

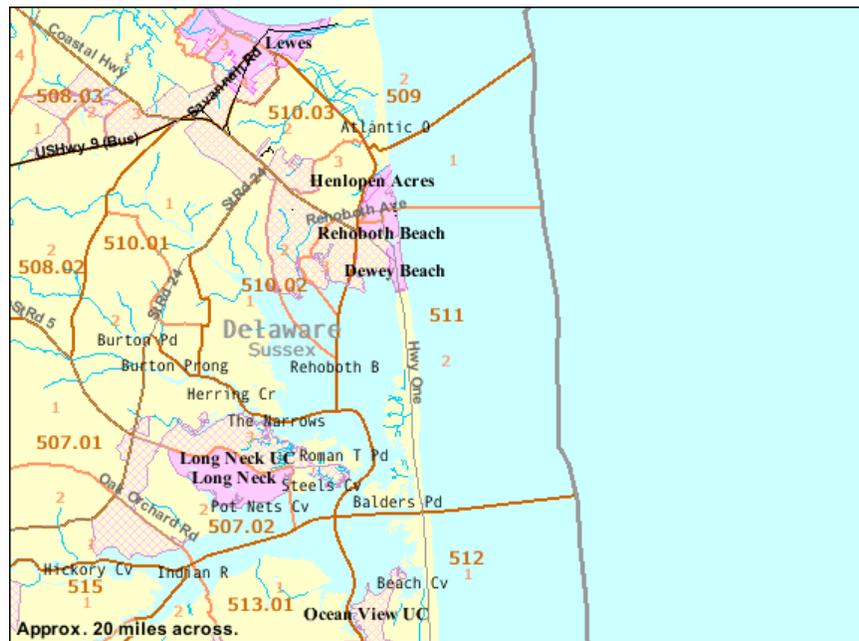
INDIAN RIVER, DE¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The area referred to as Indian River, Delaware (38.61°N, 75.06°W) is the area around Indian River Inlet, on the north end of the Delaware Seashore State Park, where the Indian River Marina and its associated fishing fleet are located. Indian River Inlet connects the Atlantic Ocean with Indian River, Indian River Bay, and Rehoboth Bay (Oles 2005). The Marina is about 6 miles south of Dewey Beach and six miles north of Bethany Beach.



Map 1. Location of the Rehoboth Beach – Dewey Beach area (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

Indian River Inlet is the principal recreational and commercial access point to the Atlantic Ocean in Delaware, but does not constitute a residential community. Indian River Inlet was an important trading port for merchant vessels traveling to and from Philadelphia. Once a natural inlet subject to erosion and shifting, permanent steel and stone jetties were constructed on both sides of the inlet in 1939 by the federal government to help stabilize the area. The Indian River Inlet and the marinas here are part of the Delaware Seashore State Park, which encompasses 2,825 acres and was designated in 1965. Recreational fishing has been an important

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.”

industry here for a long time, with for-hire fishing dating back to at least the 1930s. There were as many as 200 charter and party boats in Lewes and Indian River during the 1950s (Oles 2005). [Dewey Beach](#), just to the north of the inlet, advertises itself as a beach resort and as a meeting place for singles on the weekend. [Rehoboth Beach](#), on the other side of Dewey Beach, is also a well-known beach resort.

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, the Rehoboth Beach – Dewey Beach – Indian River census tract had a total population of 2,844 (1990 Census data was not available for the corresponding census tract). Of this 2000 total, 49.5% were males and 50.5% were females. The median age was 54.8 years and 90.7% of the population was 21 years or older while 37.7% was 62 or older.

The population structure Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River (see Figure 1) shows the largest percentage of residents to be between the ages of 50-59, followed by 60-69 and 70-79. This aging population indicates that this area may serve as a retirement community to many. There are also very few children in this area, supporting this idea. In addition, there are significantly more men than women in the 40-49 age category.

