

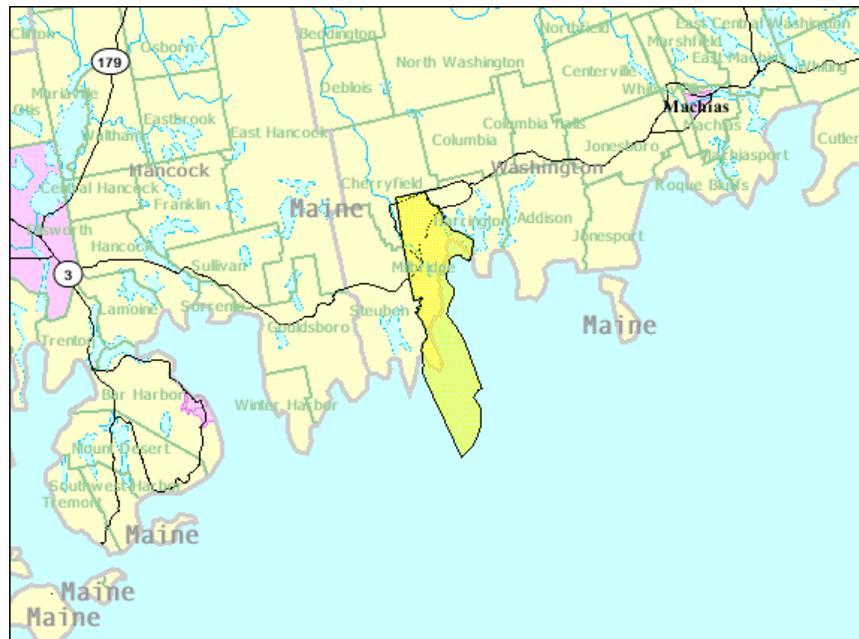
# MILBRIDGE, ME<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

Milbridge (44.28°N, 67.51°W) is in Washington County in the state of Maine. Milbridge is situated at the head of Narraguagus Bay and has a total land area of 57.4 mi<sup>2</sup>, of which 33.3 mi<sup>2</sup> of it is water (State of Maine 2004).



Map 1. Location of Milbridge, ME (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

Milbridge was settled in 1765 and incorporated on July 14, 1848 from a portion of Harrington. It annexed land from Steuben in 1876 and 1907 (State of Maine 2004). Beginning in this time period, Milbridge was a shipbuilding center. From the mid-1800s until just before World War I, the Sawyer family operated the largest shipyards in the town (Milbridge Historical Society 2007). Today Milbridge is the “shopping center” of western Washington County, drawing people from more than 30 miles away to its new grocery store and other retail shops and services. It currently boasts having the only movie theater in western Washington County. Several of the islands offshore from Milbridge belong to either the Maine Coast Heritage Trust or are a part of the Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge.<sup>3</sup>

<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).”

<sup>3</sup> Profile review comment, Lewis Pinkham, Town Manager, PO Box 66 Milbridge ME 04658, October 2, 2007

## Demographics<sup>4</sup>

According to Census 2000 data<sup>5</sup>, Milbridge had a total population of 1,279, down 2.0% from a reported population of 1,305 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.5% were males and 51.5% were females. The median age was 45.1 years and 78.4% of the population was 21 years or older while 27.3% was 62 or older.

The population structure of Milbridge (Figure 1) is somewhat consistent throughout all age groupings, with the exception of a spike in the number of males between the ages of 60 to 69. Milbridge does not display the trend often seen in fishing communities with a decline in the number of 20 to 29 year old residents. Males predominate for all age categories below 59 years old.

