

# ORIENTAL, NC<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

The town of Oriental (35.03 N, 76.68 W) is located in Pamlico County, in the middle of North Carolina's coastline, along Pamlico Sound (USGS 2008). It is roughly 40 miles from Morehead City and 140 miles from Raleigh (MapQuest 2005). Oriental is 2.80 sq. km. in land area, and has another 0.56 sq. km. in surface water. It is set along with Neuse River among five creeks (Town of Oriental 2005).



Map 1. Location of Oriental, NC (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

The first European colonists settled in what is now Pamlico County sometime around the early 1700s (Pamlico County 2005). Originally named Smith's Creek, the town was settled in the mid-1870s, and was later named Oriental after the nameplate of a steamer that had wrecked off the coast of Cape Hatteras. The town was officially incorporated in 1899 and from the early 1900s, the town's economy consisted of lumber, fishing, and farming (Town of Oriental 2005a). Oriental was once a bustling port city, serviced by two steamships and the railroad. The Great Depression, combined with the advent of the trucking industry, however, caused Oriental to

<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)."

return once again to a quiet fishing village (Oesterreich 2004). Today Oriental is known as the “Sailing Capital of North Carolina;” the town has 875 people, but over 2,700 boats (Town of Oriental 2005).

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

According to Census 2000 data, Oriental had a total population of 875, up 8.8% from the reported population of 804 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 49.1% were males and 50.9% were females. The median age was 57.2 years and 87.7% of the population was 21 years or older while 41.8% was 62 or older.

The age structure for Oriental (Figure 1) differs greatly from many other fishing communities. The town has an aging population, with few children and few young people. The most populous age bracket for both men and women is 70-79, and the second highest bracket for both is 60-69, indicating that Oriental functions largely as a retirement community.

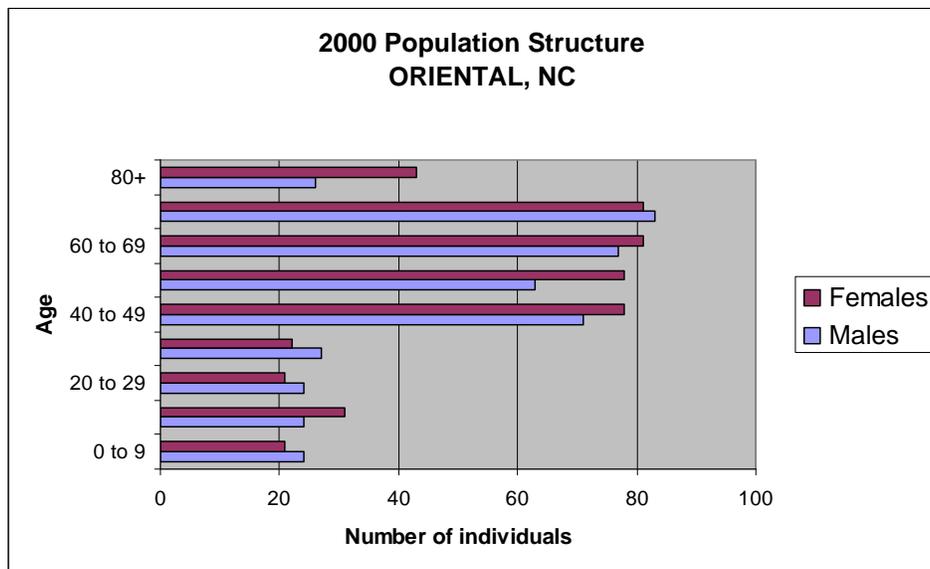


Figure 1. Oriental's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (90.7%), with 7.4% of residents black or African American, 0.5% Asian, 0.3% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 1.4% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (21.5%), German (19.4%), Irish (10.5%), and other ancestries (11.0%). With regard to region of birth, 43.5% were born in North Carolina, 51.9% were born in a different state and 4.6% were born outside of the U.S. (including 1.0% who were not United States citizens).

<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.