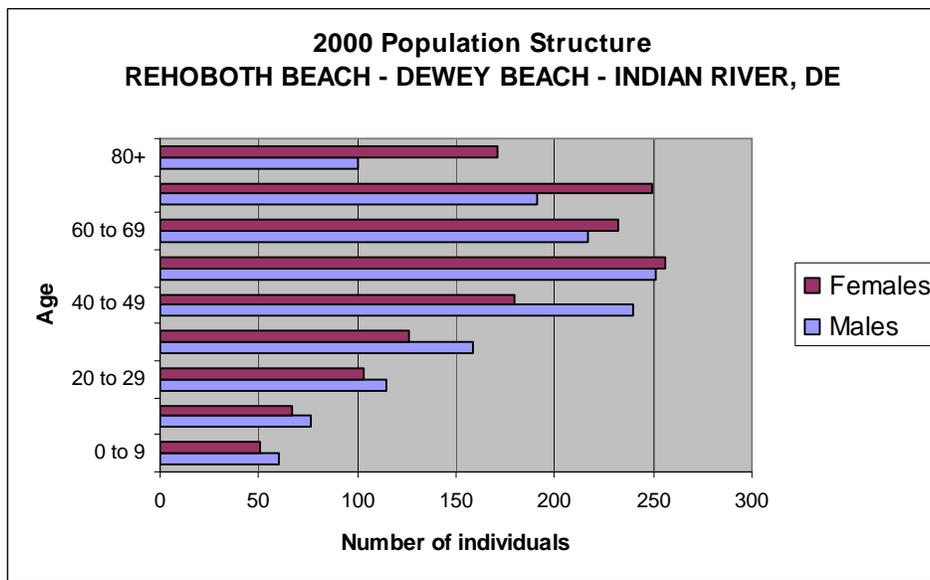


Figure 1. Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (96.6%), with 0.9% of residents black or African American, 0.9% Asian, 0.4% Native American, and 0.1% of residents Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 2.4% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino

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>; there are no residents in Delaware Seashore State Park; the census data used here is census tract 511, which encompasses the area where the Indian River Marina is found, as well as the communities of Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach (cited July 2007)

(see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (26.3%), Irish (23.9%), German (17.3%), and Italian (6.6%). With regard to region of birth, 28.8% were born in Delaware, 65.9% were born in a different state and 4.2% were born outside of the U.S. (1.4% of who were not United States citizens).

