

# BAR HARBOR, ME<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

The town of Bar Harbor, Maine is located at 44.12° N, 68.36° W (State of Maine 2004) on Mount Desert Island, in Hancock County. The town is roughly 45 square miles in area, is 28 miles long, and has about an equivalent length of coastline (BHCC 2007). The town sits on Frenchman's Bay (USGS 2008).



Map 1. Location of Bar Harbor, ME (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

The first Europeans to settle in what is now the town of Bar Harbor named their town “Eden”, not for its beauty, but after a man named Richard Eden. The name was changed to Bar Harbor in 1918. Shipbuilding and fishing were early industries of this area, like they were for much of the Maine coast. In the 1840s, the painters Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, of the Hudson River Valley School, came to Mount Desert Island and began to paint its scenery. They made the island famous, and the wealthy people who purchased their paintings began to travel to this area to see its natural beauty for themselves (Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce 2007). The first hotel, Agamont House, and the first pier were built here in 1855 to accommodate an

<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).”

increasing number of visitors. A number of wealthy visitors from New York, Boston, and elsewhere began to build enormous “cottages” (Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce 2007). By 1880, there were 30 hotels and visitors would arrive by train and ferry. In 1947, the island experienced a severe drought, resulting in a fire which burned much of the island, including many homes (Lombard 2004).

Today the town of Bar Harbor is made up of a number of different villages. The largest of these is the village of Bar Harbor (BHCC 2007). Bar Harbor borders on Acadia National Park, which brings more than two million visitors to the area each year (NPS 2007).

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

According to Census 2000 data<sup>4</sup>, Bar Harbor town has a total population of 4,820, up 8.5% from a reported population of 4,443 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 46.7% were male and 53.3% were females. The median age was 40.6 years and 75.6% of the population was 21 years or older while 18.4% was 62 or older.

The population structure of Bar Harbor (see Figure 1) shows the most populous age grouping in the 40-49 year old age group. Females outnumber males in every age group except for 0-9. Bar Harbor experiences a slight dip in the population for the 20-29 age group; however, it is not as dramatic as that seen in many other fishing communities. This is probably the result of a number of jobs for young people in the area, in addition to the presence of a college.

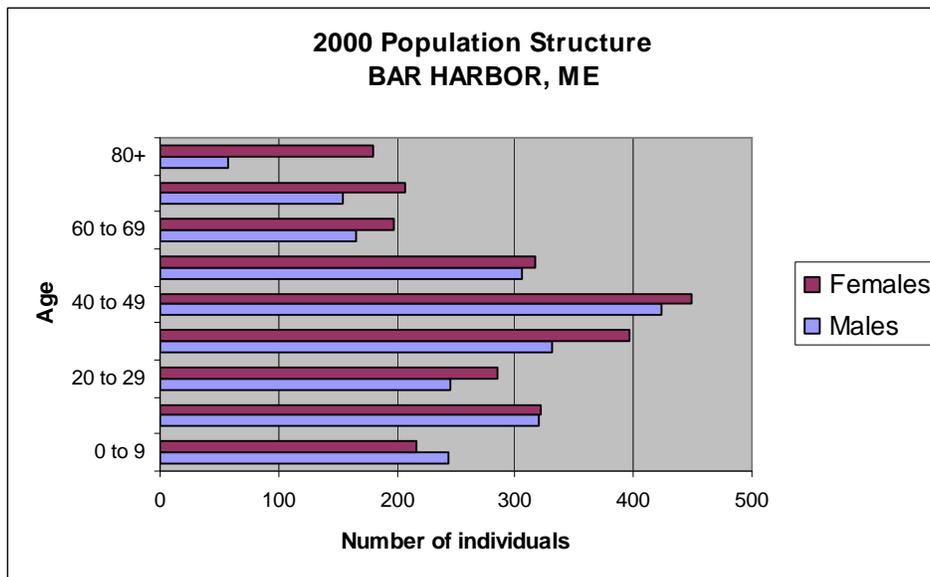


Figure 1. Population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (98.7%), with 0.1% of residents black or African American, 0.9% 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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 Bar Harbor town, Hancock county, Maine (cited Jul 2007)

(see Figure 2). Only 0.6% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (25.9%), Irish (18.6%), and German (9.2%). With regard to region of birth, 52.5% were born in Maine, 43.3% were born in a different state and 3.3% were born outside of the U.S. (including 0.0% who were not United States citizens).

