

STONINGTON, CT¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The city of Stonington, Connecticut (41.20°N, 71.54°W) is located in New London County (USGS 2008). The town is 16 miles from New London, CT, 48 miles from Providence, RI, and 61 miles from Hartford, CT (MapQuest 2006). Stonington covers 42.7 square miles and includes the villages of Mystic, Old Mystic, Stonington Borough, and Pawcatuck (Sabin 2008).



Map 2. Location of Stonington, CT (US Census Bureau 2000a)

Historical/Background

The town of Stonington, founded in 1649, encompasses several villages: the Borough of Stonington; Pawcatuck, (home to many industries); Old Mystic; and Mystic (east of the Mystic River). An area that has at one time had both a large whaling and fishing industry, Stonington is home to Connecticut's last commercial fishing fleet. Many of Stonington's early fishermen were Portuguese. As fish were depleted in the 1950s, the industry took a downturn, and the fleet went from 40 trawlers to nine. The fishermen seem to have strong local support, however. The town leases the docks to the fishermen, and in 2001 they signed a 20 year lease, indicating cooperation between the town and the fishing industry (Ross 2001).

¹ These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

² For purposes of citation please use the following template: "Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov."

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Stonington had a total population of 17,906, up 5.8% from the reported population of 16,924 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.6% were males and 51.4% were females. The median age was 41.7 years and 76% of the population was 21 years or older while 20.4% was 62 or older.

Stonington's age structure (see Figure 1) shows peak in the population between the ages of 40 to 49. The age group of 20-29 is smaller compared to the other age groups, indicating that young people are leaving the community after high school.

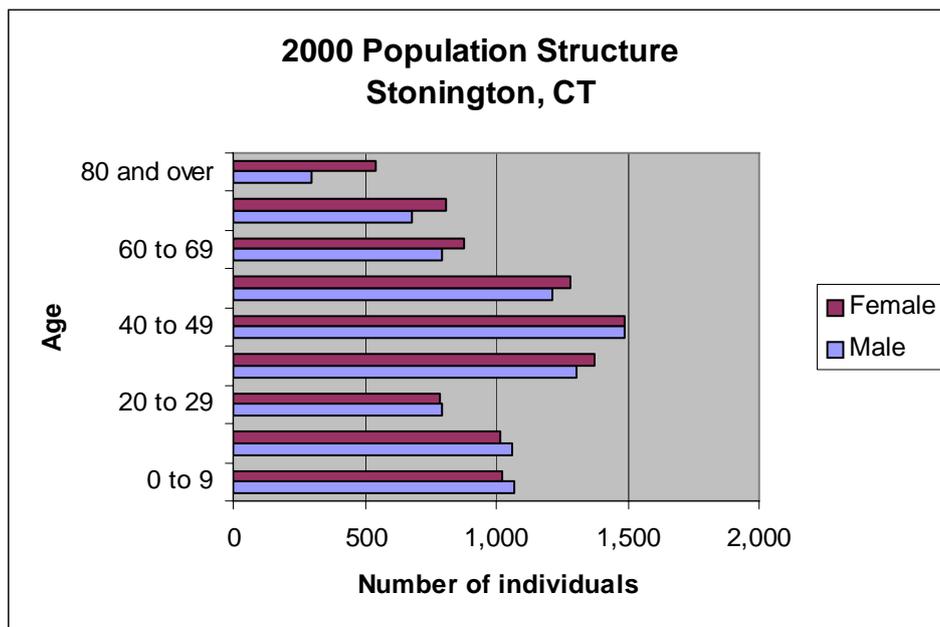


Figure 1. Stonington's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (95.8%) with 0.6% of residents black or African American, 1.3% Asian, 0.4% Native American, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 1.3% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (22.5%), English (18.8%), Italian (16.4%), German (12.1%) and Portuguese (7%). With regard to region of birth, 37.3% were born in Connecticut, 56.7% were born in a different state and 5.2% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2% who were not United States citizens).

³ While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.

⁴ These and all census data, unless otherwise referenced, can be found at U.S. Census: American Factfinder 2000 <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>; census data used are for Stonington town, New London county; this census data is at the level of County Subdivision.

