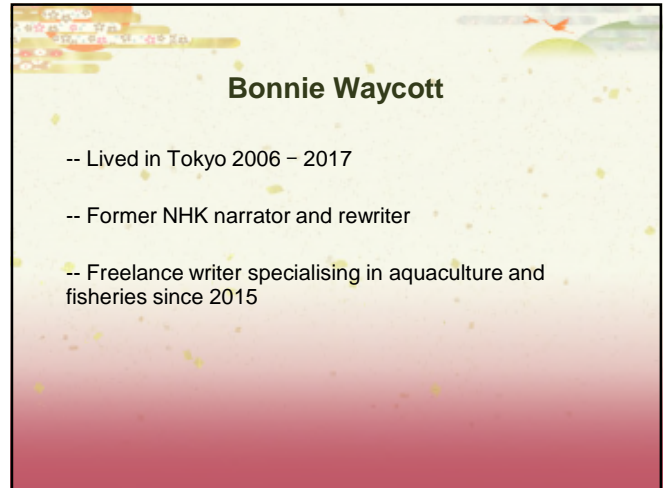
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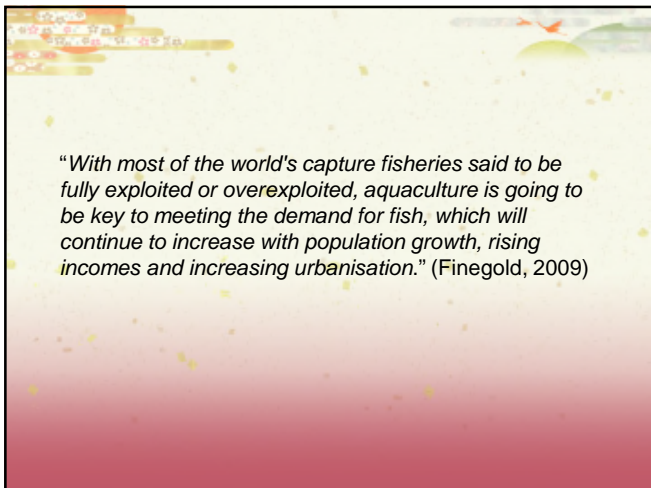
**WOMEN IN AQUACULTURE: STORIES FROM THE FIELD**  
**Bonnie Waycott**  
The Fish Site

Thank you for coming!  
I hope you enjoy the presentation.

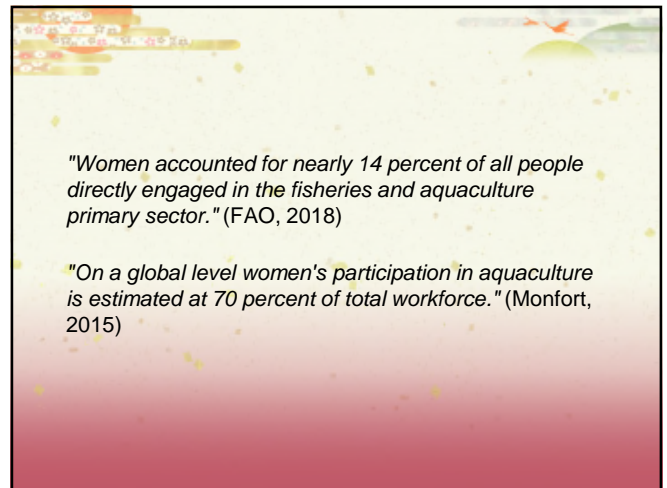


**Bonnie Waycott**

- Lived in Tokyo 2006 – 2017
- Former NHK narrator and rewriter
- Freelance writer specialising in aquaculture and fisheries since 2015



*"With most of the world's capture fisheries said to be fully exploited or overexploited, aquaculture is going to be key to meeting the demand for fish, which will continue to increase with population growth, rising incomes and increasing urbanisation." (Finegold, 2009)*



