

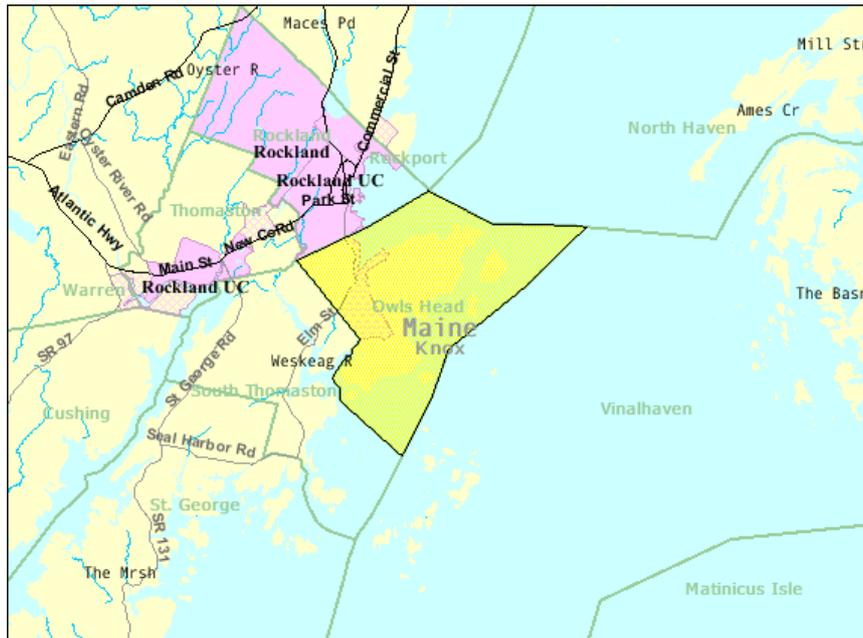
OWL'S HEAD, ME¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The town of Owl's Head, Maine (44.04°N, 69.04°W) is located in Knox County and borders on the city of Rockland and the town of South Thomaston. Owls Head Light Station marks the southern entrance to Rockland Harbor and the north entrance to Mussel Ridge Channel (State of Maine 2004).



Map 1. Location of Owl's Head, ME (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

This area was first explored by Champlain in 1605. Owl's Head was originally a part of the town of Warren (Havassy nd), and until 1921, the community was a part of South Thomaston, when it split off and was incorporated as a town in its own right. Some speculate that Owl's Head got its name from sailors who, in 1759, believed a jutting headland in the northern part of the community resembled the head of an owl (Bergren 2005); others believe it was the English translation for the Native American name for the place, Medadacut (D'Entremont 1997). The Adams/Brown shipyard was a large commercial shipyard which operated in Owl's Head Harbor during the 1800s, peaking during the mid-19th century and then taking a downturn. During the early 1900s, Owl's Head was a popular tourist destination for Boston residents, who traveled here via the train from Rockland, with service from there to Crescent Beach. Today Owl's Head is home to Knox County Regional Airport, the mid-

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."

coast region's only airport, which was at one time a military airfield (Bergren 2005). The Owl's Head lighthouse, marking the southern entrance to Rockland Harbor (State of Maine 2004), is a popular tourist attraction here (Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce nd).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Owl's Head had a total population of 1,601, up 1.7% from the reported population of 1,574 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.2% were males and 51.8% were females. The median age was 47.2 years and 78.6% of the population was 21 years or older while 27.8% was 62 or older.

Owl's Head's age structure (Figure 1) shows the highest percentage of the population is between 50-59 years, followed closely by 40-49. The population remains steady through the 60-69 and 70-79 age brackets, and is relatively large for the 80+ age bracket compared to many other fishing communities, indicating that Owl's Head may be somewhat of a retirement community. Like many other coastal communities, the population declines between the ages of 20-29, indicating that many people are leaving the community for college or to seek employment.

