

SWAN QUARTER, NC¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

Swan Quarter (35.40°N, 76.33°W) is located in Hyde County across the water from Ocracoke Island and the Outer Banks in the state of North Carolina (USGS 2008). It is located 7 miles from Swan Quarter Landing waterfront to the mouth of Swan Quarter Bay, before getting to Pamlico Sound. Swan Quarter is roughly 70 miles from Edenton and 160 miles from Raleigh (MapQuest nd) and has 122.10 square miles of land area (USGS 2008).



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

Historical/Background

Originally known as “Swann’s Quarter,” it was named after Samuel Swann, who settled in the area in the 1700s. Swann’s Quarter was eventually shortened to Swan Quarter and became the seat of Hyde County in 1836 (Lemme and Piosczyk-Lemme nd). Like many other areas in North Carolina, Hyde County relied on the lumber industry and was the center of a “lumber boom” in the late 1800s (Hyde County nd). Since then farming, fishing, crabbing, and oystering have long been principal occupations (IWC-NET nd).

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 data,⁴ Swan Quarter had a total population of 958, down 1.7% from the reported population of 975 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 46.5% were males and 53.5% were females. The median age was 44.6 years and 75.8% of the population was 21 years or older while 26.8% was 62 or older.

The age structure for Swan Quarter (see Figure 1) shows that the community has a slight age gap between youth and the middle aged residents with the greatest numbers of both men and women between the ages of 40-49 and 10-19. The decline in the number of males and females for the 20-29 age grouping, and especially females, suggests that some are leaving in search of jobs or education. Interestingly, Swan Quarter also has a large population of residents, especially females, over the age of 80, with women age 80 or older outnumbering women in every other age category except for 40-49.

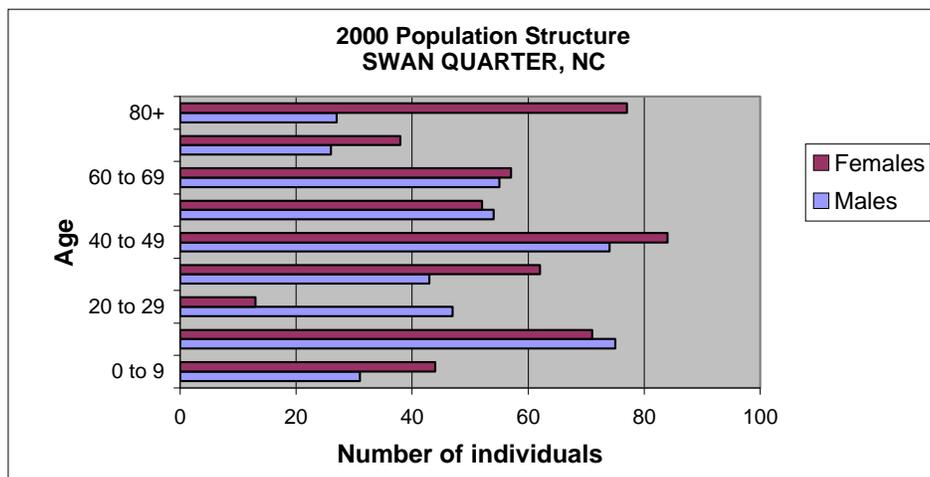


Figure 1. Swan Quarter's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (62.0%), with 35.0% of residents black or African American, 1.1% Asian, 0.5% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 2.1% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents link their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Other Ancestries (38.9%), English (2.0%), Italian (0.7%), and Norwegian (0.7%). With regard to region of birth, 81.7% were born in North Carolina, 13.8% were born in a different state and 4.5% were born outside of the U.S. (including the same 0.8% who are 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 Zip Code Tabulation area 27885; (cited July 2, 2007)