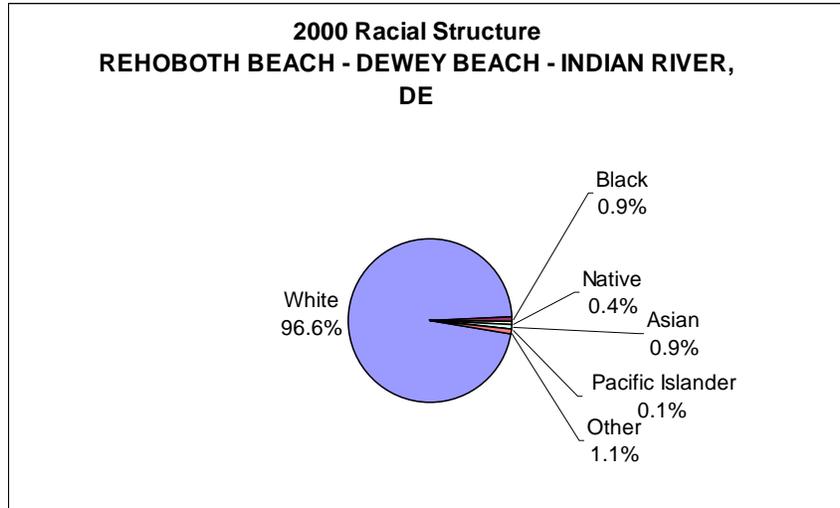


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

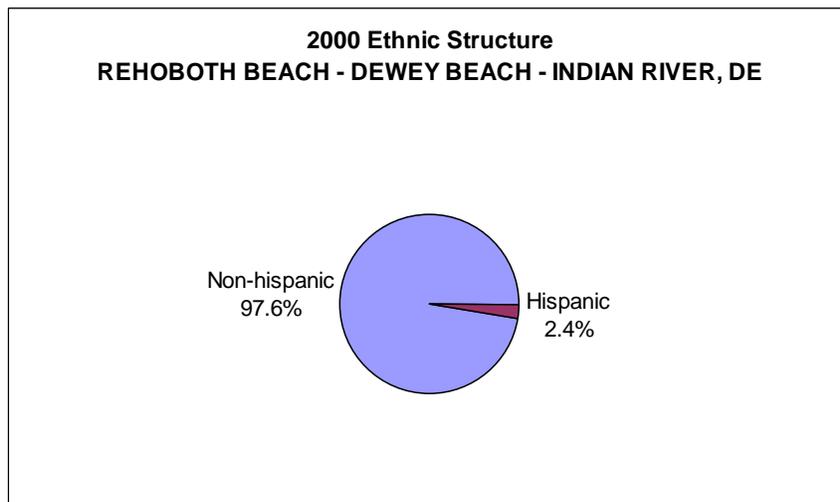


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 93.5% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 6.5% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 1.5% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 93.0% were high school graduates or higher and 47.0% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 1.5% did not reach ninth grade, 5.5% attended some high school but did not graduate, 18.5% completed high school, 21.6% had some college with no degree, 5.8% received their associate’s degree, 25.6% earned their bachelor’s degree, and 21.4% received either their 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 Sussex County was United Methodist with 79 congregations and 20,444 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Catholic (6 with 12,164 adherents), Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) (14 with 3,226 adherents), and Episcopal (11 with 2,119 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 32.1% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

There are a handful of commercial fishermen with slips at the Indian River Inlet Marina who were grandfathered in; when they are gone, commercial boats will no longer operate from here on a full-time basis, as they are not permitted between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Commercial fishermen in Delaware generally have trouble finding reliable crew who will work for little pay and only when needed, and most fishermen don't make enough money with it to fish exclusively; most have other jobs (Oles 2005).

There is a proposed ban on horseshoe crab fishing due to over harvesting in Delaware and New Jersey. Public officials are going to take public comments into consideration before putting the ban in place. Many people support the ban, recognizing the effect over harvesting has had on wildlife in the area, but they are also expecting fishermen to be upset about this restriction (Wacker 2008).

Cultural attributes

There are a number of sportfishing tournaments held in Indian River each year. The Indian River Boating Association hosts four: the Delaware Open Bluefish Tournament, the Delaware Open Tuna Tournament, the Delaware Open Bottom Fishing Tournament, and the Delaware Open Tuna Overnight Tournament (Oles 2005). Old Inlet Bait and Tackle in Rehoboth Beach hosts the annual [Delaware Seashore Fall Surf Fishing Classic](#). The Indian River Marina will be sponsoring the third annual [Rocktober Fishing Tournament](#) in October 2006, which, in addition to the rockfish (striped bass) competition, also includes children's activities, a touch tank, live music, and a chili cook-off and pie cook-off. [The Delaware Seashore State Park](#) also offers a number of related activities such as seining and boat tours to educate visitors about the area's ecology.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

The Indian River area has a clear linkage with beach tourism. There are an estimated 75-80 people employed at the marina who depend on the charter and party boats (Oles 2005). Tourism is responsible for employing over 7700 people in Sussex County with an estimated economic impact of over \$420 million annually. Chicken farming is another significant industry in the area; Sussex County is responsible for more broiler chicken production than any other county in the United States (Sussex County nd).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 53.7% (1,425 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 1.3% were unemployed, 0.1% were in the Armed Forces, and 52.2% were employed.

⁵ 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.