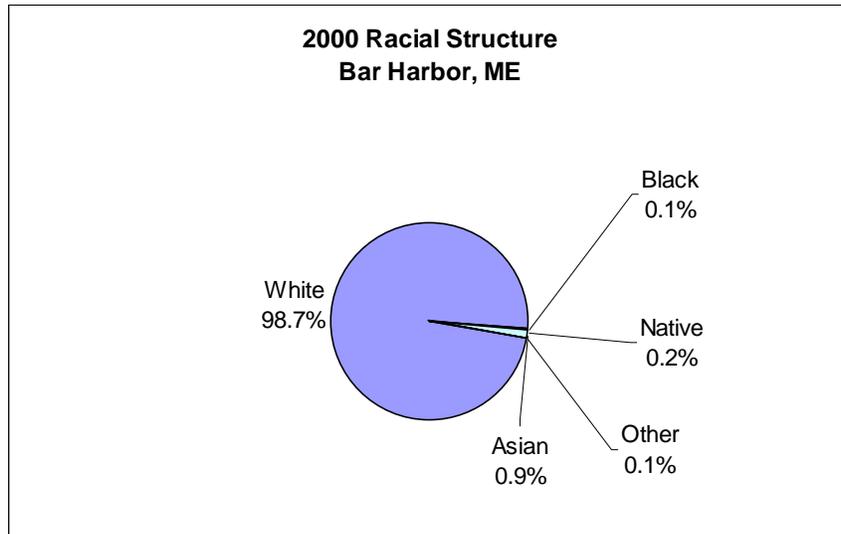


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

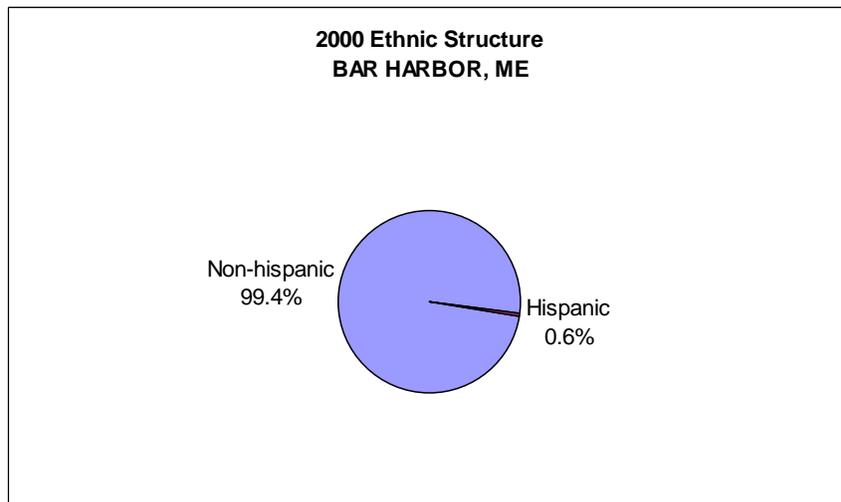


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.2% of the population, only English is spoken in the home, leaving 4.8% in homes where a language other than English is spoken, and including 1.4% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 92.0% were high school graduates or higher and 42.1% has a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over 3.1% did not reach ninth grade, 4.9% attended some high school but did not graduate, 26.2% completed high school, 18.5% had some college with no degree, 5.2% received an associate’s degree, 24.3% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 17.8% received a graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through U.S. Census data, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives in 2000 the religion with the highest number of congregations in Hancock County was Catholic with 10 congregations and 6,292 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were United Church of Christ (19 with 1,957 adherents), and American Baptist Churches in the USA (17 with 1,774 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 25.2% from 1990 (ARDA 2000). Bar Harbor has nine houses of worship, including: one Baptist, one Congregational, two Episcopal, one Pentecostal, one Quaker, one Roman Catholic, one Jehovah's Witnesses, and one other denomination (Ellsworth American 2007).

