

WILDWOOD, NJ¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The city of Wildwood, New Jersey (38.991°N, 74.815°W) is located in Cape May County. It is 36.5 miles from Vineland, NJ, 45.13 miles from Atlantic City, NJ, and 73.3 miles from Philadelphia, PA. Wildwood contains 1.3 square miles of land area (USGS 2008).



Map 1. Location of Wildwood, NJ (US Census Bureau 2000a)

Historical/Background

Incorporated in 1912, the city of Wildwood is one of five municipalities built on a barrier island, called Five Mile Beach. The communities of Wildwood, North Wildwood, West Wildwood, Wildwood Crest and Diamond Beach are collectively known as the “Wildwoods” (City of Wildwood nd). Arriving around 1870, the first here were fishermen of Nordic, Danish, and Swedish descent. The settlement was originally called Anglesea (NJ Shore nd).

In 1874, the United States Government erected the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in what was then Anglesea, to serve the increasing numbers of mariners who were passing by this often treacherous stretch of Atlantic coastline (Hereford Inlet Lighthouse nd). This region has relied heavily on fishing and farming since the 1600s, and fishing remains the second largest industry in Cape May County (Cape May County 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 Wildwood has a total population of 5,436, up 21.2% from the reported population in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.9% were male and 51.1% were female. The median age was 35.5 years and 69.9% of the population was 21 years or older while 17.3% were 62 or older.

Wildwood's age structure (see Figure 1) shows that the majority of Wildwood's population is below 40 years old, suggesting little out-migration of the younger population as is often seen in other fishing communities.

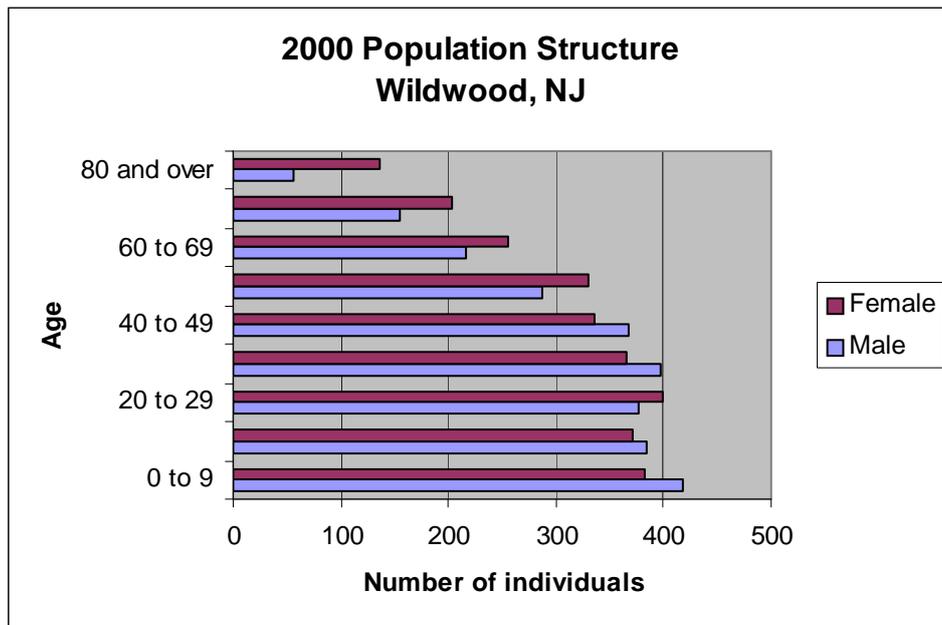


Figure 1. Wildwood's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

The majority of the population was white (70.5%) with 16.6% of residents black or African American, 0.5% Asian, 0.4% Native American, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). A total of 17.6% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (21.6%), Italian (15%), German (11%), and English (5.6%). With regard to region of birth, 41.6% were born in New Jersey, 44.1% were born in a different state and 9.7% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2.8% who were 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 Wildwood city. This census data is at the level of County Subdivision. (accessed July 5, 2007)