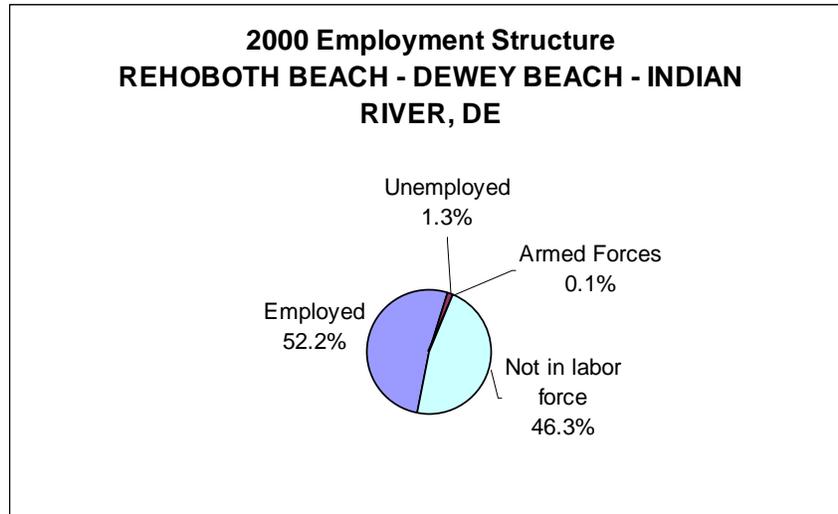


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 7 positions or 0.5% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 180 positions or 13.0% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (21.8%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (21.8%), retail trade (13.5%), and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (10.0%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River was \$53,397 (1990 Census data was not available for the corresponding census tract) and per capita income was \$43,519. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 89.4% more per year than females.

The average family in Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River consisted of 2.40 persons. With respect to poverty, 1.7% of families (1990 Census data was not available for the corresponding census tract) and 4.5% 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 2000a). In 2000, 15.8% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River had a total of 6,254 housing units of which 25.1% were occupied and 57.5% were detached one unit homes. Less than ten percent (9.3%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc. accounted for 2.1% of housing units; 90.6% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$280,000. Of vacant housing units, 80.0% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 20.7% were renter occupied.

Government

Indian River Inlet lies within Sussex County. Sussex County is governed by a five-member council, each of whom is elected to four year terms. The county is divided up into five geographical districts. There is also a County Administrator who oversees the Sussex County government (Sussex County nd).

Fishery involvement in the government

Information on fishery involvement in the government in Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Institutional

Fishing associations

[The Indian River Charter Captain's Association](#) represents about 24 charter boat captains in the marina. [The Recreational Fishing Alliance](#) has a Delaware Chapter which lobbies for recreational fishing issues within the state. [Delaware Mobile Surf-Fishermen Inc.](#) is an advocacy and conservation organization for surf and salt-water fishermen around the state. They sponsor a number of tournaments including the Delaware Fall Classic Surf Fishing Tournament.

Fishing assistance center

Information on fishing assistance centers in Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related organizations

[Delaware Seashore State Park](#) is responsible for maintaining the marina, and also runs a variety of fishing-related programs.

Physical

The fishing activity in Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River is centered around Indian River Inlet, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Indian River Bay and Rehoboth Bay through a natural opening. The Indian River North Shore Marina is where both the charter fleet and the commercial vessels are based, and is located on the north side of the inlet, and is part of the Delaware Seashore State Park. The South Shore Marina is located on the south side of the channel. There are 300 slips here, fuel and pump-out services, a boat ramp, fish cleaning station, marine repair service, and tackle shop as part of the marina. The marina property was purchased by the State of Delaware in 1971. There is no commercial fishing infrastructure here, so fishermen must pack out their own catch onto their own trucks, or sell them to the dockside buyers who sometimes come from elsewhere.

There are more than 30 marinas within 20 miles of Indian River, as well as a number of bait and tackle shops (Oles 2005). [Old Inlet Bait and Tackle](#) is in Rehoboth Beach, two miles to the north of Indian River Inlet, and is associated with the Indian River Marina fleet. [The Ships Store](#) is a marine supply store located at the marina. The marina is located on Route 1, about six miles south from Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach and six miles north of Bethany Beach.