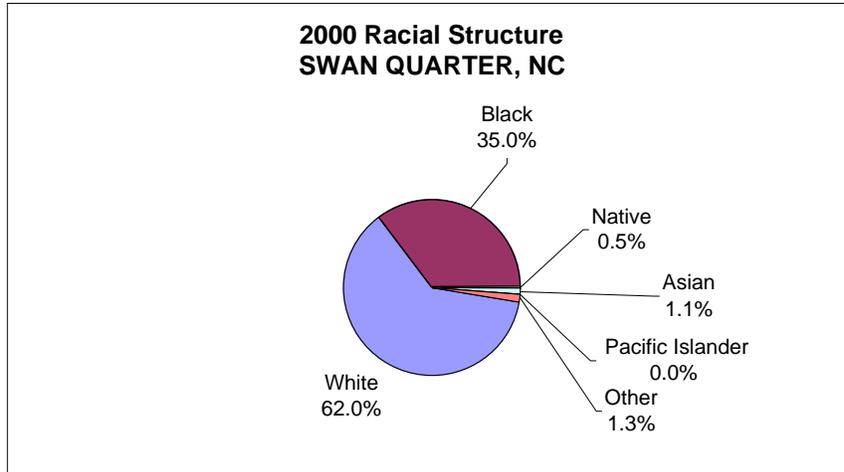


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

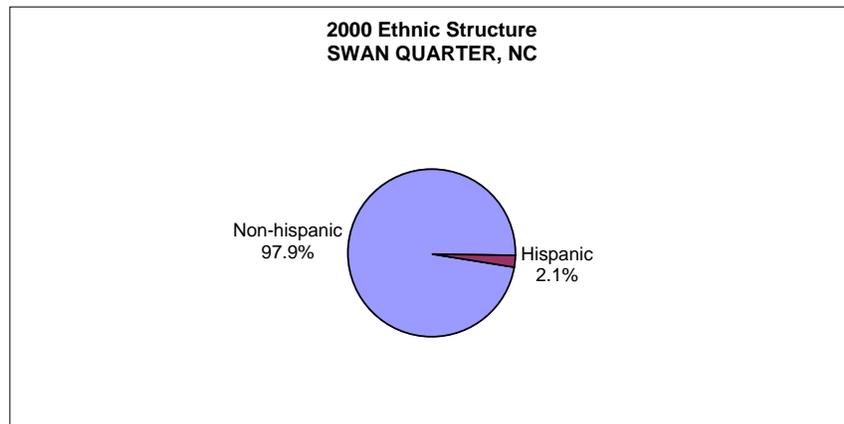


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 89.3% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 10.7% 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, 65.1% were high school graduates or higher and 7.3% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 18.4% did not reach ninth grade, 16.5% attended some high school but did not graduate, 32.1% completed high school, 15.3% had some college with no degree, 10.5% received an associate's degree, 5.3% earned a bachelor's degree, and 2.0% received either 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 Hyde County was the United Methodist Church with 9 congregations and 680 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Christian Church, Disciples of Christ (3 with 367 adherents), Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (5 with 274 adherents), and Southern Baptists Convention (4 with 180 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 17.0% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

In 1999, Hurricanes Dennis and Floyd caused severe flood damage to businesses, public buildings, and private property in Swan Quarter (US Fed News 2005). In September 2003, the town was hit by Hurricane Isabel, flooding the historic courthouse, the office annex, and the sheriff's office and jail with about three feet of water (AP 2004). Isabel hit at a time when the community was already dealing with declines in commercial fishing. In early 2004, Hyde County's unemployment rate was at 12.9%, double North Carolina's overall rate of 6%.

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

Mattamuskeet Lodge, built in 1915-16 as the world's largest pumping plant, is located in Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, about 8 miles from Swan Quarter. "The Lodge" as it is referred to by local residents, was deeded by the Federal Government to the State of North Carolina in 2006. The NC Wildlife Resources Commission is the State agency that will be heading up the renovation and rehabilitation of the historic building for use as an environmental education and community center. Other nearby sites such as the Providence United Methodist Church, known as the "Church Moved by the Hand of God" and the Hyde County Courthouse, circa 1836, provide insight into the heritage of this rural fishing village.⁵

The Ocracoke Lighthouse, on Ocracoke Island, was built in 1823 and is one of the oldest lights on the east coast (ICW-NET nd). The Lighthouse is located about 25 miles and about a 3 hours ferry ride away from Swan Quarter.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

There is not much information on the local economy in Swan Quarter. It is said that farming has always been the largest industry in Hyde County, with fishing another important way of life (Mattamuskeet Foundation 2001). Two of the major seafood businesses in town are Hobo Seafood and Newman's Family Seafood.⁶ Other seafood businesses include Rose Bay Oyster Company and Mattamuskeet Seafood (NCDACS nd).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁷, 54.5% (449 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 5.3% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 49.2% were employed.

⁵ Community Review Comments, Margie Brooks and Mitchell Newman, former owner of Clark's Marina and manager of the NC Ferry terminal, PO Box 178, Swan Quarter, NC 27885, September 24, 2007

⁶ Community Review Comments, Tom Davis, Swan Quarter Township Commissioner, PO Box 277, Swan Quarter, NC 27885, October 30, 2007

⁷ 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.

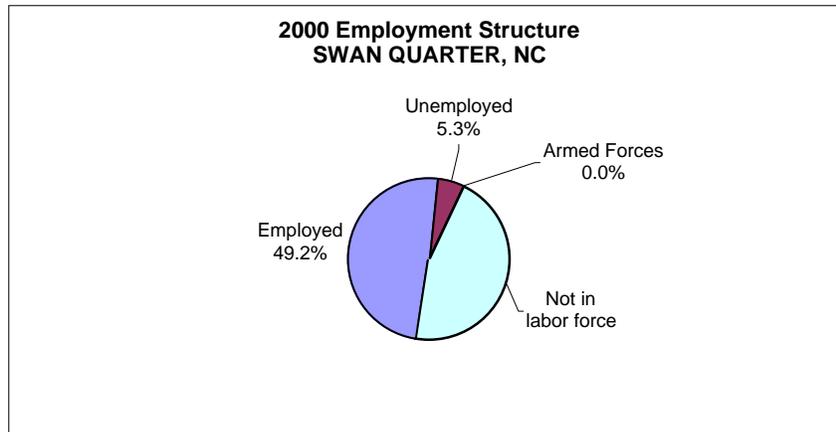


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 67 positions or 16.5% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 49 positions or 12.1% of jobs. Public administration (35.8%), educational, health and social services (16.0%), and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (8.4%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Swan Quarter was \$31,136 (up 140.0% from \$13,140 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$12,776. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 14.9% more per year than females.

