

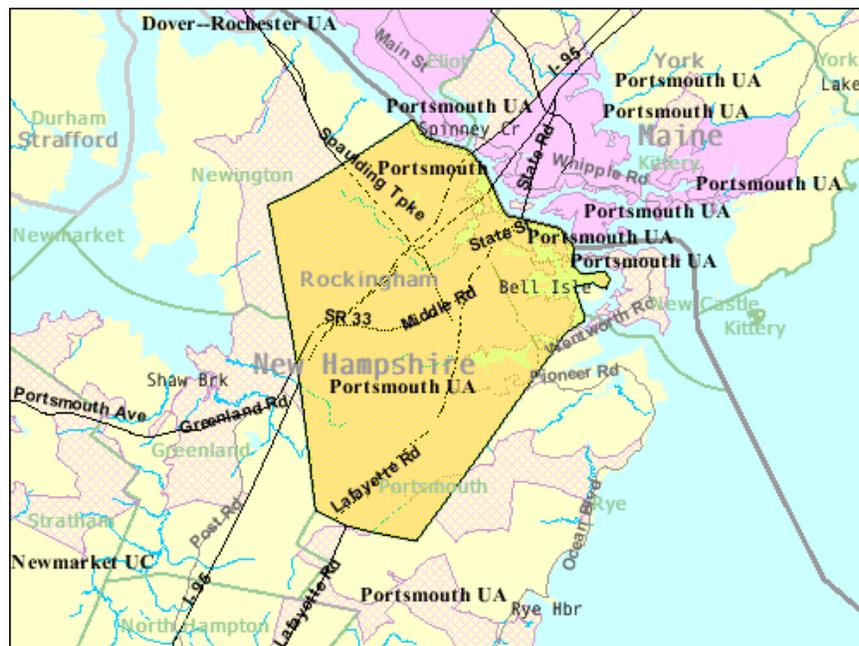
PORTSMOUTH, NH¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

Portsmouth, New Hampshire (43.03° N, 70.47°W) (USGS 2008) is located in Rockingham County, by the mouth of the Piscataqua River which allows deep water access to Portsmouth Harbor (State of New Hampshire 2006). Portsmouth is one of the cities that are located along the State's small seaboard of about eighteen miles.



Map 1. Location of Portsmouth NH (US Census Bureau 2000a)

Historical/Background

The City of Portsmouth is the second oldest city in New Hampshire. It was originally settled in 1623 as Strawberry Banke and was incorporated as Portsmouth in 1631. Fishing, farming, shipbuilding, and coastal trade were the major industries throughout New Hampshire in the 1600s. By 1725, Portsmouth was a thriving commercial port, exporting timber products and importing a wide range of goods (Wallace 2006). However, the 1800s brought change to Portsmouth as the seacoast declined as a commercial center. Many nearby towns, like Dover, Newmarket, and Somersworth turned instead to textile manufacturing (Wallace 2006). The

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."

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, established in June 1800, is the oldest naval shipyard continuously operated by the United States Government (PNS nd).

Today the urban sprawl of Boston has significant economic effects on Portsmouth and all of southern New Hampshire. A new interstate highway system as well as a favorable tax structure has encouraged many people to move to southern New Hampshire. Modern times have introduced high-tech industries and an increase in tourism that has transformed Portsmouth and all of southern New Hampshire, making New Hampshire into the fastest growing state in the Northeast (DHR 2006).

Demographics³

According to US Census Bureau 2000 data, Portsmouth had a total population of 20,784, down from the reported population of 25,925 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.6% were males and 51.4% were females. The median age was 38.5 years and 80.7% of the population was 21 years or older while 18.7% of the population was 62 or older.

Portsmouth’s age structure (see Figure 1) shows its peak in the ages of 30-39. In general, the population is skewed slightly toward the younger age categories. For the older age categories, the number of females exceeds the number of males, this is opposite for age groupings younger than 30.