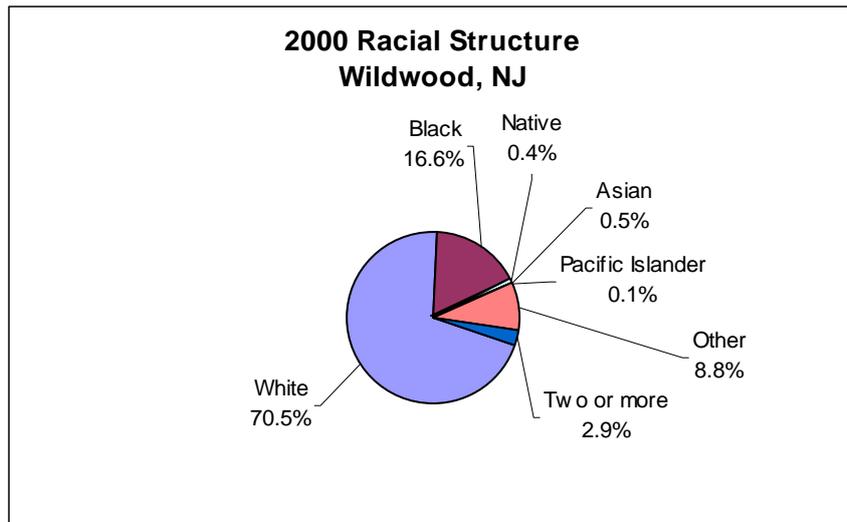


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

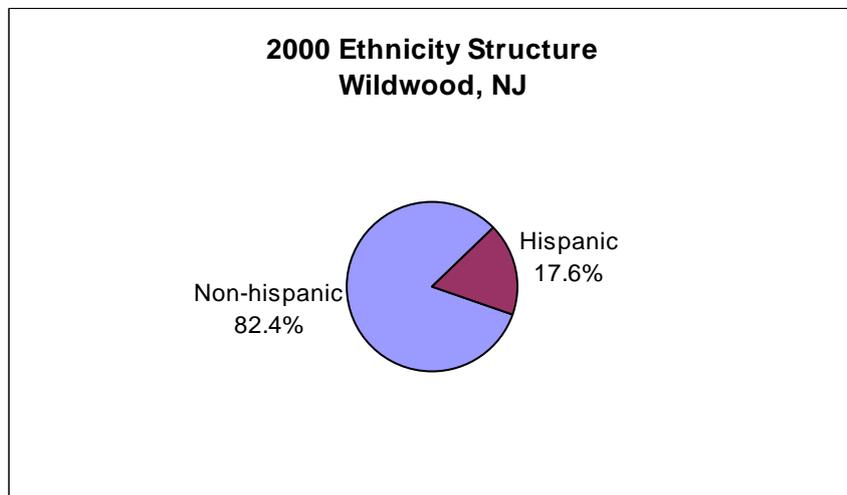


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

For 79.4% of the population, only English is spoken in the home, leaving 20.6% in homes where a language other than English is spoken, including 11.7% of the population who spoke English less than ‘very well’ according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 66.3% were high school graduates or higher and 6.8% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 8.2% did not reach ninth grade, 25.5% attended some high school but did not graduate, 42.4% completed high school, 14.6% had some college with no degree, 2.5% received an associate’s degree, 5% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 1.8% 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 Cape May County was Catholic with 15 congregations and 32,307 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were The United Methodist Church (25 with 5,133 adherents), and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (6 with 2,142 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 15% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

Offshore wind farms have been proposed for four locations off of Cape May County, and fishermen are concerned about the impact wind turbines could potentially have on fish or on their access to fisheries (Curran 2005).