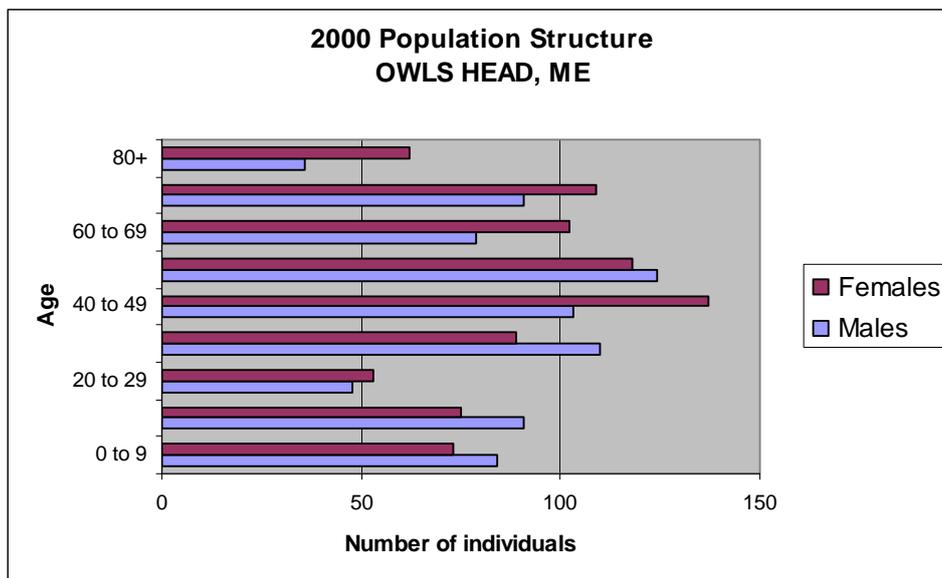


Figure 1. Owls Head's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (99.5%), with 0.1% residents listed as black or African American, 0.2% Asian, 0.1% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 0.3% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (28.9%), Irish (12.7%), and German (10.9%). With regard to region of birth, 65.0% were born in Maine, 30.8% were born in a different state and 2.7% were born outside of the U.S. (including 0.9% 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 Owls Head town (cited Jul 2007)

