

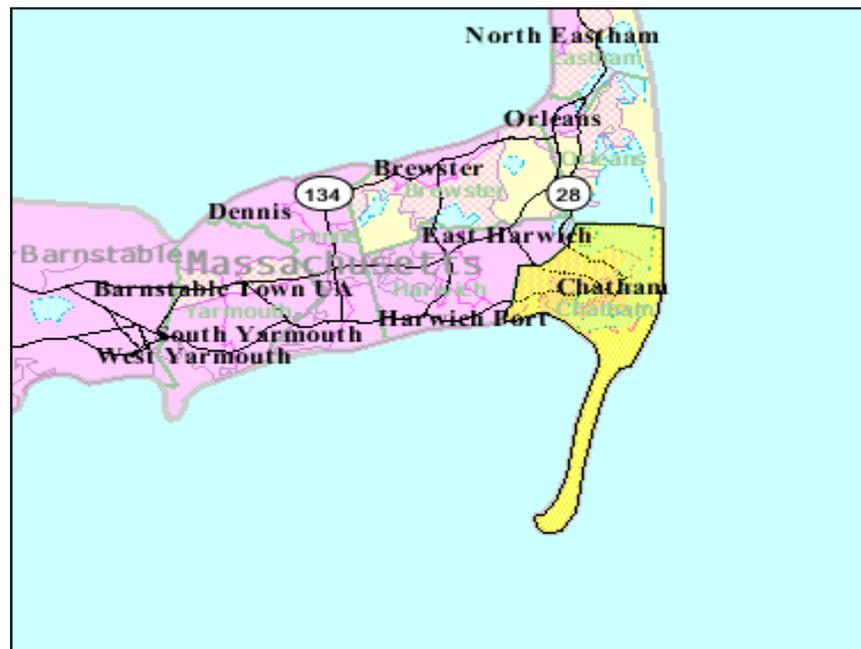
# CHATHAM, MA<sup>1</sup>

## Community Profile<sup>2</sup>

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional Orientation

Chatham, Massachusetts is located at the southeastern tip of Cape Cod in Barnstable County, approximately 89 miles from Boston. To the east is the Atlantic Ocean, to the south is Nantucket Sound, and to the north is Pleasant Bay. The only adjacent town (located at both the north and west town line boundaries) is Harwich. Major geographical features of the town are hills, wooded uplands, extensive barrier beaches and spits, harbors, numerous small estuaries, and salt and freshwater ponds (Town of Chatham nd).



Map 1. Location of Chatham, MA (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

Chatham was an English settlement in the mid 1600s. William Nickerson, a name that is still prominent in the town today, acquired nearly the entire town's area at that time. Because of Chatham's geography and lack of developed transportation, the town's economy and living conditions were vulnerable to warships. The population began to stabilize with the fishing trade, ship building, fishing, and salt making in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. With the building of the railroad in 1887, Chatham quickly became a summer resort destination for wealthy people. By 1950, the

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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](mailto:Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov)."

summer season population was more than double the year round population. According to the Town of Chatham website, Chatham now receives from 20-25,000 visitors each summer (Town of Chatham nd). Although the cost of living is increasing in Chatham from the dominant tourism industry, there is still a fishing community using a range of harvest techniques from the more traditional hook and line and weir fishing to the more modern trawling, gillnetting, scalloping, etc., as well as an important shellfishing industry. While the fishing industry exists and is determined to survive through the difficult period of stock depletion and strict fishery regulations, many changes both in and out of the town are putting pressure on the industry.

### Demographics<sup>3</sup>

According to Census 2000 data (US Census Bureau 2000), Chatham had a total population of 1,667, down 12.9% from the reported population of 1,916 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 52.3% were female and 47.7% were male. The median age was 53.3 years and 86.4% of the population was 18 years or older while 32.5% was 65 or older.

The population structure for Chatham (Figure 1) shows an abnormal age group distribution compared to other small fishing towns in the Northeast. There is a very small percentage of the total population between 30 and 39 years and between 0 and 9 years, but a large number of females between the ages of 40-49. Overall, there are more adults than younger age groups in Chatham and more males than females between the ages of 10-19, 30-39 and 60-69. This larger portion of males in these age groups may indicate fishermen working out of Chatham.