The average family in Swan Quarter consists of 2.88 persons. With respect to poverty, 11.0% of families (down from 30.4% in 1990) and 13.8% of individuals earn 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, 45.2% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Swan Quarter had a total of 488 housing units, of which 69.9% were occupied and 74.8% were detached one unit homes. Over one quarter (25.8%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 19.5% of the total housing units; 98.0% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$61,300. Of vacant housing units, 40.6% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 20.4% were renter occupied.

Government

Hyde County is governed by a five member board of commissioners. One commissioner is elected from each of the five townships, including Swan Quarter. The commissioners serve four-year staggered terms (Hyde County nd).

Fishery involvement in the government

The Division of Marine Fisheries has a Northeast Regional Advisory Committee, which advises an area that includes Swan Quarter (NCDENR nd).

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. The association works to achieve their goals through lobbying federal, state, and local legislators and through public awareness projects (NCFA nd).

Fishing assistance centers

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

Other fishing related organizations

The [North Carolina Waterman](#) is an organization whose goal is to educate and inform “for the betterment of the marine environment,” and to “create public recognition of the significance of the marine environment to all citizens.”

Physical

Swan Quarter is situated in close proximity to both the open Atlantic to the south, accessible through Swan Quarter Bay and Pamlico Sound. Swan Quarter is located off of US 264, about 75 miles east of Greenville, NC. It is roughly 70 miles from Edenton and 160 miles from Raleigh. The North Carolina Ferry Division operates a terminal in Swan Quarter with scheduled runs to and from Ocracoke by sound-class ferries carrying both vehicles and passengers.⁸ The nearest airport is 30 miles away in Engelhard (MapQuest nd). Clark’s Marina is the main marina in Swan Quarter, but is not very active (ICW-NET nd).⁹

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES¹⁰

Commercial

According to an historical account of Swan Quarter, “many residents of Hyde County make their living fishing, but farming always has been the largest industry in the county.” Crabbing is an important commercial industry in the area (Mattamuskeet Foundation 2001). Some of the local seafood businesses include Newmans Seafood, Hobo Seafood, Pam’s Soft

⁸ Community Review Comments, Margie Brooks and Mitchell Newman, former owner of Clark’s Marina and manager of the NC Ferry terminal, PO Box 178, Swan Quarter, NC 27885, September 24, 2007

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¹⁰ 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.

Crabs, Rose Bay Oyster Company, and Mattamuskeet Seafood (NCDACS nd).

Landings in Swan Quarter¹¹ were not recorded at the port level for 1997-2001 and were low for the years 2002-2006. Most of these landings were in the “other” species grouping, which had a high of \$186,750 in landings in 2006 (see Table 1). The largest landing in this grouping was *penaeid* shrimp. However, Swan Quarter had significant home port fishing, increasing over this time period to \$3.3 million in 2005 (see Table 2), indicating that Swan Quarter vessels are landing their catch elsewhere. The number of home ported vessels also increased to a high of 17 in 2006. The number of owner’s city vessels remained relatively consistent from 1997-2006, varying between 7 and 11.

Landings by Species

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

	Average from 2002-2006	2006 only
Other ¹²	115,338	186,750
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	4,514	0

Vessels by Year¹³

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	7	10	356,860	NOT RECORDED
1998	5	8	597,937	NOT RECORDED
1999	8	10	1,525,589	NOT RECORDED
2000	7	7	1,832,149	NOT RECORDED
2001	8	8	670,272	NOT RECORDED
2002	11	8	1,115,638	27,152
2003	10	8	1,215,335	38,874
2004	11	7	1,992,016	235,427
2005	15	11	3,301,469	111,054
2006	17	11	3,274,585	186,750

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

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁴

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 (Stoffle nd). Salt-water fishing in the Pamlico Sound and the small tributaries that surround it is extremely popular with

¹¹ North Carolina data for the years 1997-2001 are questionable.

¹² “Other” species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

fishermen targeting species such as trout, flounder, sea mullets, Spanish mackerel, and red drum (puppy drum).¹⁵

Swan Quarter is also located along Lake Mattamuskeet, which is a popular fishing spot. Lake Mattamuskeet, the largest natural lake in North Carolina, is home to largemouth bass, striped bass, catfish, bream and other species. Every Memorial Day the Fairfield Heritage Bass Tournament is held here (Professional Computer Consulting Inc. 2002).

Subsistence

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

Future

After Hurricane Isabel, which struck the area, Larry Gill, a commercial fisherman from Swan Quarter, had a pessimistic view of the future: "People around here can adapt and overcome a lot of things; I don't know if the county will ever get over it" (News & Observer 2004).

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