There is [summertime bus service](#) that runs between Dewey Beach and Bethany Beach, past the marina. Indian River is fourteen miles from Lewes, 100 miles from Wilmington, DE, and 128 miles from both Philadelphia and Baltimore. It is 37 miles from Cape May, NJ and 80 miles from Atlantic City by taking the Lewes-Cape May ferry. The nearest airport is the Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico Regional Airport, 37 miles away in Maryland (MapQuest nd).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁶

Commercial

Most fishing in federal waters in Delaware is by boats from Indian River Inlet (McCay and Cieri 2000). There are a few commercial boats with slips at the marina here which are allowed to remain due to a grandfather clause. Much of the commercial fishing around Indian River involves potting for blue crab and black sea bass, dredging for conch, or using small gillnets; few vessels here have federal permits. Those lucky enough to get a permit in the lottery may also dredge for horseshoe crabs. Because of the unpredictability of fishing here, most fishermen either fish in a number of different states, or fish a number of different species. Many of the fishermen who fish here don't live in this area, because property in the vicinity of Rehoboth Beach is too expensive (Oles 2005).

The most valuable landings in Indian River are in the "Other" category, which includes conch (knobbed whelk and channeled whelk) and blue crab, commonly landed species elsewhere in Delaware. The value of the "Other" category in 2006 was lower than the average value for 1997-2006. The landings in 2006 for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass was significantly higher than the ten-year average. Overall, the level of landings for Indian River was variable. There were zero landings in 1997 and a high of \$672,226 in 2003 (see Table 1). The number of vessels home ported in Indian River was between two and four most years, but made an enormous leap to 24 in 2005. However, the level of home port fishing was listed as zero in every year. There are no vessel owners listed because Indian River is not a residential place (see Table 2).

Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value of Federally Managed Groups of landings in Indian River

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Other ⁷	282,059	215,230
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	75,962	149,079
Scallop	15,580	115,744
Lobster	10,982	18,738
Bluefish	1,705	5,635
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	113	CONFIDENTIAL
Smallmesh Groundfish ⁸	26	253
Dogfish	4	0

⁶ 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.

⁷ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

⁸ Smallmesh multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

Vessels by Year⁹

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	4	0	0	0
1998	2	0	0	277,534
1999	3	0	0	458,986
2000	4	0	0	325,938
2001	3	0	0	400,352
2002	4	0	0	453,693
2003	2	0	0	672,226
2004	2	0	0	389,768
2005	24	0	0	380,833
2006	19	0	0	504,986

Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁰

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

Indian River Inlet is an important access point for recreational fishing both from sea and from shore. The website of the Indian River Marina lists thirty charter boats (DSPR 2001); there is also at least one party boat here, the [Judy V.](#) Between the years 2001-2005, there were a total of 22 charter and party boats which logged trips in Indian River, carrying a total of 22,453 anglers on 1,072 different trips. While many boats fish seasonally, four boats fish year-round. Sea bass, croaker, and flounder are the main targets of party boats, while many charter boats go offshore in search of yellowfin and bluefin tuna, as well as sharks, king mackerel, cobia, dolphin, and marlin.

Shore-based fishing from the jetties as well as surf fishing is popular in Indian River; fly fishermen are increasing in number here (Indian River Captains Assoc 2008). The Indian River Marina even has a fish cleaning station for anglers to take home their catch (DSPR 2001). Clamming is also a popular recreational activity here, and some bait and tackle shops rent clam rakes. There are a large number of big sportfishing tournaments that take place from Indian River throughout much of the season, including those hosted by the Indian River Boating Association, [Old Inlet Bait and Tackle](#), and the [Indian River Marina](#).

Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach-Indian River is unavailable through secondary data collection.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

FUTURE

Under a multi-year re-development project in progress for the state-owned marina, all but two commercial slips will be eliminated. The re-development also included dredging, new slips, dry dock storage, a travel lift, and a number of other improvements (Oles 2005). The bridge over the Indian River Inlet is also currently under construction (State of Delaware nd).

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