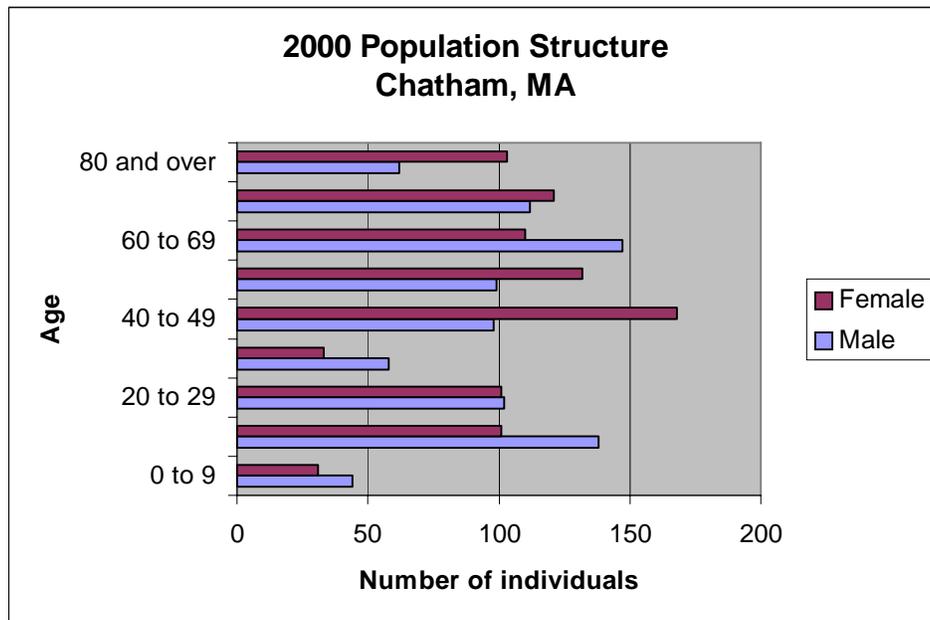


Figure 1. Chatham's Population Structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (95.2%), with 2.2% of residents black or African American, 0.3% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian

<sup>3</sup> 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.

(Figure 2). Only 1.9% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (27.5%), English (26%), German (6.5%), and Italian (6.8%). With regard to region of birth, 54.3% were born in Massachusetts, 36.4% were born in a different state and 8.8% were born outside of the United States (including 4.1% who were not United States citizens).