A community member noted rapid demographic changes occurring in Portsmouth and the surrounding communities. Portsmouth is becoming increasingly gentrified, with white-collar workers in the 30-39 age bracket as well as retirees moving to the area.⁴

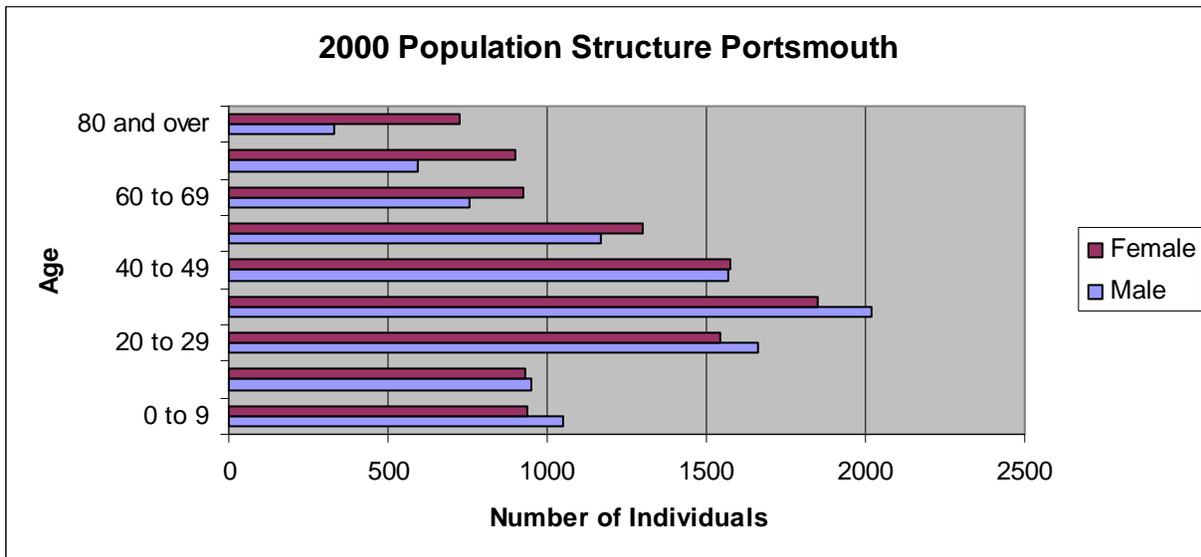


Figure 1. Portsmouth’s population structure by sex in 2000

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 Profile review comment, Erik Anderson, President, New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen’s Association, September 28, 2007

The majority of the population of Portsmouth was White (75.1%), with 12.3% Black or African American, 3.6% Asian, 0.9% Native American, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 12.5% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3) (US Census Bureau 2000a).

With regard to region of birth, 37.3% were born in New Hampshire, 56.5% were born in a different state and 4.9% were born outside the U.S (including 2.8% who were not United States citizens).