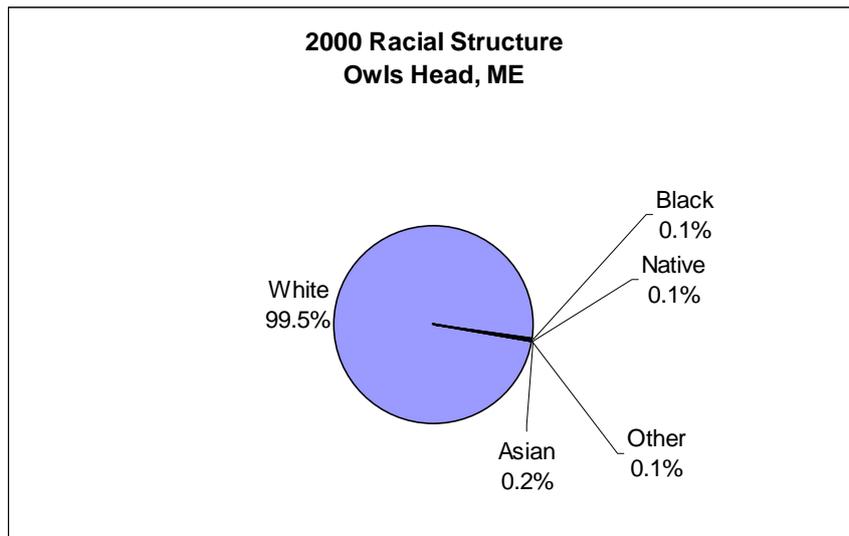


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

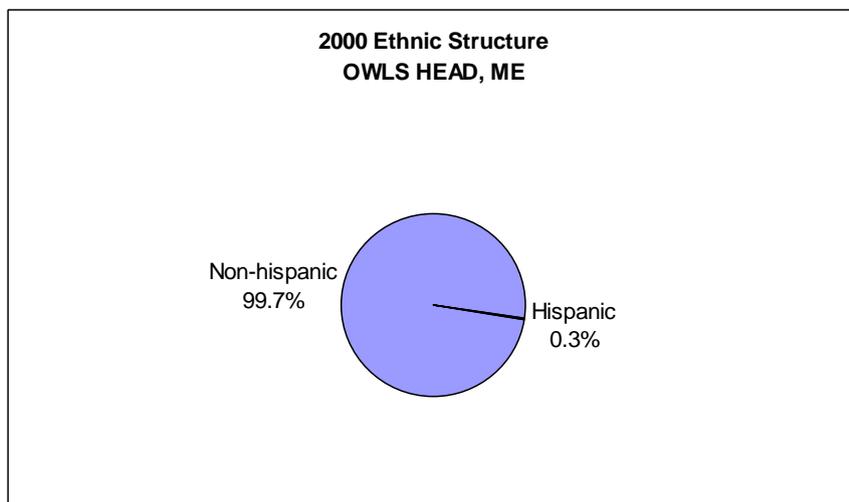


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.7% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 4.3% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 0.9% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 90.1% were high school graduates or higher and 25.6% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 2.6% did not reach ninth grade, 7.2% attended some high school but did not graduate, 37.2% completed high school, 20.8% had some college with no degree, 6.1% received an associate’s degree, 18.7% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 6.9% 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 Knox County was Catholic with 5 congregations and 4,274 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were the American Baptist Church (11 with 1,490 adherents), and the United Methodist Church (7 with 1,138 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 1% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

In 2005, lobstermen in Owl's Head were having a much less profitable season than the record-breaking 2004, as a result of higher bait and fuel prices, and because of a number of factors including variations in water temperature, mortality, etc⁵ Some lobstermen blamed a high number of Jonah crabs in the traps, which the lobstermen said were consuming the bait and reducing their catch (Maine DMR 2005).

In 2005 Maine voters approved a bond measure which provided \$2 million to the newly-established [Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program](#) (WWAPP). "The new fund provides matching funds through a competitive application process to help secure coastal waterfront land that supports commercial fisheries businesses and activities." The bond is administered by the Working Waterfront Team, made up of Coastal Enterprises Inc. and the Island Institute, working with applicants to secure this funding. Six projects were funded in the first year. Voters [approved an additional \\$3 million](#) to continue the program in 2007.

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

Many people in Owl's Head take part in the five-day [Maine Lobster Festival](#) in neighboring Rockland. This annual event features a parade, the crowing of the Maine Sea Goddess, a lobster crate race, an educational tent featuring exhibits about the Gulf of Maine, and of course plenty of lobsters. The [Owl's Head Transportation Museum](#) is a popular museum for visitors, with antique cars and airplanes and a number of other exhibits on transportation. The museum has a small section on ships as well.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

There are two lobster/fishing operations in Owl's Head, which does not include self-employed fishermen. There are also 18 construction/landscaping/earth moving businesses, and 11 automotive/marine/metal work businesses. Roughly 48% of the workforce in Owl's Head commutes to neighboring Rockland for work, while only about 19% of the labor force is actually employed within Owl's Head (Bergren 2005).

Other than fishing, and boat building/repair, Rockland City has other more recent industries stabilizing its economy such as furniture and playground equipment manufacturing, biotechnology industries, wholesale distribution, marine-related businesses, seaweed processing, metal fabricating, and food related industries. "The structure of the economy in the Rockland LMA [Labor Market Area] has been shifting from manufacturing to services, retailing, and construction for many decades" (Gill 2002). "The City continues to attract new industries to broaden its industrial base while retaining traditional industries such as ship and boat building and repair. The relatively broad base has made the city less vulnerable to economic fluctuations in any single industry or product line" (City of Rockland 2002).

⁵ Profile review comment, Richard A. Carver, Lobster fisherman / Selectman, P.O. Box 128, Owls Head, ME 04854, September 10, 2007

The major employers of Rockland include medical centers, banks, food distributors, schools, and government facilities. Other private industries demonstrate the diversity of Rockland's economy. Major manufacture employers in Knox County in 2002 included companies producing the following: snow plows, seaweed extractives, newspapers, bio-medical products, and bituminous concrete (Fagan 2003).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁶, 59.9% (796 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 1.0% were unemployed, 0.2% were in the Armed Forces, and 58.8% were employed.