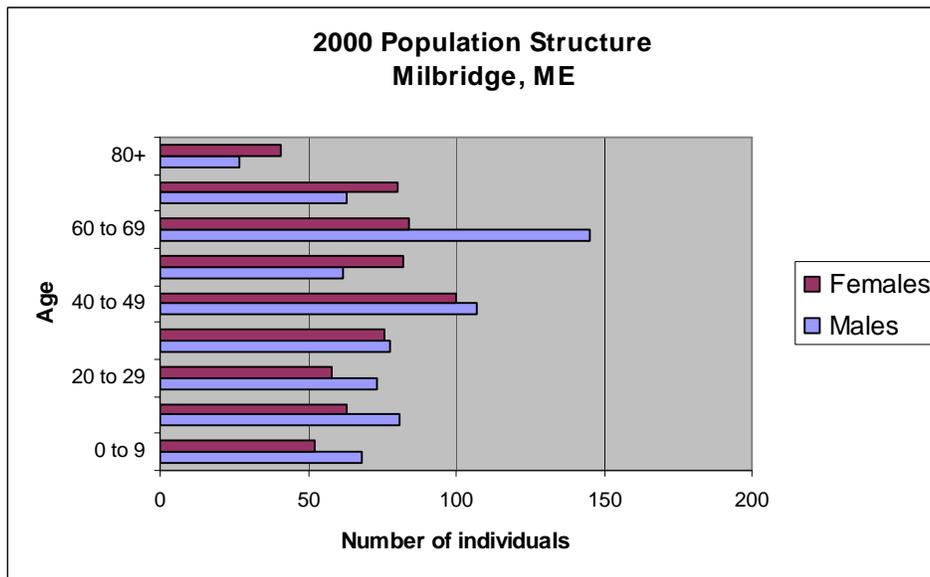


Figure 1. Milbridge's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population is white (92.8%), with 0.1% of residents black or African American, 0.2% Asian, 0.3% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 6.6% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (40.5%), Irish (14.9%), and French (8.8%). With regard to region of birth, 65.8% were born in Maine, 26.6% were born in a different state and 6.8% were born outside of the U.S. (including 5.2% who were not United States citizens).

<sup>4</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.

<sup>5</sup> 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 Milbridge town (cited Jul 2007)

