



(11)

**EP 4 140 960 A1**

(12)

**EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**  
published in accordance with Art. 153(4) EPC

(43) Date of publication:  
**01.03.2023 Bulletin 2023/09**

(21) Application number: **22786740.5**

(22) Date of filing: **08.06.2022**

(51) International Patent Classification (IPC):  
**C02F 9/04** <sup>(2006.01)</sup> **C02F 1/46** <sup>(2006.01)</sup>  
**C02F 1/467** <sup>(2006.01)</sup> **C02F 101/16** <sup>(2006.01)</sup>  
**C02F 101/30** <sup>(2006.01)</sup> **C02F 103/42** <sup>(2006.01)</sup>  
**A01K 61/10** <sup>(2017.01)</sup>

(52) Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC):  
Y02A 40/81

(86) International application number:  
**PCT/ES2022/070354**

(87) International publication number:  
**WO 2023/281138 (12.01.2023 Gazette 2023/02)**

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
**AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR**  
Designated Extension States:  
**BA ME**  
Designated Validation States:  
**KH MA MD TN**

(30) Priority: **07.07.2021 ES 202131422 U**

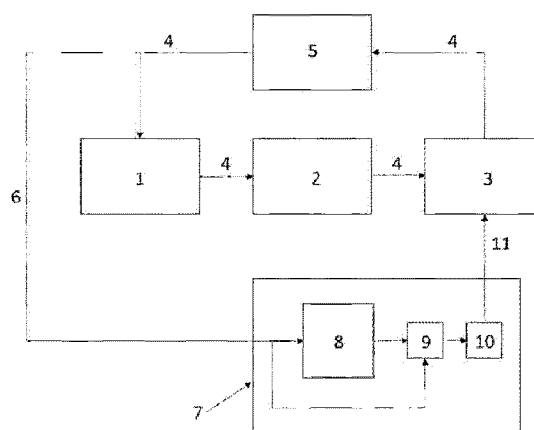
(71) Applicant: **Apria Systems, S.L.**  
**39611 Guarnizo (Cantabria) (ES)**

(72) Inventors:  
• **GOMEZ RODRIGUEZ, Pedro Manuel**  
**39611 GUARNIZO (Cantabria) (ES)**  
• **IBAÑEZ MENDIZABAL, Raquel**  
**39611 GUARNIZO (Cantabria) (ES)**  
• **URTIAGA MENDIA, Ana María**  
**39611 GUARNIZO (Cantabria) (ES)**  
• **ORTIZ URIBE, Inmaculada**  
**39611 GUARNIZO (Cantabria) (ES)**

(74) Representative: **Capitán García, Maria Nuria**  
**Felipe IV no. 10, bajo iz.**  
**28014 Madrid (ES)**

(54) **FRESHWATER-RECIRCULATING AQUACULTURE SYSTEM**

(57) Installation for the recirculation of fresh water of the type that includes a pretreatment module for pretreating the water from an aquaculture tank, an oxidation module for the elimination of contaminants and a recirculation of the treated fresh water to the culture tank, after passing through a post-treatment module that also includes an electrochemical module for generating oxidants arranged in an auxiliary line, outside the main line for recirculating the treated fresh water, which is fed by a water recirculation line from the outlet of the post-treatment module, the electrochemical oxidant generation module being decoupled from the oxidation module and in fluid communication with it through an electrogenerated oxidant feed line.



**Figure 1**

**EP 4 140 960 A1**

## Description

### TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

**[0001]** The present invention lies within the field of freshwater aquaculture, that is, facilities for rearing fish or other freshwater organisms in which the culture water is reused after treatment.

**[0002]** More specifically, the invention provides an installation for the treatment of fresh water in recirculation, including a module for the pretreatment of water from a culture tank, a module for the electrochemical generation of oxidants to eliminate contaminants, and a recirculation of the treated water back to the culture tank. The electrochemical oxidant generation module is arranged in an auxiliary line, outside the main process water recirculation line, that is, the electrochemical oxidant generation module is decoupled from the main water circuit.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

**[0003]** Recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) are well known as systems for the culture of different aquatic organisms where the culture water is reused after it has been treated by physical, chemical and/or biological methods.

**[0004]** Some of these systems are essentially made up of a water pretreatment module for water from an aquaculture tank, an electrochemical oxidation module for the removal of contaminants in which the salinity of the water to be treated is used to generate oxidants and perform electrochemical oxidation and a recirculation of the treated water back to the aquaculture tank.