### **Issues/Processes**

The number of cruise ships visiting Bar Harbor has been increasing in recent years; 2007 will see 91 cruise ships using the port, which at times puts a strain on traffic in the small village (Bangor Daily News). Since 1997, the number of cruise ship passengers has increased from 27,000 to 128,000 each year. The town neither encourages nor discourages cruise ships; they provide an economic boost to the community but also bring congestion (Bangor Daily News 2007).

In 2006, the State of Maine passed the Working Waterfront Tax Law, to address the problem of working waterfront property being heavily taxed based on its projected market value. The goal of this tax is "to encourage the preservation of working waterfront land and to prevent the conversion of working waterfront land to other uses as the result of economic pressures caused by the assessment of that land for purposes of property taxation." The law requires the tax assessor to value the property based on what it is worth as working waterfront land, rather than what its market value would be if it were sold and converted to residential or other uses (State of Maine 2005).

### **Cultural attributes**

Bar Harbor hosts a Working Waterfront Celebration each year. Held on the Bar Harbor pier, the event raises awareness about the town's working waterfront and raises money for the Fishermen's Health Fund. The celebration includes a traditional seafarer's memorial and a blessing of the fleet. There are competitions such as the Best Decorated Boat, the Fastest Trap Pull, and the Baiting Pockets Race. The event also includes the Mooring Ball, with a barbecue and live music, and educational booths (Maine Coast Now 2007).

The [Mount Desert Oceanarium](#) in Bar Harbor features a lobster museum and a working lobster hatchery, where visitors can learn all about lobsters and the history of lobster fishing in Maine. The [Lulu Lobster Boat](#) tour takes passengers on a traditional Downeast lobster boat to learn about lobsters and the lobster industry, and observe lobster traps being pulled. [Bar Harbor Whale Watch](#) also offers a lobster tour where passengers take part in pulling lobster traps and have a chance to see and touch crabs, lobsters, sea urchins, and other sea creatures. The [George B. Dorr Natural History Museum](#) is located at the College of the Atlantic, and provides interpretive exhibits on the natural history of Maine.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

The largest employers in Bar Harbor are as follows: [Jackson Laboratory](#) (1,240 employees); MDI hospital (322 employees); and [College of the Atlantic](#) (131 employees)

(Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce 2005). There are a number of research and academic institutions located in Bar Harbor. The Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, which conducts genetics research, has 1,172 full-time employees and 47 part-time employees at its Bar Harbor facility. The [Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory](#) in Bar Harbor employs 41 staff and scientists year-round, and adds an additional 200 students and scientists during the summer months. The laboratory conducts research “in the areas of marine biomedicine and physiology, marine molecular biology and functional genomics, bioinformatics, environmental toxicology and toxicogenomics, transgenic species, and neuroscience” (MDIBL 2007). The College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor has 40 full- and part-time faculty, a staff of around 75, plus a number of adjunct faculty and research associates.

According to the US Census 2000, 66.9% (2,662 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 5.6% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 61.3% were employed.

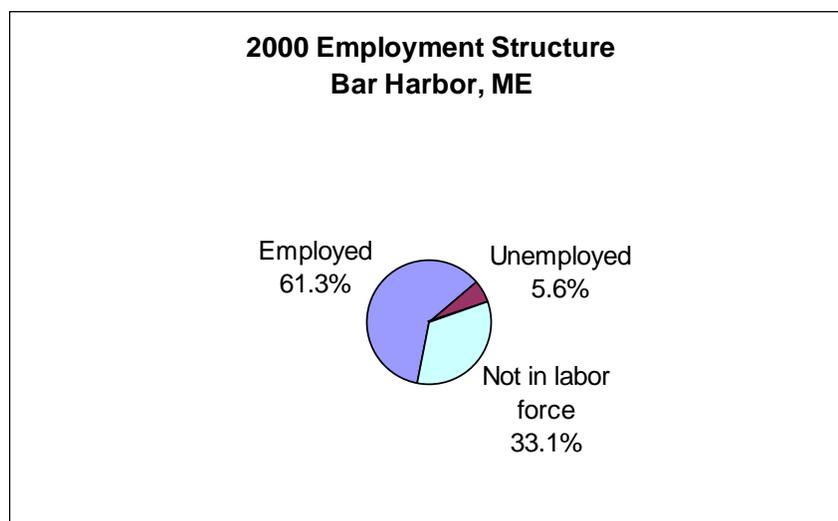


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data<sup>5</sup>, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 55 positions or 2.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 282 positions or 11.6% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (21.9%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (16.8%), and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (13.9%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Bar Harbor was \$37,481 (up 33.4% from \$28,100 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$24,103. For full-time year round workers, males made 22.3% more per year than females.