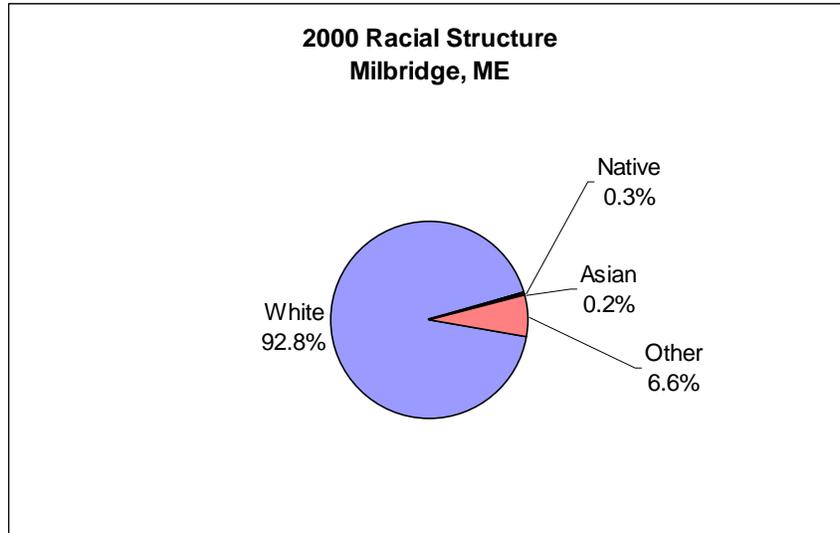


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

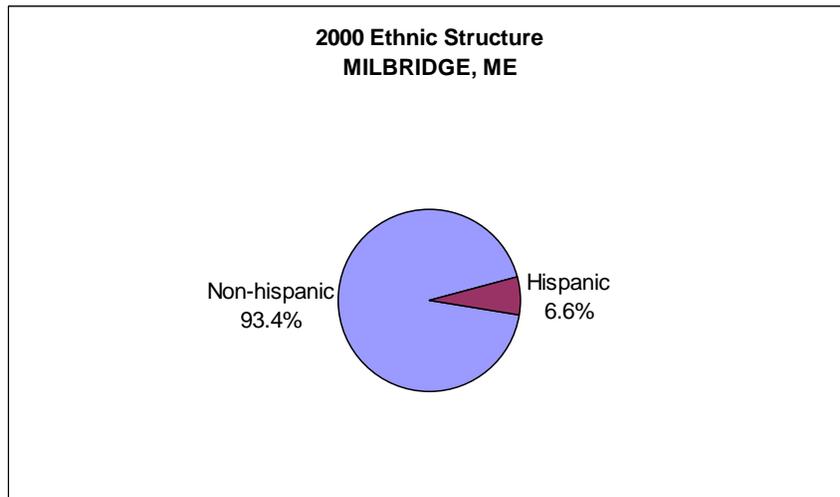


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 90.3% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 9.7% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 3.7% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 77% were high school graduates or higher and 14.3% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 8.1% did not reach ninth grade, 14.9% attended some high school but did not graduate, 41.6% completed high school, 16.7% had some college with no degree, 4.4% received an associate’s degree, 9.7% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 4.6% 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 Washington County was Catholicism, with 12 congregations and 4,155 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were the United Methodist Church (15 with 1,301 adherents), and the United Church of Christ (9 with 577 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 3.2% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

## **Issues/Processes**

Milbridge has recently seen an increase in the number of retirees moving here either full- or part-time. Milbridge is also increasingly becoming a bedroom community for the city of Ellsworth, 40 miles to the west.<sup>6</sup>

In 2006, the State of Maine passed the Working Waterfront Tax Law, to address the problem of working waterfront property being heavily taxed based on its projected market value. The goal of this tax is “to encourage the preservation of working waterfront land and to prevent the conversion of working waterfront land to other uses as the result of economic pressures caused by the assessment of that land for purposes of property taxation.” The law requires the tax assessor to value the property based on what it is worth as working waterfront land, rather than what its market value would be if it were sold and converted to residential or other uses (State of Maine 2005).

## **Cultural attributes**

Milbridge’s annual Milbridge Days festival takes place in July. The highlight of the festival is the greased cod contest which attracts national attention for its unique demonstration of town pride (Maine Office of Tourism 2007). Sea kayaking, sailing, boating, and island exploring add to the recreational enjoyment.

The new Women’s Health Resource Library in Milbridge, located in the Milbridge Medical Center, has become an active hub for both Milbridge and the surrounding area, offering free or low-cost classes, speakers, and events to promote physical and mental well-being and health for women (WHRL 2007).

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

Trees, blueberries and marine life are abundant natural resources which are the foundation of the local economy and the way of life in this part of Maine. Blueberries and the Wyman Company in particular are important elements of the local economy. Milbridge is home to the largest concentration of low bush wild blueberries in the world (MAMA 2007). In addition, neighboring Cherryfield is home to Cherryfield Foods, which operates the largest fruit farm in North America ([Oxford Frozen Foods](#)). The largest employers in Milbridge are Kelco Industries, which makes wreaths and wreath-making supplies, and Narraguagus Bay Health Care Facility, an assisted living and nursing home business. A local resident, Donald Bayrd, owns and operates a worm buying and wholesale business which employs around 80 people and has annual revenue of roughly \$2 million.<sup>7</sup> Other important industries to Milbridge’s economy include fishing, lobstering, clamming, and small, home based industries such as Christmas wreaths and crafts. Milbridge is the trade center for western Washington County, and has much to offer its residents and visitors (The Maine Way 2007).

According to the U.S. Census 2000<sup>8</sup>, 51.9% (556 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 4.9% were unemployed, 0.2% were in the Armed Forces, and 46.8% were employed.

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<sup>6</sup> Profile review comment, Lewis Pinkham, Town Manager, PO Box 66 Milbridge ME 04658, October 2, 2007

<sup>7</sup> Profile review comment, Lewis Pinkham, Town Manager, PO Box 66 Milbridge ME 04658, October 2, 2007

<sup>8</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.