**[0005]** Although RAS systems represent an advance in the intensification of aquaculture production, they present two main limitations: i) the rapid accumulation of metabolized toxic compounds in the water; and ii) the discharge of significant volumes of wastewater due to the water renewal requirements of conventional treatment systems. To avoid these disadvantages, treatment stations for culture water are implemented in these treatment systems before the culture water is recirculated. An example of these treatment stations is that of stations that include an electrochemical oxidation reactor, in which water treatment is carried out by indirect oxidation through the formation of oxidizing agents. In this regard, see for example EP3225597A1.

**[0006]** This electrochemical oxidation treatment of the culture water enables obtaining a treated water free of contaminants such as total ammonia nitrogen (TAN), nitrites, dissolved organic matter and pathogenic organisms such as bacteria and viruses. Given that this electrochemical oxidation requires the presence of water with a sufficient salt concentration, this treatment is applicable exclusively to aquaculture in salt water, where the salt water can be purified by applying electricity due to the catalytic properties of the materials that make up the electrodes, and this purified salt water is then recirculated

back into the system.

**[0007]** To do this, anodic oxidation reactors are used that are formed by packages of flat geometry electrodes whose active anodes are of the DSA (Dimensionally Stable Anodes) type, with the following processes mainly taking place:

- Online or "online" generation of oxidizing agent, oxidation of the chloride ion ( $\text{Cl}^-$ ) of the salt in seawater and, therefore, present mainly in seawater - generating chlorine gas ( $\text{Cl}_2$ ), which in aqueous solution in turn gives rise to the formation of what is known as active chlorine or free chlorine, which is a mixture of hypochlorous acid ( $\text{HClO}$ ) and hypochlorite ions ( $\text{ClO}^-$ );
- Elimination of NAT: free chlorine reacts with total ammonia nitrogen - nitrogen present in the water from both ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) and ammonium ( $\text{NH}_4^+$ ) - forming mainly nitrogen gas ( $\text{N}_2$ ), which is totally innocuous, and transforming the free chlorine back into chloride, which enables maintaining the salinity of the water;
- Elimination of nitrites: if they are present, they are also oxidized to nitrate, which is reduced to ammonia nitrogen at the cathode, to later be oxidized again to  $\text{N}_2$  via chlorine;
- Elimination of organic matter through the oxidants generated: if there is organic matter in the marine culture water, this organic matter experiences a very rapid oxidation reaction, resulting in the improvement of the value of associated specific quality parameters, such as COD and TOC, and even reaching the mineralization of the organic load.

**[0008]** Since the presence of chlorides in the water of the culture tanks is necessary in these known systems, they are only applicable to marine and high salinity aquaculture. For this reason, it would be desirable to achieve an aquaculture installation for the recirculation of fresh water that could use the aforementioned principles.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

**[0009]** The present invention is defined and characterized by the independent claims, while the dependent claims describe other characteristics thereof.

**[0010]** The present invention provides a fresh water recirculation installation of the type that includes a module for pretreating the water from an aquaculture tank, an oxidation module for the removal of contaminants and recirculation of the treated water to the aquaculture tank, wherein the installation also includes an autonomous electrochemical oxidant generation module arranged in an auxiliary line, outside the main process fresh water recirculation line, that is, with the electrochemical oxidant

generation module decoupled from the oxidation module, but in fluid communication with it.

**[0011]** In this installation, the offline generation of oxidants makes it unnecessary for salt water to circulate through the recirculation line. Thus, the generation of oxidants by electrochemical means is decoupled from the main recirculation line of the already known systems, becoming an auxiliary line. As the generation of oxidants is carried out separately, only this auxiliary line requires salinity. Therefore, fresh water can circulate through the main line and the inherent salinity of the culture medium is preserved.

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

**[0012]** This description is complemented with figure 1, illustrative of an embodiment of the invention.

**[0013]** Figure 1 shows a diagram of a fresh water recirculation installation according to an embodiment of the invention.

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

**[0014]** As mentioned, and referring to Figure 1, the fresh water recirculation installation of the invention is of the type that includes a pretreatment module (2) for pre-treating the water from an aquaculture tank (1), an oxidation module (3) for the elimination of contaminants and a recirculation (4) of the treated fresh water to the aquaculture tank (1), after passing through a post-treatment module (5), characterized in that it also includes an oxidant generation module (7) arranged in an auxiliary line, outside the main line for recirculating the treated fresh water (4), which is fed by a water recirculation line (6) from the outlet of the post-treatment module (5), the oxidant generation module (7) being decoupled from the oxidation module (3) and in fluid communication with it through an electrogenerated oxidant feed line (11).

**[0015]** As can be seen, the oxidant generation module (7) includes a brine tank (8), as well as a static mixer (9) associated to the electrochemical reactor (10), which provides the electrogenerated oxidants to the oxidation module (3).