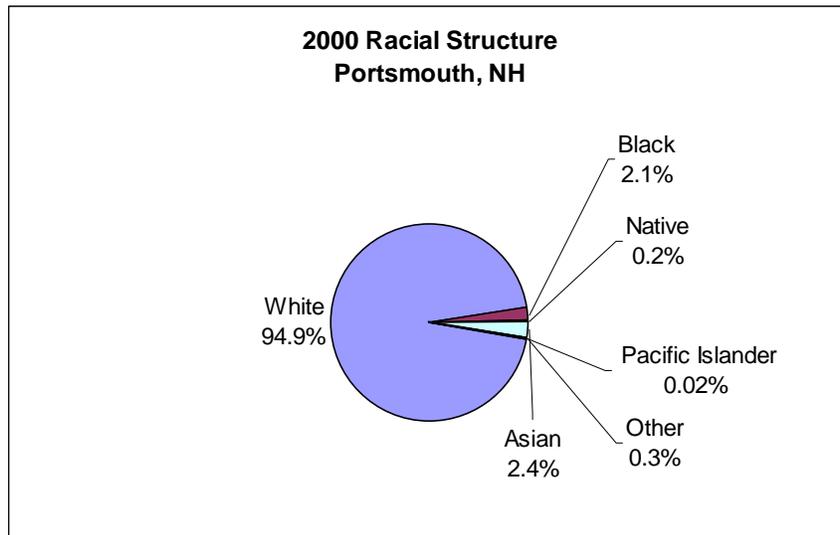


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

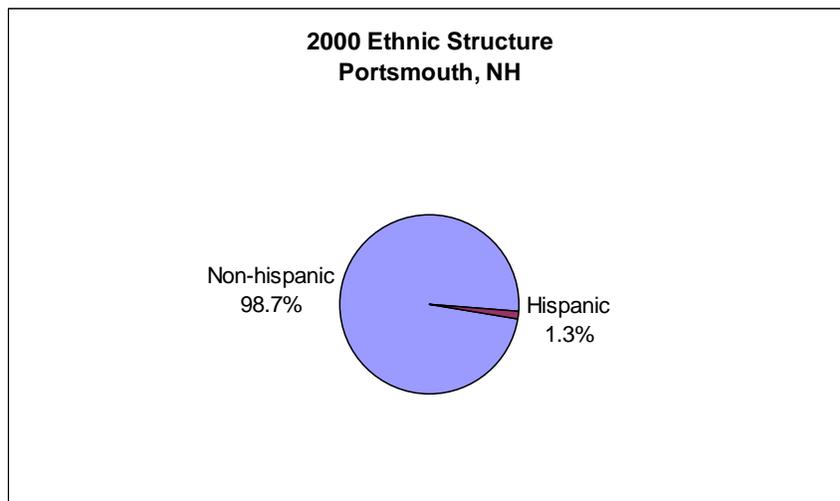


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 93.4% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 6.6% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 2.0% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 91.4% were high school graduates or higher and 41.9% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 2.6% did not reach ninth grade, 6.1% attended some high school but did not graduate, 24.3% completed

high school, 17.8% had some college with no degree, 7.3% received their associate's degree, 28% earned their bachelor's degree, and 13.9% received either their graduate or professional degree.

Although the religion percentages are not available through US Census data, according to Hall-Arber et al. (2001) the number of Protestant churches in Portsmouth was 27 versus only one Synagogue and three Catholic Churches. Further, the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000 indicates that the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Rockingham County was Catholic with 25 congregations and 117,542 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were United Church of Christ (23 with 6,352 adherents), American Baptist (21 with 4,449 adherents) and United Methodist (16 with 4,391 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 70.5% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

Not unlike most fishing communities, Portsmouth fishermen are concerned that their livelihood is dependent on regulations that they believe are overly stringent Ray 2002). In September of 2007, the Portsmouth Co-op closed its doors. According to the President of the New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association, "the current groundfish management regulations of Amendment 13 and more recently Framework 42 overwhelmed its ability to function as it had for over 30 years."⁵

Many residents stated their frustration with high property taxes in the town and high real estate prices. Some residents say the town is losing its small town atmosphere and parking has become a big issue in the downtown area. Some residents are also concerned that new buildings and development is engulfing the historic buildings along the main streets in downtown.⁶ The city recognizes these issues, and has developed a master plan aimed at revitalizing the city in a comprehensive manner.⁷

Cultural attributes

Portsmouth boasts a number of museums, including the Albacore Park & Maritime Museum which offers year round submarine tours. Additionally, the Strawberry Banke Museum is a living museum that recreates life 300 years ago. Portsmouth also hosts an annual chowder fest which is the largest in New Hampshire. Beginning in 1980 Portsmouth once had a Blessing of the Fleet ceremony. However, due to an injury during the ceremony and a subsequent law suit the ceremony was forced to carry a large insurance policy that it could not afford. As a result, the ceremony no longer takes place (Brown 2002). There is also a Fishermen's Memorial plaque at the Portsmouth Commercial Fish Pier, commemorating fallen sailors.⁸