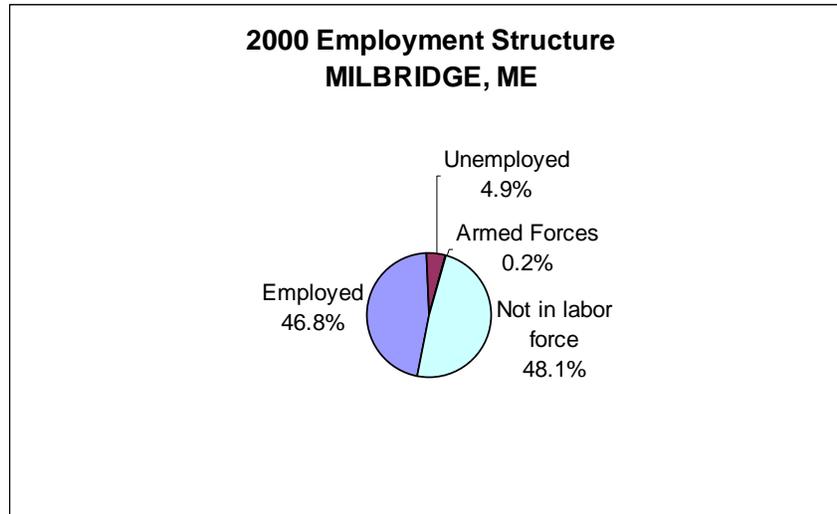


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 79 positions or 15.7% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 104 positions or 20.7% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (17.5%), retail trade (12%), manufacturing (18.5%), transportation, warehousing and utilities (3.6%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (3.6%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (2.4%), and other services (6.2%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Milbridge was \$22,371 (up 30.7% from \$17,118 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$11,996.

The average family in Milbridge consisted of 2.67 persons. With respect to poverty, 14.9% of families (down from 19.9% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 20.7% 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 2000a). In 2000, 66.5% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Milbridge had a total of 866 housing units of which 43.9% were occupied and 74.8% were detached one unit homes. Only 28.2% of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 14.7% of housing units; 92.8% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$74,500. Of vacant housing units, 28.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 20.2% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

Milbridge is governed by a Town Manager, Selectmen, and through town meetings (State of Maine 2004).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

Milbridge has a harbor master (SCEC 2008).

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

The [Maine Lobstermen's Association](#) (MLA) was founded in 1954, and works to protect the lobster resource and the lobstermen's way of life. The association was founded by lobstermen with a goal of empowering Maine's lobster industry by representing lobstermen with a united front. The MLA is the largest commercial fishing industry group on the east coast, and represents the interests of 1200 lobstermen.

The Downeast Lobstermen's Association actively seeks to address concerns of lobstermen in Hancock and Washington Counties.<sup>9</sup> Also, Maine Scallopers Association is located in Milbridge; however, further information on this association is unavailable.

### *Fishing assistance centers*

The Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC), located in the nearby town of Machias, has worked with fishermen to develop a grant program to help the small home-based crab pickers. This council is also available to provide assistance to other sectors of the fishing industry in Downeast Maine (SCEC 2008).

The Washington Hancock Community Agency (WHCA) is located in Milbridge; this organization provides a number of services including small business assistance and housing, transportation, and child services for low-income residents of Washington and Hancock counties (WHCA 2007).

The Working Waterfront Coalition is a statewide collaboration of various industry associations, non-profits, and government agencies with the goal to support Maine's working waterfronts. The [Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program](#) (WWAPP), administered by the Department of Marine Resources, provides money to applicants such as municipalities, fishing co-ops, private commercial fisheries businesses and more, ranging from \$7,000 to \$475,000. The intention of the program is to preserve commercial fisheries working waterfronts and to help secure property for these businesses. As of December 2007, the \$2 million pilot program has reportedly supported over 400 jobs, 194 boats, and assured access to clam flats, parking, wharfage and fisheries in six towns (Maine DMR 2005). Voters [approved an additional \\$3 million](#) to continue the program in 2007.

### *Other fishing related organizations*

The [Maine Fishermen's Forum](#) was founded in 1976, and its goal is to provide continuous opportunities to educate the public and the fishing industry about marine resource issues and fisheries, as well as to provide a platform for discussion and decision making. The Forum also holds an annual three day event which focuses awareness on issues that affect the commercial fishing industry.