The average family in Bar Harbor consists of 2.78 persons. With respect to poverty, 4.9% of families (up from 4.2% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 8.9% of individuals earn below the official US 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

<sup>5</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.

Census Bureau 2000a]). In 2000, 29.4% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Bar Harbor had a total of 2,805 housing units of which 76.4% were occupied and 69.4% were detached one-unit homes. Close to one-third (32.3%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 3.6% of housing units; 92.0% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$143,100. Of vacant housing units, 18.7% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 38.3% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

The town of Bar Harbor is governed by a seven-member Town Council. It also has a Town Manager and a Town Clerk (Town of Bar Harbor 2007).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

Bar Harbor has a Harbor Department, a Harbor Committee, and a Marine Resources Committee. The Marine Resources Committee issues recreational and commercial shellfishing licenses. There is a Shellfish Warden in the town, who also serves as the harbor master. In the town's recently drafted Comprehensive plan, one of its goals is "to protect Bar Harbor's marine resources industry, its coves and harbor and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public" (Town of Bar Harbor 2007).

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

The [Maine Lobstermen's Association](#) (MLA) was founded in 1954, and works to protect the lobster resource and the lobstermen's way of life. The association was founded by lobstermen with a goal of empowering Maine's lobster industry by representing lobstermen with a united front. The MLA is the largest commercial fishing industry group on the east coast, and represents the interests of 1200 lobstermen.

### *Fishing assistance centers*

The [Maine Sea Coast Mission](#), headquartered in Bar Harbor, is a non-denominational religious group which offers a number of programs such as serving as a ministry to coastal and island communities, assisting local residents with housing, and providing food and health services. The organization operates from a boat, the *Sunbeam*, which travels to islands providing health care, serving as a meeting place, and sometimes serving as an icebreaker to clear harbors. The group has a fisheries resource management policy consultant who attends meetings and meets with communities.

The Working Waterfront Coalition is a statewide collaboration of various industry associations, non-profits, and government agencies with the goal to support Maine's working waterfronts. The [Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program](#), administered by the Department of Marine Resources, provides money to applicants such as municipalities, fishing co-ops, private commercial fisheries businesses and more, ranging from \$7,000 to \$475,000. The intention of the program is to preserve commercial fisheries working waterfronts and to help secure property for these businesses. As of December 2007, the \$2 million pilot program has reportedly supported over 400 jobs, 194 boats, and assured access to clam flats, parking, wharfage and fisheries in six towns (Maine DMR 2005). Voters approved an additional \$3 million to continue the program in 2007 (Vote 4 Maine 2007).

### *Other fishing-related institutions*

The College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor offers a marine studies track for its students, with classes such as “The Cultural Ecology of the Maine Fishing Industry”, “Fisheries and their Management”, “Piloting and Navigation”, and “Salmon: History and Policy of North Atlantic Fisheries” (COA 2007). The Island Research Center at the College of the Atlantic focuses on studying the flora and fauna of islands, both locally and internationally (COA 2007). Allied Whale is a marine mammal research institute based at College of the Atlantic (COA 2007). There is also the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory which “is an independent, not-for-profit marine and biomedical research facility and an international center for comparative physiology, toxicology and marine functional genomic studies” (MDIBL 2007).

The [Maine Fishermen’s Forum](#) was founded in 1976, and its goal is to provide continuous opportunities to educate the public and the fishing industry about marine resource issues and fisheries, as well as to provide a platform for discussion and decision making. The forum also holds an annual three-day event which focuses awareness on issues that affect the commercial fishing industry.