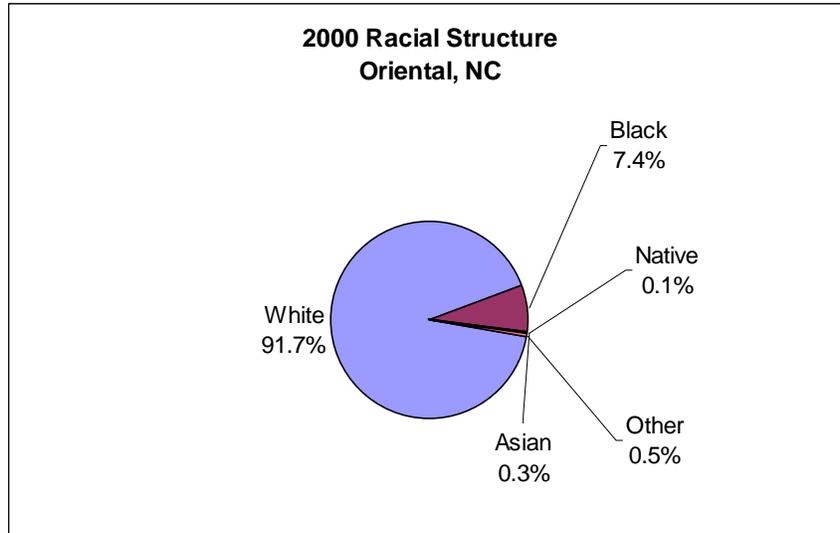


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

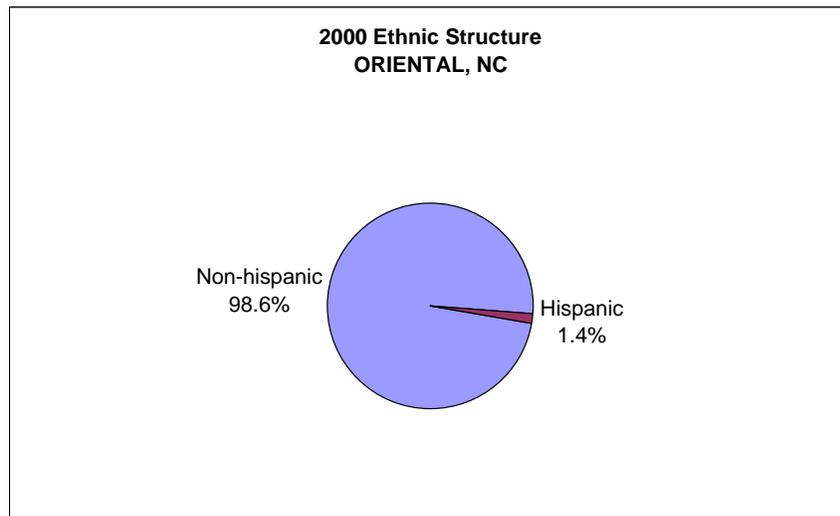


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.0% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 5.0% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 1.3% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 89.1% were high school graduates or higher and 35.2% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 1.7% did not reach ninth grade, 9.2% attended some high school but did not graduate, 21.0% completed high school, 25.9% had some college with no degree, 6.9% received an associate’s degree, 22.1% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 13.2% received a 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 Pamlico County was United Methodist with 8 congregations and 1,410 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Original Free Will Baptists (8 with 1,070 adherents), Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (3 with 492 adherents), and

Southern Baptist Convention (3 with 492 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 17.0% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

### **Issues/Processes**

Shrimp fishermen along the North Carolina coast have suffered because of decreasing prices of shrimp, resulting from an increase of foreign farmed shrimp on the market. North Carolina shrimp fishermen are working to promote their wild-caught shrimp to create a niche market and higher prices for their product (NCSG 2005). The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries was discussing minimum size limits for the shrimp that could be taken by trawlers, noting that foreign imports have cornered the market on small shrimp (Smith 2005).

Crab fishermen along North Carolina's eastern coast have also seen an increase in competition from the global market, with an influx of imported crab meat from around the world. Many local Crab processors are unable to compete and are losing profit (NCSG 2002).

### **Cultural attributes**

The annual [Pamlico County Blessing of the Fleet](#), which used to be held each June in Hobucken, no longer occurs. The event once featured a parade of the fleet's vessels, seafood dinners, educational displays, and commercial fishing boat tours, all sponsored by the North Carolina Fisheries Association Auxiliary, Pamlico Chapter.