## **Physical**

Milbridge has 75 miles of coastline and views of the Narraguagus River, several bays, and the Gulf of Maine. The town lies at the mouth of the Narraguagus River where it empties into the Narraguagus Bay. Both recreational and working boats use Milbridge Marina. Sargents Custom Boats and Crowley Boat & Beal Boat are both boatyards in Milbridge which build lobster boats locally. Milbridge received \$250,000 in 2001 from the state to build a new town dock (State of Maine 2001). U.S. Route 1 splits with Route 1A in Milbridge, allowing a coastal

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option to Harrington, while U.S.1 passes through Cherryfield on its way east (State of Maine 2004). The Hancock County-Bar Harbor airport is located 24 miles west of Milbridge. The closest large airport is Bangor International Airport, 50 miles west of town. Augusta, ME is approximately 113 miles away, while Portland, ME is roughly 186 miles away. Milbridge is one of five towns that comprise MSAD 37 (Maine School Administrative District), and has an elementary school with an annual student population of approximately 110 students.<sup>10</sup>

## **INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>11</sup>**

### **Commercial**

[Dorr Lobster Company](#) is a family run business since 1977. Originally, the business consisted of a single fisherman and has expanded to include a coldwater seasoning and packaging facility. Dorr Lobster Company's goal is to provide the freshest and most affordable product to customers directly from the coastal waters of Maine. Cherry Point Products is a locally-owned business which processes sea cucumbers, urchins, and eels for export overseas. Inland Lobster is a division of Inland Seafood of Atlanta, GA, and operates the largest lobster-buying business in the area.<sup>12</sup>

Lobster is by far the most valuable species in Milbridge, with 2006 values more than double the average landings values of lobster for 1997-2006. Landings in the "other" category were also significant, and were also much higher in 2006 than the ten year average values (Table 1). Overall, the level of landings in Milbridge was high and increased from 1997-2006. The level of home port fishing, however, varied considerably during these years, and was much lower than the level of landings in Milbridge, including a value of zero in 2003, indicating that most of the fishermen landing their catch in Milbridge have another port listed as their home port. The number of vessels home ported in Milbridge increased considerably from a low of nine in 1998 to a high of 22 in 2006 (Table 2). The number of boats registered to owners living in Milbridge was similar in most years, indicating that most vessels home ported here are also owned by residents.

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<sup>11</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.

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## Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Other <sup>13</sup>	2
Scallop	3
Surf Clams, Ocean Quahog	4
Largemouth Groundfish <sup>14</sup>	5
Monkfish	6
Skate	7
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	8

(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 Year<sup>15</sup>

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	12	14
1998	9	11
1999	11	15
2000	13	17
2001	13	15
2002	15	19
2003	14	19
2004	17	18
2005	19	18
2006	22	22

(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>16</sup>)

## Recreational

Milbridge also offers a variety of recreational fishing. The Narraguagus River is famous for its Atlantic salmon and striped bass. Milbridge's public harbor has a dock and moorings. The seas run 10 to 13 feet during the summer and the fall. The Milbridge Marina, or Milbridge Town Landing, is located off Route 1A. This site offers access to the Narraguagus River, with a

<sup>13</sup> "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

<sup>14</sup> Largemouth groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

<sup>15</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>16</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.

boat ramp, float and ample parking (Maine DMR 2006). Charter trips are also available. For example, Captain Robertson of [Robertson Sea Tours](#) has years of experience on the coastal waters of Maine and has spent the last 13 years as a commercial fisherman and scuba diver. Robertson Sea Tours offer 1.5 hour lobster fishing trip and tours Maine's rocky coast.

### **Subsistence**

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

### **FUTURE**

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is attempting to change the Natural Resources Protection Act that would make the law more effective in protecting wetlands. This Act affects all of Maine, and was established in 1988 to help prevent any impact to or destruction of protected natural resources. If the revisions to the act are adopted, the buffer zone around these important areas will increase from 75 to 250 feet, and the law will require landowners to minimize the impact or avoid development completely in this zone (Maine DEP 2005).

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