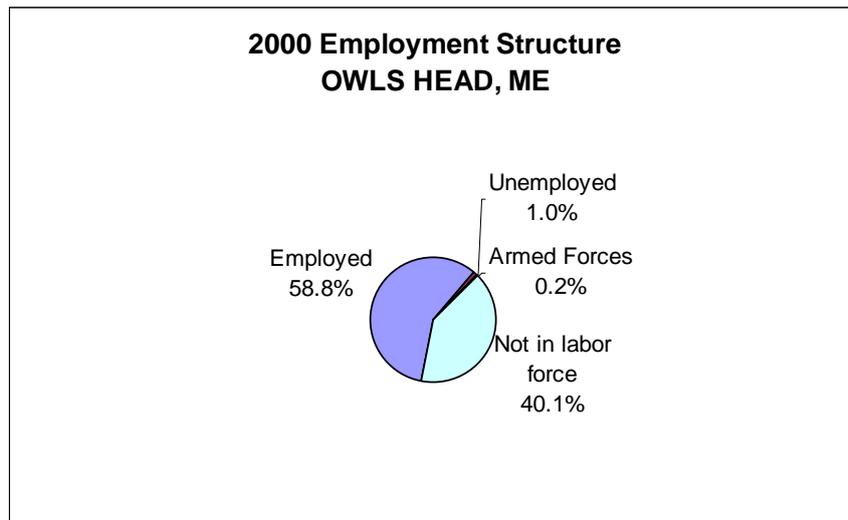


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 65 positions or 8.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 132 positions or 16.9% of jobs. Educational, health, and social services (18.3%), retail trade (16.3%), and manufacturing (10.6%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Owl's Head was \$40,107 (up 30.9% from \$30,647 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]); Patrice McCarron of the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) noted that this increase likely corresponds to the doubling of lobster landings in Maine in the 1990s⁷) and median per capita income was \$22,660. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 44.2% more per year than females.

The average family in Owl's Head consisted of 2.68 persons. With respect to poverty, 4.2% of families (down from 7.2% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 8.1% of individuals earn 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, 27.1% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Owl's Head had a total of 992 housing units of which 72.9% were occupied and 87.4% were detached one unit homes. More than one-third (35.8%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, vans, and boats accounted for 5.9% of housing units; 90.8% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in

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.

⁷ Profile review comment, Patrice McCarron, Executive Director, Maine Lobstermen's Association, 21 Western Ave., Suite 1, Kennebunk, ME 04043, October 2, 2007

this area was \$135,500. Of vacant housing units, 23.9% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, while of occupied units 17.4% were renter occupied.

Government

Owl's Head has a three-member Board of Selectmen with a Town Meeting form of government. The town also has a three-member Town Council which serves as an advisory committee to the Town Meeting (State of Maine 2004).

Fishery involvement in government

Throughout the history of Owl's Head, fishermen have been involved with the town government. At present there is one Selectman who is a lobsterman, the chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals is a part-time lobsterman, the Assistant Fire Chief is a lobsterman, and there are five members of the Owl's Head Fire Department who are lobstermen. Owl's Head has a Harbor Committee; three of its members are lobstermen.⁸ There is also a harbor master in town.

Institutional

Fishing associations

At least ten lobstermen in Owl's Head⁹ are members of the [Maine Lobstermen's Association](#) (MLA), which represents the interests of lobstermen up and down Maine's coast.¹⁰ Nine members of the Spruce Head Fishermen's Co-op live in Owl's Head.¹¹

The 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.

Fishing assistance centers

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](#), 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 [Island Institute](#), located in Rockland, promotes ecological research to help conservation efforts of 15 Maine island communities, which includes research on fisheries, especially that of lobster fisheries.

⁸ Profile review comment, Richard A. Carver, Lobster fisherman / Selectman, P.O. Box 128, Owls Head, ME 04854, September 10, 2007

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¹⁰ Profile review comment, Patrice McCarron, Executive Director, Maine Lobstermen's Association, 21 Western Ave., Suite 1, Kennebunk, ME 04043, October 2, 2007

¹¹ Profile review comment, Richard A. Carver, Lobster fisherman / Selectman, P.O. Box 128, Owls Head, ME 04854, September 10, 2007

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 (Maine Fishermen's Forum 2007).