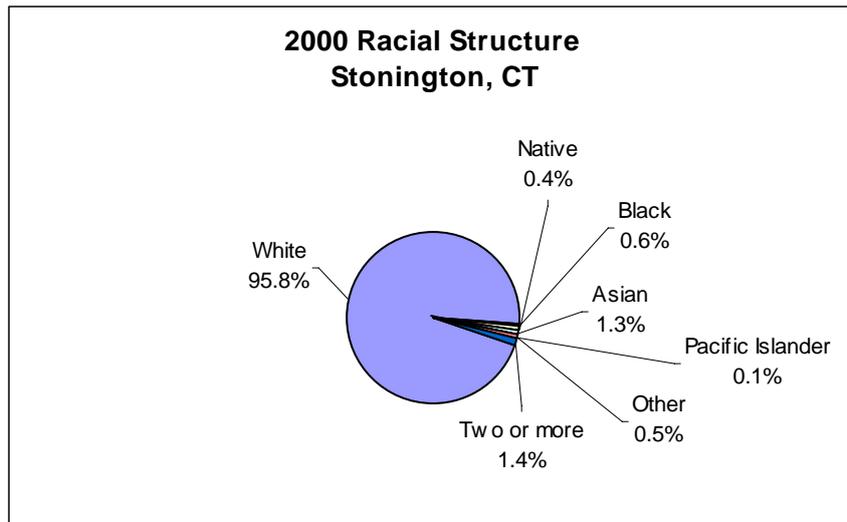


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

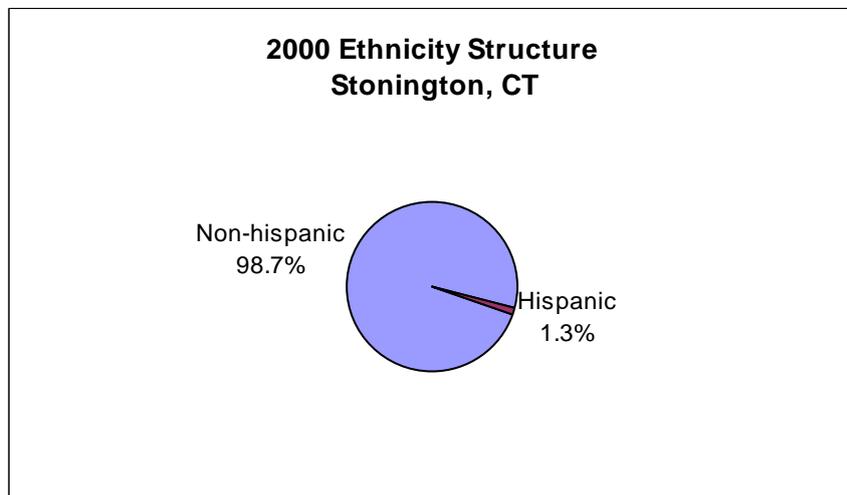


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 92.5% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 7.5% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 2.8% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 88.2% were high school graduates or higher and 34.6% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 5% did not reach ninth grade, 6.8% attended some high school but did not graduate, 28.5% completed high school, 17.7% had some college with no degree, 7.4% received their associate’s degree, 19.2% earned their bachelor’s degree, and 15.4% received either their graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in New London County was Catholic with 33 congregations and 80,563 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were The United Church of Christ (20 with 6,809 adherents), and American Baptist Churches in the USA (19 with 6,502 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 0.3% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

One issue affecting the fishing industry in Stonington is the continued gentrification and resulting increased housing and property prices around the waterfront. Although most fishing activity is based at the Town Dock which is leased from the town, the escalating cost of housing is forcing many fishermen to move away from the waterfront area (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Within the Stonington area, the Pentagon recently included the Naval Submarine Base in nearby Groton on its list of potential base closures, which could have had a significant economic impact on the region. The departure of one of the area's largest employers could have resulted in a loss of thousands of jobs (Baldor 2005). Eventually, the base was removed from the closure list, and is presently working with the Pentagon to upgrade the facilities for future stability.⁵