The Oriental Rotary Club holds a Tarpon Tournament each July (Visitoriental.com 2005). The town's largest event is the yearly [Croaker Festival](#), an event honoring the croaker with a parade, boat races, the Croaker King and Queen Pageant, and fireworks. [Spirit of Christmas](#) takes place every year during the second week in December. Civic groups and churches open their doors with refreshments and entertainment as a way to thank the community. Oriental also has the Running of the Dragon on New Year's Eve. This is a popular event where the Town's dragon makes its way down the street along the Town Dock with people following clanging pots and pans and others making music to bring in the New Year.<sup>4</sup>

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

Within Pamlico County, seafood processing, boat building, and government manufacturing account for most manufacturing done here. As much as 10% of the population of Pamlico County may be involved in the commercial fishing industry, whether directly or indirectly (Pamlico County Chamber of Commerce 2005). The largest employers in Pamlico County are two camps, [Camp Seafarer and Camp Seagull](#), which each employ 350 people seasonally. Other significant [employers](#) in the county are the [Pamlico Corrections Institute](#), the Pamlico County government, and [Pamlico Community College](#).

[Garland Fulcher Seafood](#) in Oriental is a processing and canning facility, employing 40-50 people during their slow season, and as many as 125 during the summer season.<sup>5</sup> This includes roughly 60 Mexican migrant workers hired each year to pick crabs during the summer months (Hedlund 2005). Oriental has a number of marinas and other businesses involved with the marine industry, including sales, repairs, and insurance, as well as a number of realtors (Oriental Tourism Board 2005).

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<sup>4</sup> Community Review Comments, Wyatt Cutler, Town Manager, 507 Church St., Oriental, NC 28571, October 30, 2007

<sup>5</sup> Personal Communication, Michelle, Garland Fulcher Seafood, 301 Hodges St., Oriental, NC 28571, July 20, 2005

According to the U.S. Census 2000<sup>6</sup>, 37.0% (395 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 2.0% were unemployed, 0.3% were in the Armed Forces, and 34.3% were employed.

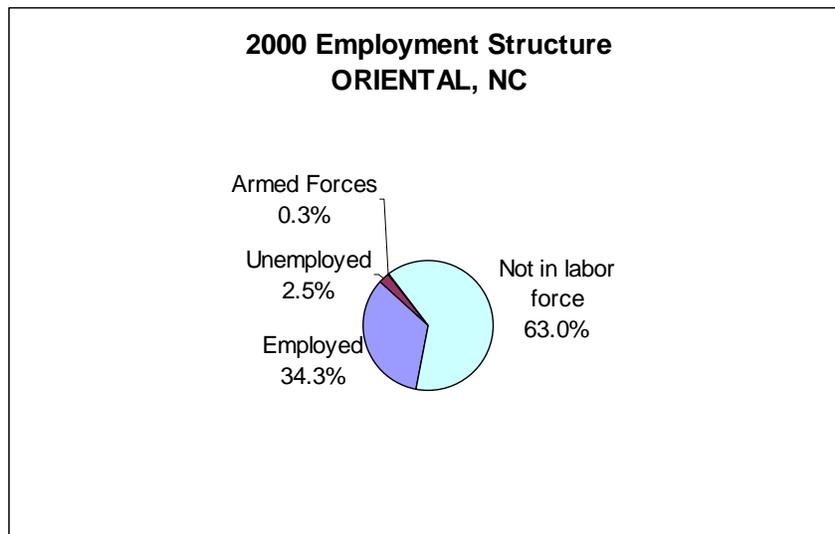


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 9 positions or 3.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 46 positions or 16.6% of jobs. Education, health, and social services (14.3%), retail trade (12.8%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (12.8%), and manufacturing (11.7%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Oriental was \$37,794 (up 43.5% from \$26,339 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$25,949. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 47.8% more per year than females.

The average family in Oriental consisted of 2.38 persons. With respect to poverty, 6.2% of families (down from 14.1% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 8.4% of individuals earned 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, 33.0% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Oriental had a total of 581 housing units, of which 76.4% were occupied and 79.0% were detached one unit homes. Twenty percent (20.0%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 5.0% of the total housing units; 93.8% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$177,000. Of vacant housing units, 11.8% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 19.8% were renter occupied.

<sup>6</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.

## **Government**

The Town of Oriental has a Board of Commissioners with five members, and a Town Mayor and Town Manager (Town of Oriental 2005).

### *Fishery involvement in the government*

Information on fishery involvement in government in Oriental is unavailable through secondary data collection.