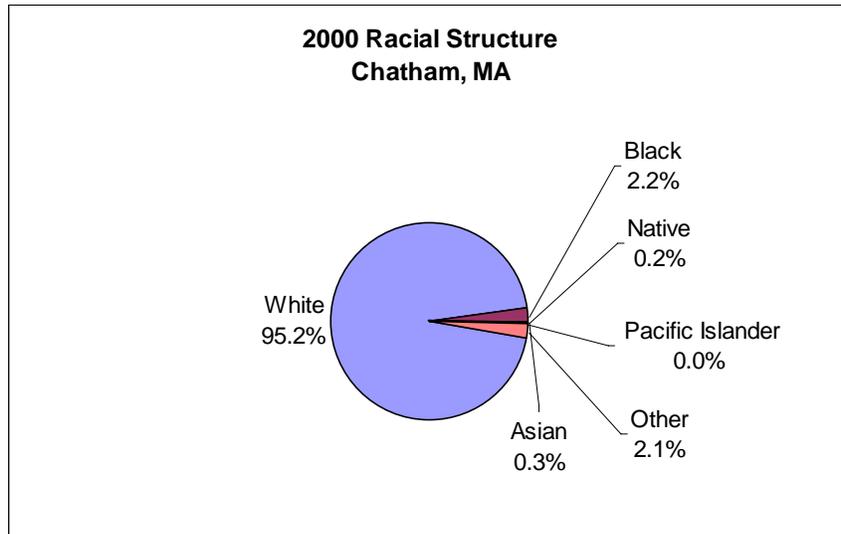


Figure 2. Chatham's Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

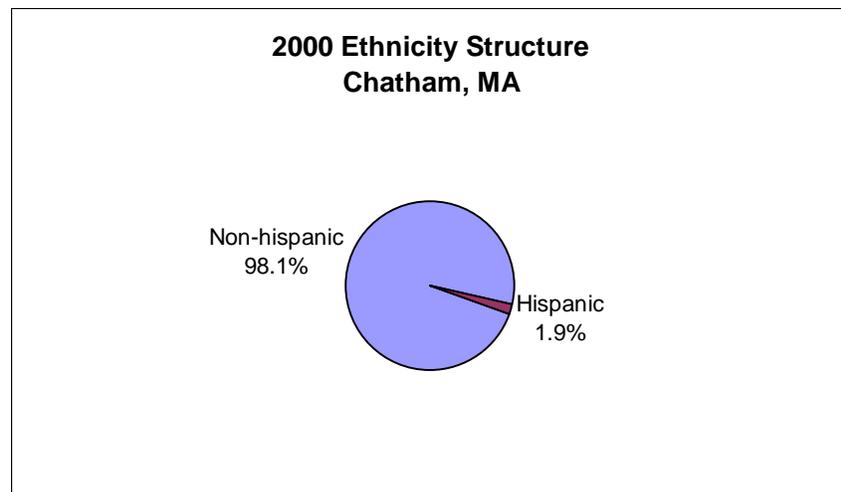


Figure 3. Chatham's Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.1% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 4.9% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 2.9% of the population who spoke English less than 'very well' according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 89.9% were high school graduates or higher and 45.1% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 5.0% did not reach ninth grade, 5.1% attended some high school but did not graduate, 22.2% completed high school, 14.1% had some college with no degree, 8.4% received their associate's degree,

32.8% earned their bachelor's degree, and 12.3% received either their graduate or professional degree.

Although the religion percentages are not available through U.S. Census data, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations in Barnstable County was Catholic with 29 congregations and 89,000 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Episcopal (11 with 8,028 adherents) and Baptist (7 with 1,387 adherents). The total numbers of adherents to any religion was down 20.7% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

### **Issues/Processes**

Information gathered during a visit to the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association (CCCHFA) in 2004 revealed that the fishing industry in Chatham faces similar challenges to other fishing port communities in the Northeast. With tourism and the increase of gentrification, the fishing industry is threatened by a lack of mooring space and the threat of land-based fishing infrastructure closing down. At the same time many believe that the history of fishing has been a large part of the allure that draws tourists to Chatham, so it could lose its cultural appeal if the fisheries really did fade away. With a group such as the CCCHFA, the fishermen appear to be fighting the challenges of stricter catch regulations and decreased catches by finding alternative ways to keep their fishing industry alive. Also refer to section "Fisheries involvement in the government" for more information on CCCHFA sector allocation.

The Cape Cod Regional Economic Development Council (CCREDC) has not recognized the importance of commercial fishing on Cape Cod, however; they rely on census data which hides fishermen's incomes in the self employment and agricultural categories. Melissa Weidman of CCCHFA estimated that there are 10,000 fishermen on Cape Cod, while the CCREDC reported only 50 fishermen. One example of an important business to fishing in Chatham is Cape Fish Supply. It is the biggest supplier for the entire Cape. People come here from Provincetown with the next biggest supplier in New Bedford.<sup>4</sup>

The Town of Chatham has made many significant financial investments in the commercial fishing industry. In early 2006, the taxpayers invested \$1 million in the Chatham Municipal Fish Pier. The Town dredges the channel and the harbor at the fish pier twice a year due to the constant shifting shoals in the area.<sup>5</sup>

There is controversy over the harvesting of shellfish in the National Seashore Wilderness Sanctuary (Monomoy). Some people are trying to organize against the extraction of shellfish in this area. This is the most important shellfishery in New England. A few years ago Chatham had \$4.5 million industry from shellfish, while the entire state of Maine had only \$9 million. The process of turning the clam beds (a result of extraction) actually releases sulfates from the soil producing a more conducive environment for other creatures, including more shellfish.<sup>6</sup>

### **Cultural attributes**

The [Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association](#) plays a major role in the Chatham community. Each year they host their annual Hookers Ball gala in the summer. The event's proceeds help support the work of the grassroots sustainable fishery organization. The

---

<sup>4</sup> Personal Communication, Melissa Roberts Weidman, Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association, 210 E. Orleans Road, North Chatham, MA 02650, August 2004

<sup>5</sup> Profile review comment, Susan Rocanello, Chatham Assistant Harbormaster, 594 Main St. Chatham, MA 02633, September 12, 2007

<sup>6</sup> Personal Communication, Personnel Manager, Chatham Bars Inn, Shore Rd., Chatham, MA 02633, August 2004