While most residents interviewed in a site visit in 2007 acknowledged the town was a seaside area and had some fishing infrastructure, the majority did not consider Portsmouth an actual fishing community. Instead, most respondents considered the town an artist community or

⁵ Profile review comment, Erik Anderson, President, New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association, September 28, 2007

⁶ URI site visit (groundtruthing exercise), March, 2007

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one that focuses more on the arts than fishing. It is important to note, however, the importance that fishing and the city's maritime heritage plays in Portsmouth's significant tourism industry.⁹

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

In 2004, the top employers in the city of Portsmouth were the following: Liberty Mutual (1800), Columbia HCA Hospital (1040), City of Portsmouth (881), Demoulas Market Basket (425), Lonza Biologies (390), Erie Scientific/Sybron Lab Products (310), Pan-Am Airlines/Boston-Maine Airways (300), US Department of State – National Passport Center (259), High-Liner Foods USA (241) (City of Portsmouth 2005). With the closing of the Pease military installation in the 1980s, the state embarked on redevelopment of the facility and created the Pease Development Authority, which has transitioned the facility into a successful economic redevelopment project, housing industrial and high tech industries.¹⁰

According to the U.S. Census 2000¹¹, 69.9% (12,296 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 2.0% were unemployed, 0.3% were in the Armed Forces, and 67.5% were employed.

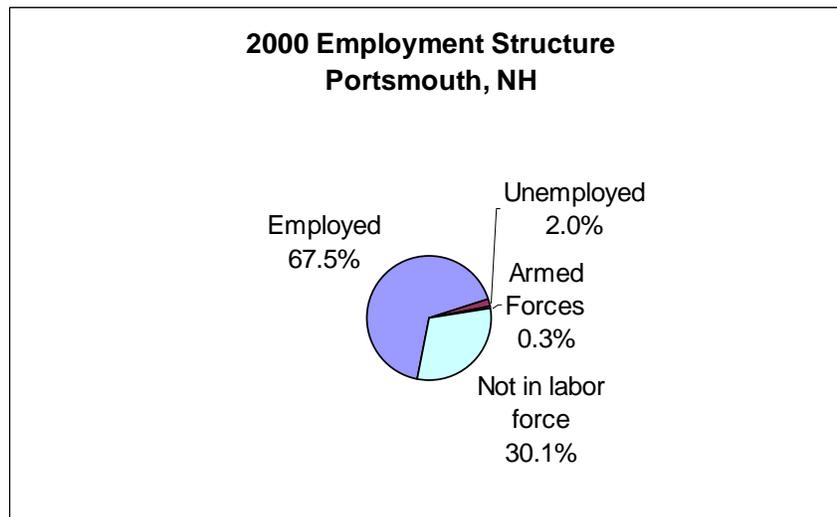


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 76 positions or 0.6% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 1,084 positions or 9.1% of jobs. Manufacturing (12.5%), retail trade (15.2%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (13.2%), educational, health and social services

⁹ Profile review comment, Erik Anderson, President, New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association, September 28, 2007

¹⁰ Profile review comment, Erik Anderson, President, New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association, September 28, 2007

¹¹ 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.

(18.8%) and entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (9.0%) were the primary industries.

The median household income in Portsmouth was \$45,195, up 47.7% from \$30,591 (US Census Bureau 1990) and median per capita income was \$27,540. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 30.8% more per year than females.

The average family in Portsmouth consisted of 2.75 persons. With respect to poverty, 6.4% of families. up from 5.1% in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990) and 9.3% of individuals earned 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 2000b). In 2000, 24.7% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Portsmouth had a total of 10,183 housing units of which 97.1% were occupied and 40.2% were detached one unit homes. Less than half (39.9%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 2.7% of housing units; 98.5% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$168,600. Of vacant housing units, 0.8% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 57.2% were renter occupied.