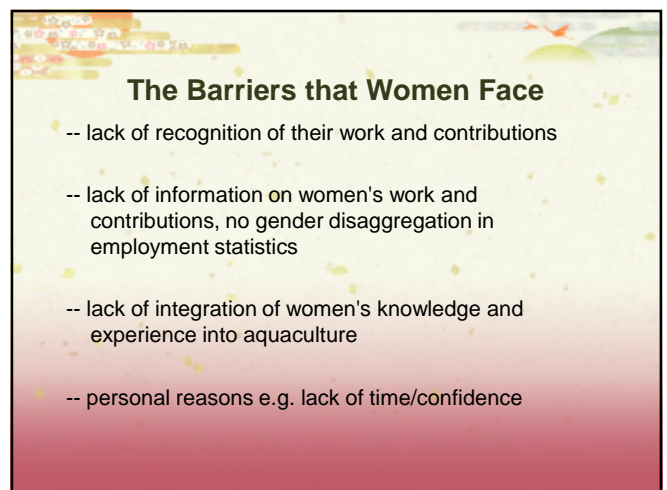
*"Women accounted for nearly 14 percent of all people directly engaged in the fisheries and aquaculture primary sector." (FAO, 2018)*

*"On a global level women's participation in aquaculture is estimated at 70 percent of total workforce." (Monfort, 2015)*



**The Roles of Women in Aquaculture**

- Strongly associated with post-harvest sector (FAO, 2018)
- Rural Aquaculture in China (33% of workforce)
- Freshwater and Cage Culture in Indonesia and Vietnam (42 - 80%)
- Taking care of ponds, feeding fish, measuring pH, checking water quality and keep records in Thailand
- Ensuring fish availability, preserving and processing in Africa (Monfort, 2009)



**The Barriers that Women Face**

- lack of recognition of their work and contributions
- lack of information on women's work and contributions, no gender disaggregation in employment statistics
- lack of integration of women's knowledge and experience into aquaculture
- personal reasons e.g. lack of time/confidence


### How Do We Address This?

- How can we highlight and recognise women in aquaculture?
- Can we encourage more women to join the aquaculture industry?
- How can we allow more women to be considered in aquaculture projects?

### 5m Publishing



### 5m Publishing and The Fish Site

- provides global agricultural/aquaculture news daily
- Topics: health, welfare, nutrition
- Websites: The Poultry Site, The Pig Site,
- Aquaculture website: The Fish Site 
- Aims to share latest aquaculture developments to over 600,000 unique users



### Lilian Elekwachi, Nigeria



*"My dream is to improve Nigeria's aquaculture through new trends and opportunities."* – Lilian Elekwachi, catfish farmer

### The Aquagettes, UK





### The Aquagettes, UK



*"As a group we can inspire change more effectively than we could do as individuals." -- Dr. Sophie Fridman (right), the Aquagettes*

### Margie Saul, USA



*"A woman can do any job that she is interested in." -- Margie Saul, minnow farmer and bait delivery driver*

### Dr. Giana Gomes, Singapore



### Marie Tan, Singapore



*"Whatever the stress, always persevere, because your hard work will always bear fruit." -- Marie Tan, Assistant Fish Health Manager*

### Dr. Giana Gomes and Marie Tan, Singapore



*"I want to make a positive difference in an amazing industry that is transforming quickly and constantly." -- Dr. Giana Gomes, lecturer*

### The Women in Aquaculture Series

- A platform to share stories
- A way for women to connect
- A way to raise awareness of women in aquaculture and their roles
- A way of encouraging both men and women to join the aquaculture industry

## Feedback

*"The Women in Aquaculture series is fantastic, very inspiring and hymn to the diversity of women's experiences, backgrounds and roles in the sector."*

-- Dr. Cecile Brugère, independent consultant and director, Soulfish Research and Consultancy, UK

*"We loved the article you wrote on Natalie. Aquaculture is near and dear to our hearts here and it's especially wonderful since it highlights a woman!"*

-- Ms. Susan Banks, Business Development Manager at the Dorchester Economic Development Office, Hooper's Island, USA

*"I look forward to reading what you and your team will write for your next Women in Aquaculture interview."*

-- Marie Tan, Assistant Fish Health Manager, Barramundi ASIA, Singapore

## Addressing the Lack of Data

-- The Women in Aquaculture series is one small step in highlighting women who work in a new and thriving industry.

-- There appears to be a lack of data and information on women in aquaculture today.

-- We wish to address this lack of data.

## Diversity

-- Diversity is a key word in our series.

-- Diversity generates different life experiences.

-- Applying these experiences to business creates a broad range of thinking.

-- Such thinking is essential for businesses.

## Ideas Going Forward

-- Mentoring programme

-- Stalls at future aquaculture events

-- Aquaculture network to support women

-- Women in Aquaculture breakfasts

Thank you very much for your attention!