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

[The North Carolina Fisheries Association](#) has been supporting fishing families since 1952, with the goal “to celebrate and preserve commercial fishing families, heritage, and seafood” in North Carolina. This is achieved through lobbying federal, state, and local legislators and through public awareness projects. The North Carolina Fisheries Association Auxiliary has a [Pamlico Chapter](#).

### *Fishing assistance centers*

[Pamlico Community College](#) offers a number of job retraining and placement programs both on location at its facility in Grantsboro and for long-distance learners. The Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAA) program has provided business education to shrimp fishermen in the state to assist them in recent changes in the market of shrimp, and also provides some training to fishermen to exit the business if they chose.

### *Other fishing related organizations*

Information on other fishing related organizations is unavailable through secondary data collection.

## **Physical**

Oriental is located roughly 20-25 miles from Interstate 70, which travels to Raleigh, and Route 17, which travels to the Norfolk/Virginia Beach area of Virginia (MapQuest.com 2005). Morehead City is 40 miles away, Washington is 59 miles away, and Raleigh is 140 miles from Oriental. The closest airport, Craven County Regional Airport in New Bern, is 20 miles from Oriental.

The fishing fleet in Oriental generally accesses the ocean through Beaufort Inlet, and also sometimes through Oregon Inlet. Oriental has a number of marinas that mostly service sailboats and recreational power vessels, either permanently stationed here or just passing through as they travel the Intracoastal Waterway (Pamlico County Chamber of Commerce).

## INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>7</sup>

### Commercial

Garland Fulcher Seafood, a processing and wholesale facility, owns 9 trawlers and has a dock attached to the facility where these trawlers tie up. In a good year, there will be 10-12 boats in addition to the 9 owned by the company that pack here; some of these vessels come from out of state.<sup>8</sup> [Fulcher's Point Pride Seafood](#) is another processing and wholesale facility located in Oriental, which distributes mostly blue crab to such large companies as WalMart and the Winn-Dixie supermarket chain.

The top value species landed in Oriental is was *penaeid* shrimp (in the “other” species grouping). Landings in the “other” grouping were less in 2006 than the average landings value for 1997-2006 (Table 1). Landings in the summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass grouping were also significant. At least one of the sea scallop vessels fished off and landed in New Bedford some of the time (Kennedy 2005). The value of fishing by vessels with Oriental as their home port increased close to twenty-fold between 1997-2006, to over \$8 million in 2006, while the value of fish landed here reached its highest level in 2000. The number of vessels listing Oriental as their home port and the number of vessels owned by Oriental residents both increased from 1997–2006; home port vessels went from just 3 in 1997 to 26 in 2006 (Table 2).

### Landings by Species

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

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Other <sup>9</sup>	1,702,113	1,350,410
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	559,869	945,609
Scallop	103,306	225,637
Monkfish	5,237	7,502
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	2,419	2,490
Bluefish	1,392	1,294
Largemouth Groundfish <sup>10</sup>	57	0
Tilefish	4	0
Skate	2	0

<sup>7</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.

<sup>8</sup> Personal Communication, Michelle, Garland Fulcher Seafood, 301 Hodges St., Oriental, NC 28571, July 20, 2005

<sup>9</sup> “Other” species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

<sup>10</sup> Largemouth Groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

## Vessels by Year<sup>11</sup>

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	3	7	408,037	2,313,949
1998	7	7	1,227,342	1,902,226
1999	8	8	2,487,175	3,518,360
2000	7	7	2,884,677	4,781,313
2001	8	8	1,856,801	1,678,007
2002	10	12	3,277,209	1,964,613
2003	11	14	4,493,867	938,994
2004	18	18	5,537,892	2,288,317
2005	22	20	9,606,597	1,825,280
2006	26	25	8,007,900	2,532,942

(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>12</sup>

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)

## Recreational

Recreational fishing is a billion dollar industry in North Carolina. Oriental has one [sportfishing tournament](#) each year, as well as a few [fishing guide](#) services. Some of the marinas are home to [sport fishing charter vessels](#). One website noted that despite its location and the presence of a public boat ramp, the [sport fishing](#) industry in Oriental remains “in its infancy.”

## Subsistence

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

## FUTURE

Information on plans for the future in Oriental is unavailable through secondary data collection.

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<sup>11</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.

<sup>12</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.

[dec04.pdf](#)

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