Government

Portsmouth's government is comprised of a mayor, 9 elected Council Members, and a city manager. Portsmouth was settled in 1623 and incorporated as a city in 1849 (City of Portsmouth 2008).

Fishery involvement in government

Portsmouth has a U.S. Coast Guard Station situated within the Fort Constitution State Park. Through the Coast Guard grounds runs a Blue line trail which takes visitors through the USCG parking area to the old fort overlooking the water.¹² Portsmouth has a harbor master, who is overseen by the New Hampshire State Port Authority (DPH 2003).

Institutional

Fishing associations

The Portsmouth Fisherman's Cooperative was formed to provide fuel, ice and unloading services to the local, small-scale fishing community (Schmitt 2002). The manager of the Co-op (as of March 2007) also sat on the board of the MA Division of Marine Fisheries Vessel Buy-back group. While the buy-back program had not been approved, the manager expressed uncertainty over what action he would take if it was approved.¹³ The Co-op closed its doors in September 2007, however, prompted largely by increasing federal and state regulations.¹⁴

The Northeast Consortium, created with the support and leadership of U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), committed resources to fund the Portsmouth co-op staff to facilitate partnerships between the co-op and researchers in 2005 (Schmitt 2002). The Consortium is a

¹² URI site visit (groundtruthing exercise), March, 2007

¹³ URI site visit (groundtruthing exercise), March, 2007

¹⁴ Profile review comment, Erik Anderson, President, New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association, September 28, 2007

research-based project facilitated by the University of New Hampshire for funding of reviewed research projects throughout New England.¹⁵

The New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association represents both lobstering and groundfishing, the major components of New Hampshire's commercial fishing industry. It has been an active advocate for industry issues at both the state and federal level with members participating as representatives on boards, commissions, and councils.¹⁶

Fishing assistance centers

Seafarer's Friend is a non-denominational Christian organization found in Boston, Portsmouth, and Portland, that visits fishing vessels and other fishing related industries to provide assistance and religious counsel.

When NMFS proposed Amendment 13, which closed vast areas to fishing, this reduced the number of days fishermen can fish, and required fishermen to purchase new and expensive gear. New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg (R) asked Senate Appropriations for more than \$11 million in economic assistance for New England fishing communities (Davidson 2002). As a result of Senator Gregg's efforts, a revolving loan fund was made available to the fishing industry. Fund activity has been sporadic because of the decline in economic investment in the industry resulting from regulatory conditions.¹⁷

Other fishing related organizations

The [Recreational Fishing Alliance](#) is a national, grassroots political action organization representing individual sport fishermen and the sport fishing industry. The [Coastal Conservation Association](#) (CCA) is an organization composed of recreational fishermen and that addresses conservation issues nationally and at the state level. It was formed in 1998 in New Hampshire.

Physical

Portsmouth has an extensive public transportation infrastructure including rail, ferry, and bus transportation. Portsmouth lies almost halfway between Portland, ME (52 miles), and Boston, MA (57 miles). The Pease International Airport is located in neighboring Newington; in addition, the Manchester Airport is 36 miles from Portsmouth, and the Portland International Jetport in Portland, ME is 46 miles away. Many residents characterized Portsmouth as a creative, quaint, seaside community with a lot of activities for youths. Many also identified a change to more tourist-related activities and infrastructure, as well as more development in the downtown area.¹⁸

Outside of the main downtown area, there are large piles of salt along the waterfront and a primarily commercial docking area with dilapidated pilings and what appeared to be a small summer educational facility with salt water touch tanks and displays. There is at least one ferry service to Isle of Shoals (*Isle of Shoals S.S. Co.*) and a Shoals Marine lab vessel (*John M. Kingsbury*). There was one commercial vessel docked at the pier, and more may use the area at times. The primary commercial facility, however, is the Portsmouth Commercial Fish Pier,