**[0016]** The subsequent stage of treatment or degradation of the polluting load takes place in the recirculation line (4) after dosing the electrogenerated oxidants, the reaction being favored by the intimate contact of the reagents as they pass through the oxidation module (3).

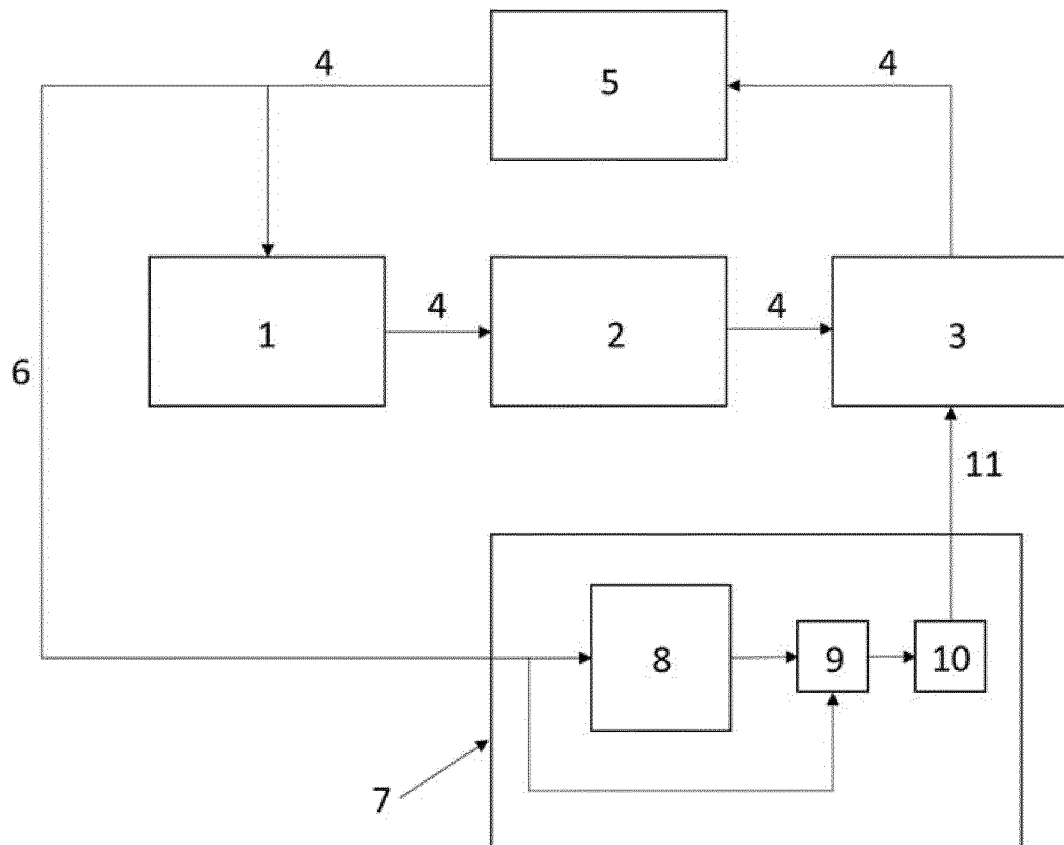
**[0017]** In the installation described here, the dosage of oxidants is adjusted to what is known as breakpoint chlorination, which corresponds to a dose of chlorine such that it allows all the NAT (total ammonia nitrogen) and by-products (chloramines) that may have been formed during the process to be oxidized. In other words, the quantity of oxidants necessary to eliminate the key contaminants is generated by the oxidant generation module (7) described, so as to minimize the amount of residual chlorine in the water and, potentially, reduce the

formation of by-products. The increase in salinity of the main line is compensated by introducing a supply and purge current of fresh water intended for cleaning the pre-treatment and post-treatment modules.

**[0018]** On the other hand, the fact of producing oxidants offline allows optimizing the quantity produced, since it takes place in a controlled environment, as well as adjusting the dosage to the contaminant load present in the fresh water of the line to be treated.

### **Claims**

1. Installation for the recirculation of fresh water of the type that includes a pretreatment module (2) for pre-treating the water from an aquaculture tank (1), an oxidation module (3) for the elimination of contaminants and a recirculation (4) of the treated fresh water to the culture tank (1), after passing through a post-treatment module (5), **characterized in that** it also includes an electrochemical module for generating oxidants (7) arranged in an auxiliary line, outside the main line for recirculating the treated fresh water (4), which is fed by a water recirculation line (6) from the outlet of the post-treatment module (5), the electrochemical oxidant generation module (7) being decoupled from the oxidation module (3) and in fluid communication with it through an electrogenerated oxidant feed line (11).
2. A fresh water recirculation installation according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the oxidant generation module (7) includes a brine tank (8), as well as a static mixer (9) associated to the electrochemical reactor (10), which provides the electrogenerated oxidants to the oxidation module (3).