CCCHFA also started a [Chatham Fish Pier Program](#), where local retired fishermen explain details about the boats as they unload their catch. Another way the community remembers its maritime history is through the [Chatham Maritime Festival](#), which celebrates Chatham's maritime heritage with an exciting day of contests, races and a fishing parade. There are web cams ([TeleCAM](#)) for the Chatham fish pier and Stage Harbor, where visitors can go online to view boat activity and get panorama's of the harbor. The TeleCAMs are updated every half hour from sunrise to sunset.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Current Economy

The economy of Chatham drives the population fluctuation as tourists and seasonal residents come in and out for the summer. Representative of this is the fact that the two businesses in Chatham that employ the most people are summer resorts (Chatham Bars Inn and Chatham Wayside Inn). [Chatham Bars Inn](#), established in 1914, is the largest employer in Chatham with approximately 200 year-round employees and 550-600 summer employees. The resort provides housing for some of its seasonal employees, the majority of which are from other countries or are college students.<sup>7</sup> Chatham is also notable in that it has "twice the Cape Cod average of self-employed persons, a higher-than-regional average number of fishermen, and more highly valued residential properties" (Town of Chatham nd).

According to the U.S. Census 2000<sup>8</sup>, 51.6% of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 2.0% were unemployed, 2.0% were in the Armed Forces, and 47.6% were employed.

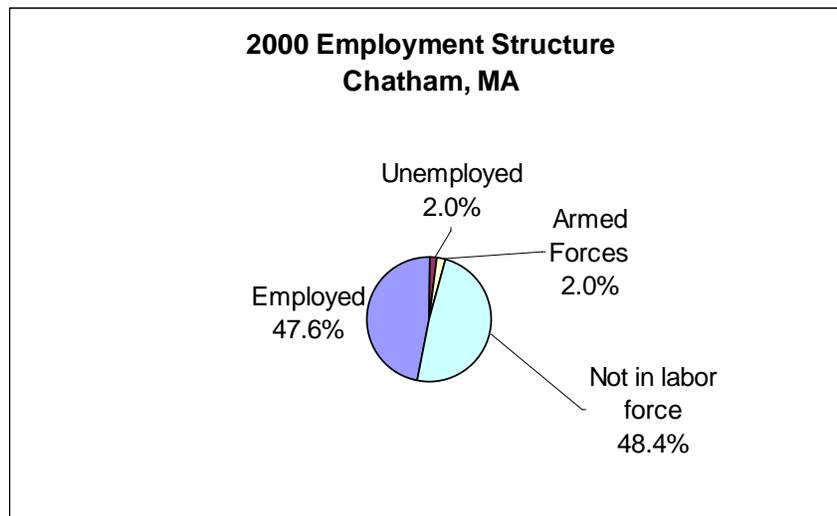


Figure 4. Employment structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 26 positions or 3.6% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 122 positions or 16.8% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (19.1%), arts, entertainment, recreation,

<sup>7</sup> Personal Communication, Personnel Manager, Chatham Bars Inn, Shore Rd., Chatham, MA 02633, August 2004

<sup>8</sup> 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.

accommodation and food services (17.9%), retail trade (17.3%), construction (10.7%), and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (10.2%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Chatham was \$47,037 (up 76.1% from \$26,716 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$28,542. For full-time year round workers, men made approximately 3.3% more per year than females.

The average family in Chatham consisted of 2.52 persons. With respect to poverty, 0.9% of families (down from 9.5% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 7.8% of individuals were below the official 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 2000b). In 2000, 23.9% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Chatham had a total of 1,891 housing units of which 43.1% were occupied and 85.4% were detached one unit homes. Over one third (36%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs, and vans accounted for no housing units; 98.9% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$372,900. Of vacant housing units, 89.5% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 27.2% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

The town of Chatham was incorporated as a town in 1730. The town is operated by a Town Manager, a Board of Selectmen, and an Open Town Meeting (Town of Chatham 2007).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

The Town owns and operates a shellfish upwelling system in Stage Harbor as part of their shellfish program.<sup>9</sup> They also have a harbor master's office.

NOAA Fisheries, [Fisheries Statistics Office](#), has a port agent based off Main Street in Chatham. Port agents sample fish landings and provide a 'finger-on-the-pulse' of their respective fishing communities.