Cultural attributes

Every year, the last week end in July, the annual Blessing of the Fleet remembers Stonington's fishermen who have died at sea in a two-day celebration with parades, bands, food, music, dancing on the docks, and a Sunday Mass (Ross 2001). [Mystic Seaport](#) in the village of Mystic celebrates seafaring life with a recreation of a historic whaling village and historic tall ships and other restored vessels. The [Mystic Aquarium/Institute for Exploration](#) in Mystic is dedicated to inspiring people to care about and protect the oceans through educating them about the underwater world.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

Major industries in the Stonington area which employ large numbers of residents are the defense industry, based in nearby Groton and New London, and the gaming industry, with two large casinos (Foxwoods, Mohegan Sun) located a short distance away (seCTer 2005).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁶, 65% (14,450 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 2% were unemployed, 0.5% were in the Armed Forces, and 62.5% were employed.

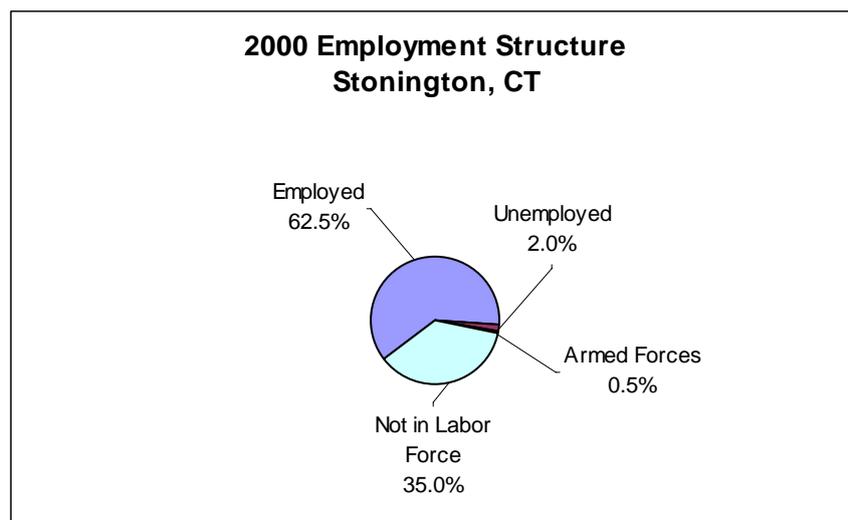


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

⁵ Profile review comments, Eric Donch, harbormaster, 220 S. Anguilla Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06379, October 29, 2007

⁶ Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 48 positions or 0.5% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 683 positions or 7.6% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (20.4%), manufacturing (19.3%), and entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (15.9%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Stonington was \$52,437 (up 32.2% from \$39,664 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$29,653. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 42.2% more per year than females.

The average family in Stonington consisted of 2.88 persons. With respect to poverty, 2.9% of families (down from 15.9% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 5% of individuals earn below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239 through \$35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9 [US Census Bureau 2000a]). In 2000, 19.3% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Stonington had a total of 8,591 housing units of which 89.2% were occupied and 67.8% were detached one unit homes. Approximately one-third (35%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, vans, and boats accounted for 3.1% of housing units; 83.9% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$168,200. Of vacant housing units, 5.6% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied, units 29.3% were renter occupied.

Government

Stonington's local government is comprised of three Selectmen and a town clerk (Town of Stonington 2004).

Fishery involvement in government

The [Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission](#) regulates the harvest of clams, oysters, scallops, and other shellfish within the town waters. The Commission provides permits for both recreational and commercial shellfishing as well as for aquaculture operations for raising shellfish. The town of Stonington has a harbormaster; there are also harbormasters listed for Mystic and Pawcatuck (CTDOT 2008).

Institutional

Fishing associations

The Southern New England Fishermen and Lobstermen Association (SNEFLA) is located in Stonington alongside the Town Dock, and consists of a president, vice-president, and a nine-person board of directors who are elected annually. The approximately 125 members come from Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Started in 1931, the original goal of the organization was to assist fishermen and lobstermen with the common problems like the hijacking of trucked shipments of fish to New York. Members must pay \$100 to join, and then \$20 annually. Stonington Pier grants tie-up space to members of SNEFLA (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Fishing assistance centers

Information on fishing assistance centers in Stonington is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related organizations

The Portuguese Holy Ghost Society in Stonington was founded in 1914, and is made up of Stonington residents of Portuguese descent (Boylan 1987). The society serves as a social nexus to many of the town's fishermen (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Physical

Stonington lies within two hours or less of major research and transportation centers in Boston, Providence, New Haven, Hartford and New York. In addition, Interstate 95 passes through the town. Major airports are located nearby in Groton, Hartford/Springfield, Providence and Boston. Amtrak trains are located in Mystic, New London and Westerly (Hall-Arber 2001).