### **Physical**

Bar Harbor is located 20 miles from Ellsworth, Maine, 43 miles from Winter Harbor, and 175 miles from Portland, and is located at the end of Maine Route 3 (MapQuest 2005). [Bar Harbor Airport](#) is located halfway between Ellsworth and Bar Harbor. A regional service is provided between this airport and Logan Airport in Boston, Massachusetts. The international airports of Portland and Bangor are 175 and 47 miles from Bar Harbor respectively. For ground transportation, the [Island Explorer](#) bus provides seasonal service to Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor Airport, Bar Harbor, and Southwest Harbor. It features eight bus routes linking hotels, inns, and campgrounds with destinations in Acadia National Park and neighboring village centers. Seasonally, [Bay Ferries](#) provides ferry transportation from Bar Harbor, Maine, to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. The [Bar Harbor Ferry](#) operates daily passenger service between Bar Harbor and Winter Harbor. Bar Harbor has a town pier used by local fishermen (Town of Bar Harbor 2007).

## **INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>6</sup>**

### **Commercial**

The population of lobsters in eastern Maine, including the area around Bar Harbor, has been increasing in recent years, leading to a tripling of landings from 40 years ago (Mount Desert Islander 2007). The town grants commercial licenses for harvesting soft shell clams to those who already hold a state commercial shellfishing license (Town of Bar Harbor 2007). [Stewman’s Lobster Pound](#) in Bar Harbor has two locations, and is one of the few genuine lobster

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<sup>6</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.

pounds selling freshly caught lobsters. They also ship across the country. Mussel harvest is a growing enterprise for both wild and raised (aquaculture) in Eastern and Frenchman’s Bay.<sup>7</sup>

Lobster was by far the most valuable species landed in Bar Harbor for the years 1997-2006, with the 2006 landed value more than double the average landings for the years 1997-2006 (see Table 1). The second most valuable species grouping was the “other” grouping; however, the value of landings in both this grouping and in the largemesh groundfish grouping were considerably less in 2006 than the average value for the same ten years. Landings in Bar Harbor were generally variable from 1997-2006, with landings declining sharply in 2004 and then rising dramatically in 2006.

The level of fishing for home ported vessels was consistently lower than the port landings, indicating that vessels from outside of Bar Harbor are landing their catch here. The number of vessels home ported in Bar Harbor was consistently between 20 and 23 for this time period, and the number of vessels with owners living in Bar Harbor was similar, varying between 20 and 25 (see Table 2).

### Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Other <sup>8</sup>	2
Largemesh Groundfish <sup>9</sup>	3
Scallop	4
Monkfish	5
Skate	6
Dogfish	7

(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>10</sup>

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	20	20
1998	21	20
1999	21	23
2000	20	22
2001	22	24
2002	21	24
2003	20	24
2004	21	23
2005	22	24
2006	23	25

(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>11</sup>)

<sup>7</sup> Community Review Comments, Charlie Phippen, Harbormaster, Bar Harbor, ME, September 6, 2007

<sup>8</sup> “Other” species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group.

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

<sup>10</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

[Downeast Windjammer Cruises](#) runs four-hour fishing trips from Bar Harbor for cod, pollock, cusk, mackerel, sculpin, black sea bass, and other species. Passengers also have the opportunity to learn about the history of fishing in Bar Harbor. Recreational shellfishing for soft shell clams takes place in Bar Harbor; both residents and non-residents can purchase licenses to do so (Town of Bar Harbor 2007). Many people also fish for mackerel and pollock from the town pier during the summer, and blue mussels are also harvested in the town.<sup>12</sup>

## Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Bar Harbor is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist. However, it is noted by the Harbormaster that there are a few people who collect clams for subsistence.<sup>13</sup>

## FUTURE

A developer is seeking a lease on the Maine State Pier located in Bar Harbor to bring high speed ferries to Bar Harbor from Portland and Rockland. They also want to build a hotel and office building on the pier (Bell 2007). The fishermen's floats on the pier are scheduled to be replaced in 2008 (Town of Bar Harbor 2007).

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<sup>11</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>12</sup> Community Review Comments, Charlie Phippen, Harbormaster, 93 Cottage St., Bar Harbor, ME, September 6, 2007

<sup>13</sup> Community Review Comments, Charlie Phippen, Harbormaster, 93 Cottage St., Bar Harbor, ME, September 6, 2007

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