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

The Chatham maritime community is supported by the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association (CCCHFA). The association began in 1993 with a small group of commercial hook and line fishermen who got together to discuss problems in the industry. Their purpose is to address problems by building sustainable fisheries for the future, and representing the traditional fishing communities. One of the programs that the CCCHFA created is the S.S. Shanty Community Fisheries Action Center (CCCHFA 2005). They also spearheaded the creation of and received the first sector allocation for the groundfish fishery (Plante 2004). This initiative has encouraged other sectors to form in the area and region. The purpose of the Action Center is to empower fishermen, educate concerned residents, and facilitate collaboration between conservation, fishing and community organizations to generate a more active and effective marine community on Cape Cod (CCCHFA 2005).

The Massachusetts Fisherman's Partnership focuses on issues for fishermen in different ports in Massachusetts. The Partnership responded to the need of health care for fishermen and their families by developing the Fishing Partnership Health Insurance Plan with federal and state

---

<sup>9</sup> Profile review comment, Stuart Smith, Harbormaster, 594 Main St. Chatham, MA 02633, September 19, 2007

aid. This plan has been in place since 1997 and reduces the amount of money that fishermen's families have to pay to be covered by health insurance (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

#### *Fishing assistance centers*

No fishing assistance centers that provide monetary support were identified in Chatham during this research; however, the CCCHFA could be classified as an assistance center.

#### *Other fishing-related organizations*

Hook and line fishermen of Cape Cod established the [CCCHFA](#) in 1993. This grassroots organization now has 2,500 members and several programs to support Cape Cod traditional maritime communities and increase awareness about the fishing culture in the area. Another organization that is vital to the Chatham community is the [Friends of Chatham Waterways](#). The association has an interest in the broader municipal issues that may have an impact on Chatham's maritime heritage or upon the natural environment of the community.

### **Physical**

Chatham is 17 miles east of Hyannis, 89 miles southeast of Boston, and 223 miles away from New York City (State of Massachusetts 2007). Chatham is supported by the State Routes 28 and 137. There is no freight rail service, but the network of intermodal facilities serving eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island is easily accessible. Chatham is a member of the [Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority](#) (CCRTA), which operates a b-bus demand response service. The b-bus is a convenient, low-cost public transportation system, picking residents up at their homes on Cape Cod. The CCRTA provides this door-to-door, ride-by-appointment service for people of all ages for trips for any purpose, including school, work, shopping, college, doctor's appointments, visiting friends and even Boston medical trips. B-buses carry up to 19 passengers and are all lift-equipped. The Chatham Municipal Airport is a General Aviation (GA) facility located 2 miles NW of town, and scheduled airline flights are available at the Hyannis Municipal Airport in the neighboring town of Barnstable (State of Massachusetts 2007). The nearest international airports are Logan International in Boston (90 miles away) and T.F Green Airport in Warwick, RI (100 miles away) (MapQuest nd). There are three commercial piers located in Stage Harbor, all of which are privately owned.<sup>10</sup>

## **INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>11</sup>**

### **Commercial**

Cod had the highest landings in pounds within state waters for 2003. Shellfishing is also very important in Chatham. Approximately 150 people depend on the shell fishing in

---

<sup>10</sup> Profile review comment, Stuart Smith, Harbormaster, 594 Main St. Chatham, MA 02633, September 19, 2007

<sup>11</sup> 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.

Chatham.<sup>12</sup> Federal landed value data reveals that largemesh groundfish were the highest value catch between the years 1997 and 2006. There are a variety of landed groups in Chatham, with largemesh groundfish, “Other”, and lobster yielding the highest values (Table 1). The number of vessels whose home port was Chatham stayed relatively consistent over the 1997-2006 time period, with a small spike in 2002 and a significant decline in 2006. Likewise, the level of fishing home port value stayed consistent during the same time. The number of vessels whose owner’s city was Chatham fluctuated between 61 and 94 vessels, showing the same decline in 2006. The level of fishing landed port was also stable, with a spike in 2001 (Table 2).

### Landings by Species

Table 1 Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
<b>Largemesh Groundfish</b> <sup>13</sup>	1
<b>Other</b> <sup>14</sup>	2
<b>Lobster</b>	3
<b>Scallop</b>	4
<b>Monkfish</b>	5
<b>Dogfish</b>	6
<b>Skate</b>	7
<b>Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish</b>	8
<b>Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass</b>	9
<b>Bluefish</b>	10
<b>Smallmesh Groundfish</b> <sup>15</sup>	11
<b>Surf Clams, Ocean Quahog</b>	12
<b>Tilefish</b>	13
<b>Herring</b>	14

(Note: Only rank value is provided because value information is confidential in ports with fewer than three vessels or fewer than three dealers, or where one dealer predominates in a particular species and would therefore be identifiable.)