Stonington town dock fishing pier and memorial is situated in the quaint fishing village of Stonington Borough. Although much of the waterfront property in this village has been converted to residential dwellings, there is still an active marine commercial fishing fleet in the harbor (CTDEP 2007). Stonington's infrastructure consists of a town-owned central fishing wharf (Town Dock) with two processing facilities at which most of the fleet is docked (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁷

Commercial

Stonington has a diversified fishing fleet, which includes gillnetters, draggers, and lobster fishermen (Hall-Arber et al. 2001). [Stonington Seafood Harvesters Inc.](#) is a family operated sea scallops wholesaler and retailer located in Stonington. Bait and tackle stores are found in town (CTDEP 2008).

For 1997-2006, scallops were by far the most significant species landed in Stonington, with average landings over \$5 million. The 2006 landings value was slightly higher than this ten-year average value. There were a wide variety of other species landed in Stonington; lobster, summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, monkfish, largemouth groundfish, smallmouth groundfish, and squid, mackerel, and butterfish all had average landings values of at least \$400,000 (see Table 1). Stonington has several commercially-operated aquaculture facilities, raising and harvesting shellfish in the town waters, and regulated by the town's shellfish commission. Scallops are also commercially harvested within the waters regulated by the town (Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission, no date). Overall, landings in Stonington demonstrated an increasing trend until 2004, when landings were at over \$12 million; they fell off slightly in 2005 and 2006 (see Table 2). The level of home port fishing in all years was significantly lower than the level of landings. Home port fishing was at its highest in 2004 and 2005, at \$2 million and \$3.8 million respectively, but the landings in 2006 had fallen to just over \$100,000. This indicates that most vessels landing in Stonington are home ported elsewhere. There were a number of home ported vessels in Stonington, falling from a high of 24 in 1997 to a low of 17 in 2006. In every year the number of home

⁷ In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

ported vessels far exceeded the owner's city vessels, indicating that many vessel owners reside in other communities.

Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value by Federally Managed Groups of landings in Stonington

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Scallop	5,268,459	5,690,408
Lobster	969,486	800,218
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	669,818	759,058
Monkfish	548,713	107,636
Smallmesh Groundfish⁸	482,725	164,166
Largemesh Groundfish⁹	473,867	234,212
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	445,394	275,485
Other¹⁰	122,965	104,074
Skate	108,756	37,315
Tilefish	6,497	914
Bluefish	4,529	5,839
Herring	3,891	3,518
Dogfish	3,534	13,878
Red Crab	84	0

Vessels by Year¹¹

Table 2. All columns represent vessel permits or landings value combined between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)	Level of fishing home port (\$)	Level of fishing landed port (\$)
1997	24	10	990,539	6,594,784
1998	19	9	418,333	6,940,038
1999	21	11	87,921	8,697,638
2000	19	11	620,660	9,733,402
2001	20	10	1,146,206	9,898,776
2002	23	12	1,737,018	8,479,559
2003	21	12	823,807	9,411,356
2004	23	12	2,043,818	12,376,800
2005	22	12	3,793,828	10,758,099
2006	17	6	105,746	8,196,721

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹²

Level of fishing home port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries associated with home ported vessels

Level of fishing landed port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries landed in location)

⁸ Smallmesh multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

⁹ Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

¹⁰ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

¹¹ Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

¹² The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

Recreational

There are two charter fishing vessels listed for Stonington (CCPBA 2004). Stonington also has a number of residents and visitors participating in recreational shellfishing which is regulated by the town's shellfish commission (Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission, no date).

Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Stonington is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

FUTURE

The Town of Stonington is attempting to receive federal funding to expand the town dock to permit more vessels to dock there. An initial request for funding as part of a transportation appropriations bill was originally rejected by the House of Representatives in 2004.

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