### Figure 1

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.  
PCT/ES2022/070354

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

See extra sheet

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
C02F, A01K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPODOC, INVENES, WPI

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
D, Y	EP 3225597 A1 (APRIA SYSTEMS S L) 04/10/2017, paragraph [0001]; paragraphs [0017 - 0019]; paragraphs [0037 - 0039]; paragraphs [0042 - 0043]; paragraph [0047]; paragraph [0049]	1, 2
Y	ROMANO A. et al. Optimized energy consumption in electrochemical-based regeneration of RAS wáter.. Separation And Purification Technology, 07/02/2020, Vol. 240, N° 116638, <DOI: 10.1016/j.seppur.2020.116638> See page 2, section 2.3; figure 1B	1, 2
A	US 8617403 B1 (PETERS JASON E ET AL.) 31/12/2013, columns 5 - 7	1, 2
A	US 2019380313 A1 (LAHAV ORI ET AL.) 19/12/2019, paragraph [0001]; paragraph [0016]; paragraphs [0020 - 0024]; paragraph [0037]; paragraphs [0060 - 0064]	1, 2

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☒ See patent family annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance.

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure use, exhibition, or other means.

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"D" document cited by the applicant.

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search  
19/09/2022

Date of mailing of the international search report  
(20/09/2022)

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

OFICINA ESPAÑOLA DE PATENTES Y MARCAS  
Paseo de la Castellana, 75 - 28071 Madrid (España)  
Facsimile No.: 91 349 53 04

Authorized officer  
M. Taboada Rivas

Telephone No. 91 3495356

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (January 2015)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.  
PCT/ES2022/070354

5  
  
10  
  
15  
  
20  
  
25  
  
30  
  
35  
  
40  
  
45  
  
50  
  
55

C (continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of documents, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 2015090670 A1 (ECKELBERRY NICHOLAS ET AL.) 02/04/2015, paragraph [0013]; paragraph [0046]; paragraphs [0051 - 0054]; paragraphs [0062 - 0063]	1

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/ES2022/070354

Information on patent family members

Patent document cited in the search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP3225597 A1	04.10.2017	NONE	
-----	-----	-----	-----
US8617403 B1	31.12.2013	MX2015017713 A	26.07.2016
		MX369544 B	12.11.2019
		JP2016528031 A	15.09.2016
		AU2014302899 A1	11.02.2016
		SG11201510644Y A	28.01.2016
		HK1205538 A1	18.12.2015
		CN104250827 A	31.12.2014
		CN104250827B B	22.02.2019
		WO2014209797 A2	31.12.2014
		WO2014209797 A3	26.02.2015
		US2014377131 A1	25.12.2014
		US9370590 B2	21.06.2016
		CA2847966 A1	12.06.2014
		CA2847966 C	24.11.2015
		EP2818453 A1	31.12.2014
-----	-----	-----	-----
US2019380313 A1	19.12.2019	US2017029299 A1	02.02.2017
		DK2902368T T3	03.10.2016
		DK2640668T T3	01.06.2015
		EP2902368 A1	05.08.2015
		EP2902368 B1	31.08.2016
		CL2013001366 A1	14.02.2014
		US2013292335 A1	07.11.2013
		US9560839 B2	07.02.2017
		EP2640668 A2	25.09.2013
		EP2640668 B1	01.04.2015
		WO2012066554 A2	24.05.2012
		WO2012066554 A3	06.12.2012
-----	-----	-----	-----
US2015090670 A1	02.04.2015	HK1214837 A1	05.08.2016
		JP2016517798 A	20.06.2016
		WO2016094611 A1	16.06.2016
		KR20150144771 A	28.12.2015
		CN105189728 A	23.12.2015
		US2015122741 A1	07.05.2015
		US2015076076 A1	19.03.2015
		WO2014172587 A1	23.10.2014
		WO2014172582 A1	23.10.2014
		WO2014172573 A1	23.10.2014
		WO2014172573 A9	11.12.2014
		EP2986706 A1	24.02.2016
		EP2986706 A4	01.03.2017
		US2014106437 A1	17.04.2014
		US2013299434 A1	14.11.2013
-----	-----	-----	-----

Form PCT/ISA/210 (patent family annex) (January 2015)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/ES2022/070354

CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

*C02F9/04* (2006.01)

*C02F1/46* (2006.01)

*C02F1/467* (2006.01)

*A01K61/10* (2017.01)

*C02F101/16* (2006.01)

*C02F101/30* (2006.01)

*C02F103/42* (2006.01)



**REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION**

*This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.*

**Patent documents cited in the description**

- EP 3225597 A1 [0005]