### Vessels by Year<sup>16</sup>

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
<b>1997</b>	146	87
<b>1998</b>	131	75
<b>1999</b>	130	77
<b>2000</b>	131	79
<b>2001</b>	135	81
<b>2002</b>	162	94
<b>2003</b>	161	94
<b>2004</b>	145	82
<b>2005</b>	136	72
<b>2006</b>	117	61

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence<sup>17</sup>)

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication, Stuart Moore, Chatham Department of Coastal Resources, 549 Main Street, Chatham, MA 02633, (508) 945-5184, August 2004

<sup>13</sup> Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

<sup>14</sup> “Other” species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

<sup>15</sup> Smallmesh multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

<sup>16</sup> 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.

## Recreational

There are at least 27 charter fishing businesses located in Chatham, five of which work from the Chatham Fish Pier.<sup>18</sup> Due to restricted Days at Sea regulations, especially for groundfish, and to limits on striped bass (as of August 2004), some commercial fishermen use their fishing boats as day charters. This allows fishermen to still make money at sea even when they cannot catch and sell fish commercially. Thursday through Saturday fishermen cannot sell their catches, so catch and release fishing is practiced by the few that are combination commercial/recreational charter fishermen.<sup>19</sup>

## Subsistence

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

## FUTURE

During a field visit to Chatham by the NEFSC Social Science Branch community profilers (August 2004), the CCCHFA mentioned that intense pressure exists on the coastal fishing infrastructure due to gentrification and increasing costs. In Stage Harbor, there are three commercial piers which are privately owned; two by families and the third by the Stage Harbor Yacht Club. While all are presently used for commercial off-loading, any of these piers could easily be converted to a use inconsistent with the needs of the commercial fishing industry in Chatham.<sup>20</sup>

## REFERENCES

- Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA). 2000. Interactive Maps and Reports, Counties [cited Aug 2004]. Available at: <http://www.thearda.com>
- Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fisherman's Association (CCCHFA). 2005. The Shanty, Community Fisheries Action Center. Available from: <http://www.ccchfa.org/>
- Hall-Arber M, Dyer C, Poggie J, McNally J, Gagne R. 2001. New England's Fishing Communities. Cambridge (MA): MIT Sea Grant 01-15. Available at: <http://seagrant.mit.edu/cmss/>
- MapQuest. nd. Web site [cited Oct 2008]. Available at: <http://www.mapquest.com>
- Plante JM. 2004. Forming a management sector. Commercial Fisheries News, September 2004.
- State of Massachusetts. 2007. Town of Chatham, Massachusetts. DHCD Community Profiles. Available from: <http://www.mass.gov>
- State of Massachusetts. 2007. Town of Chatham, Massachusetts. DHCD Community Profiles. Transportation. Available from: <http://www.mass.gov>
- Town of Chatham. nd. About Chatham. Available at: <http://www.town.chatham.ma.us>
- Town of Chatham. 2003. Economics. Available at: [http://www.town.chatham.ma.us/Public\\_Documents](http://www.town.chatham.ma.us/Public_Documents)
- Town of Chatham. 2007. Town Departments. Available at: [http://www.town.chatham.ma.us/Public\\_Documents/ChathamMA\\_WebDocs/deptindex](http://www.town.chatham.ma.us/Public_Documents/ChathamMA_WebDocs/deptindex)

---

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Profile review comment, Stuart Smith, Harbormaster, 594 Main St. Chatham, MA 02633, September 19, 2007

<sup>19</sup> pers. com. Captain Mike during field visit to Chatham, August 4, 2004 with JE, PS, and LS.

<sup>20</sup> Profile review comment, Stuart Smith, Harbormaster, 594 Main St. Chatham, MA 02633, September 19, 2007

US Census Bureau. 1990. Decennial Census [cited Aug 2004]. Available from:  
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

US Census Bureau. 2000. Fact Sheet: Chatham town, Barnstable County, Massachusetts. [cited August 2004]. Available from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

US Census Bureau. 2000b. Poverty Thresholds 2000. [cited August 2004] Available from:  
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh00.html>