Cultural attributes

Numerous recreational fishing tournaments take place in Wildwood, including: the annual “Duke of Fluke” Fishing Tournament in July; the annual Surf Fishing Tournament and the annual Anglesea Surf Anglers Surf Fishing Tournament in September; and in October the Pennsauken Surf Fishing Club Tournament, the Great Fall Classic Surf Fishing Tournament, and the annual South Jersey Surf Casters Tournament (Borough of Wildwood Crest nd).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

The tenth largest employer (140 employees) in Cape May County is Snow’s/Doxsee Inc. (CMCCC nd), with an 86,000 square-foot plant in Cape May that produces clam products including chowder, soups, canned clams, clam juice, and seafood sauces. [Snow’s/Doxsee](#) is the only domestic manufacturer to harvest its own clams, and the company maintains the largest allocation for fishing and harvesting ocean clams in the United States (NOAA Fisheries nd). Cold Spring Fish and Supply employs 500 people, and is the third largest employer in the county (CMCCC nd). Other top employers in the county include Cape Regional Medical Center (1100), Acme Markets (600), WaWa (485), Holy Redeemer Visiting Nurse (250), and Super Fresh (250) (CMCCC nd). The largest seasonal employer in Wildwood is [Morey’s Piers](#),⁵ an entertainment complex along Wildwood’s beach featuring amusement rides, two water parks, as well as games, shops, and restaurants. The Piers hire ~1500 employees during the summer, of which roughly half are international students.

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁶, 62.1% (4,256 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 13.3% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 48.8% were employed.



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

⁵ Personal Communication, Wildwood City Clerk’s office, 4400 New Jersey Ave., Wildwood, NJ 08260, 6/28/05

⁶ 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.

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 30 positions or 1.4% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 169 positions or 8.1% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (14.3%), retail trade (14.2%), and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (8.8%), and construction (7.8%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Wildwood was \$23,981 (up 42.9% from \$16,775 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$13,682. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 32% more per year than females.

The average family in Wildwood consists of 3.06 persons. With respect to poverty, 20.2% of families (down from 77.8% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 26.4% 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, 60.7% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Wildwood had a total of 6,488 housing units of which 36% were occupied and 24% were detached one unit homes. Approximately one-third (34.4%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc. accounted for none of the housing units; 76.8% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$84,000. Of vacant housing units, 50.9% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 59.9% were renter occupied.

Government

Wildwood has a Mayor-council form of government.

Fishery involvement in government

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

Institutional

Fishing associations

[Garden State Seafood Association](#) in Trenton is a statewide organization of commercial fishermen and fishing companies, related businesses, and individuals working in common cause to promote the interests of the commercial fishing industry and seafood consumers in New Jersey.

The [Jersey Coast Anglers Association](#) (JCAA) is an association of over 75 saltwater fishing clubs throughout the state. Founded in 1981, the purpose of the organization is to unite and represent marine sport anglers to work towards common goals. The JCAA website (www.jcaa.org) also provides links for many NJ anglers associations.

Fishing assistance centers

“In an effort to maintain a healthy and safe fishing industry the Board of Chosen Freeholders along with the State of New Jersey developed the Cape May County Revolving Fishing Loan Program. This program was instituted in 1984 and is designed to help commercial, charter and party boat fishermen with low interest loans for safety and maintenance of fishing vessels. More than \$2.5 million has been loaned out to help strengthen the local fishing industry” (Cape May County nd).

Other fishing related organizations

The Association of Surf Angling Clubs in New Jersey was founded in 1915. The following annual tournaments are conducted in affiliation with the association: H. W. Shanner

Striped Bass Tournament; North Philadelphia Surf Club Tournament; South Jersey Anglers Association Tournament; Brigantine Sportsman's Association Tournament; Double Dipper Tournament of the Fishing Mermaid's of Atlantic City, N.J.; Ocean City fishing Club Tournament; Long Beach Island Fishing Club Tournament; Nagshead Surf Fishing Club Tournament; Pennsauken Surf Fishing Club Tournament; Cape Hatteras Surf Fishing Club Tournament; Brunswick Surf Fishing Club Tournament; and Tri-State Tournaments sponsored by Strippers Unlimited Club (Association of Surf Angling Clubs 2003).

[Cape May County Party & Charter Boat Association](#) is an organization made up of many local boats located at the Southern New Jersey shore, from Ocean City to Cape May.