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¹⁸ URI site visit (groundtruthing exercise), March, 2007

former home of the Fishermen's Co-op. While the co-op has dissolved, the pier is still in place, and today houses primarily lobster vessels as groundfish vessels have largely disappeared.¹⁹ There are three fueling stations at the pier and an ice house. Across the street is the Pierce Island Boat Launch and small side streets along the river with chowder shops, and a few other stores. There is an exclusive marina in nearby Newcastle called the Little Harbor Marine. The area features an Inn, restaurants, shops, condos and the marina. They also sell fuel to the public. While mostly recreational boats and yachts, there were three commercial vessels tied to the dock that were in disrepair and three party/ whale watching vessels (*Starfish*, *North Star*, and *White Star*) being stored at the marina, all of which operate out of Hampton, NH.²⁰ There are a few fish markets, with the prominent one being Olde Mill Fish Market.²¹

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES²²

Commercial

Largemouth groundfish and monkfish were the most valuable landings in Portsmouth between the years 1997-2006 (see Table 1). Additionally, lobster, "other" species, and sea scallops accounted for a large portion of the value of species landed in Portsmouth. The value of landings of most of these species groupings had declined in 2006 from the 1997-2006 average; lobster landings had increased considerably, however, and were the most valuable landings for Portsmouth in 2006.

The number of home ported vessels has varied between the years 1997-2006, but overall showed an increasing trend. In 1997 there were 54 vessels which increased to a high of 67 vessels in 2004. The number of vessels where the owner's city is Portsmouth is somewhat consistent, varying over the years but with no consistent trend (see Table 2).

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²¹ URI site visit (groundtruthing exercise), March, 2007

²² 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.

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

	Average from 1997-2006
Largemouth Groundfish²³	1
Monkfish	2
Lobster	3
Other²⁴	4
Scallop	5
Dogfish	6
Herring	7
Smallmouth Groundfish²⁵	8
Skate	9
Bluefish	10
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	11
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	12
Tilefish	13

(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 Year²⁶

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	54	26
1998	44	20
1999	45	18
2000	62	21
2001	63	22
2002	59	25
2003	54	21
2004	67	29
2005	64	20
2006	66	19

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence²⁷)

²³ Largemouth groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

²⁴ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

²⁵ Smallmouth multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

²⁶ 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

Portsmouth supports a large recreational fishing industry. Numerous companies are available for deep sea fishing (PortsmouthNH.com nd). Many of these companies also offer whale watching and day cruises.

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

When NMFS proposed Amendment 13, which closed vast areas to fishing, this reduced the number of days fishermen can fish, and required fishermen to purchase new and expensive gear. New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg (R) asked Senate Appropriations for more than \$11 million in economic assistance for New England fishing communities (Davidson 2002). As a result of Senate or Gregg's efforts, a revolving loan fund was made available to the fishing industry. Fund activity has been sporadic because of the decline in economic investment in the industry resulting from regulatory conditions.²⁸

Portsmouth fishermen are concerned that NMFS regulations are overly stringent and will force them out of business. Specifically, they question the data gathering methods and ultimate validity of NMFS's stock assessments (Fabrizio 2002). The future of commercial fishing in Portsmouth is unclear after the closing of the co-op. The co-op serviced groundfishing vessels from Portsmouth and Rye, NH, as well as from Kittery and York, ME. The Portsmouth Commercial Fishermen's Pier still exists, but the services provided by the co-op such as transportation and marketing are gone. "As attrition in the industry continues, there is a concern that there will be limited ability for the industry to respond when and if regulatory conditions are relaxed. Fewer vessels, collapsed infrastructure, and increased costs will jeopardize the industry's future."²⁹

Residents in Portsmouth are concerned over increasing development, high taxes, and downtown access being hindered by tight parking regulations.³⁰

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²⁷ 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.

²⁸ Profile review comment, Erik Anderson, President, New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association, September 28, 2007

²⁹ Profile review comment, Erik Anderson, President, New Hampshire Commercial Fishermen's Association, September 28, 2007

³⁰ URI site visit (groundtruthing exercise), March, 2007

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