Physical

Wildwood is situated in the southern portion of the state on a peninsula between Cape May (to the south) and Atlantic City (to the north). Wildwood sits on the open Atlantic but is in close proximity to the Delaware Bay to the west. There are three airports certified for carrier operations nearest to Wildwood: Atlantic City International, NJ (about 37 miles), Dover AFB, DE (about 45 miles), and Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico Regional, MD (about 66 miles). Other public-use airports nearest to Wildwood are: Cape May County, NJ (about 6 miles), Woodbine Municipal, NJ (about 16 miles), and Ocean City Municipal, NJ (about 24 miles) (MapQuest nd). Wildwood is approximately a 90-minute drive from Philadelphia and a 2.5 hour drive to New York City; many of the tourists in Wildwood come from Philadelphia because of its proximity.

The commercial fishing industry in Wildwood is located along Otten's Harbor (McCay and Cieri 2000). There are 15 marinas located near Wildwood (in Lower Township): Bridgeport Marina, Canyon Club Marina, C Marina Inc., Lake View Docks, Lighthouse Pointe Marina, North Wildwood Marina, Ottens Harbor Marine Service, [Pier 47 Marina](#) (150 deep-water slips, a supply store, and a bait shop), [Schooner Island Marina](#) (300 slips), Shawcrest Marina, South Dock Marina Inc., Spray Dock Marina, Sunset View Marina, Waterway Marina, and West Bay Marina (NJ Shore nd). In addition to marinas, there are many bait and tackle stores found in Wildwood's area such as Sunset Lake Bait and Tackle (NJ Shore nd).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁷

Commercial

Because of their proximity, the ports of Cape May and Wildwood are sometimes considered together, making this combined port the largest commercial fishing port in New Jersey (NJ Fishing nd), and the fifth most valuable on the east coast (NJCM nd). Like much of the rest of New Jersey, shellfish were by far the most important species landed here. Unlike nearby Cape May, Wildwood has a large surf clam and ocean quahog fishery, which was by far the most valuable species on average for 1997-2006 (see Table 1). However, in 2006, the landings value of surf clams and ocean quahogs had declined, and was considerably

⁷ 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.

lower than the ten-year average values. The value of scallop landings, on the other hand, was much greater in 2006 than the ten-year average value, and in that year scallop landings exceeded surf clam and ocean quahog landings in value almost four-fold. Generally, the number of vessels home ported in Wildwood was variable and did not demonstrate any clear pattern, with a high of 19 in 2000 to a low of 14 in 2003 and 2004 (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
Surf Clams, Ocean Quahog	1
Scallop	2
Other ⁸	3
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	4
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	5
Lobster	6
Monkfish	7
Bluefish	8
Skate	9
Largemouth Groundfish ⁹	10
Smallmouth Groundfish ¹⁰	11
Dogfish	12
Herring	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 Year¹¹

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	16	9
1998	16	8
1999	15	7
2000	19	9
2001	18	9
2002	17	11
2003	14	11
2004	14	9
2005	14	7
2006	15	11

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹²)

⁸ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

⁹ Largemouth groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

¹⁰ Smallmouth multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

¹¹ 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

Recreational fishing is significant in Wildwood, and attracts a large percentage of the tourist base in Wildwood. [One website](#) claims that Wildwood has over 100 party boats for fishing, sightseeing, and parasailing. Data from this same website indicates that between 2001- 2005, there were 12 charter and party vessels making 2,646 total trips registered in logbook data by charter and party vessels in Wildwood carrying a total of 53,773 anglers.

In New Jersey the charter/party fleet is the largest on east coast. Many vessels are over 120ft long and carry over 150 people.¹³

Subsistence

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

Future

Information on the future of Wildwood is unavailable through secondary data collection.

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¹² 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.

¹³ Community Review Comments, Bruce Freeman, NJ Coast Anglers Association, 1201 Route 37 East, Suite 9, Toms River, NJ 08753, October 2, 2007

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