Physical

Owl's Head borders Rockland and South Thomaston. It is home to the Knox County Regional Airport, the only airport servicing the mid-coast region, providing commuter service to Boston. There are two larger airports near Rockland are Bangor International (67 miles) and Portland International (80 miles). Maine Eastern Railroad provides excursion train service between Brunswick and Rockland and there are plans to extend passenger rail service from Portland to Rockland via Brunswick.¹² From the center of Owl's Head it is 3 miles to Rockland, 48 miles to Bath, and 82 miles to Portland. Owl's Head is on a peninsula to the south of Rockland Harbor.

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES¹³

Commercial

Ship to Shore Lobster Co. in Owl's Head is a lobster wholesale operation which buys from about 37-40 boats in Owl's Head. They have a wharf and they supply bait and fuel to the boats. All of their lobsters are then sold to a distributor located in Connecticut.¹⁴ Owl's Head Lobster Company is another lobster dealer located in Owl's Head. The Owl's Head Lobster Co. has more vessels than Ship to Shore Lobster Co.; all these boats are operated by self-employed fishermen.¹⁵

The data on landings by species for Owl's Head shows that the lobster was by far the most valuable species in 2006, and on average from 1997-2006. Lobster landings values in 2006 were much higher than the ten-year average values (Table 1). The number of vessels home ported in Owl's Head also increased sharply in this time, from 12 in 1997 to 23 in 2003. The number of vessels with owners living in Owl's Head was slightly higher than the number of home ported vessels, meaning some residents of Owl's Head keep their vessels elsewhere (Table 2). Overall, the level of port landings was much higher than the level of home port fishing, indicating that many vessels from outside Owl's Head are also landing their catch here. There are also landings of Jonah crabs, green crabs, and scallops which may not appear in the landings table, either because they are sold at other locations¹⁶, or because they are state landings. There are a number of vessels owned by Owl's Head residents which

¹² Profile review comment, Ann Matlack, Assistant to the City Manager, 270 Pleasant St., Rockland, ME 04841, October 23, 2007

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Personal Communication, Susan, Ship to Shore Lobster Co., 2 Wharf St., Owls Head, ME 04854, August 30, 2006

¹⁵ Profile review comment, Richard A. Carver, Lobster fisherman / Selectman, P.O. Box 128, Owls Head, ME 04854, September 10, 2007

¹⁶ Profile review comment, Richard A. Carver, Lobster fisherman / Selectman, P.O. Box 128, Owls Head, ME 04854, September 10, 2007

are involved only in state fisheries; the number of vessels in Table 2 does not provide a complete representation of all home ported vessels involved in lobster fishing in Owl's Head.¹⁷

Some fishermen who fish remote islands such as Matinicus or Ragged Island sell their catch in Owl's Head and have either their primary home or a second home in Owl's Head. Others catch lobster and/or fish around uninhabited islands not part of any township, maintain their homes in Owl's Head, and sell their catch in other ports. Still others live in Owl's Head, fish in Owl's Head waters, but sell their catch in ports like Rockland or Spruce Head. There are some fishermen living in Owl's Head who work on larger vessels out of ports such as Rockland, Port Clyde, Portland, or New Bedford.¹⁸

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

| Species | Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006 |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Lobster | 1 |
| Largemesh Groundfish ¹⁹ | 2 |
| Other ²⁰ | 3 |
| Monkfish | 4 |
| Scallop | 5 |
| Herring | 6 |
| Skate | 7 |

(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 Year²¹

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

| Year | # Vessels (home ported) | # Vessels (owner's city) |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1997 | 12 | 14 |
| 1998 | 16 | 16 |
| 1999 | 14 | 15 |
| 2000 | 16 | 16 |
| 2001 | 19 | 21 |
| 2002 | 19 | 24 |
| 2003 | 23 | 28 |
| 2004 | 20 | 24 |
| 2005 | 18 | 23 |
| 2006 | 21 | 25 |

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence²²)

Recreational

Information on recreational fishing in Owl's Head is unavailable through secondary data collection.

¹⁷ Profile review comment, Richard A. Carver, Lobster fisherman / Selectman, P.O. Box 128, Owls Head, ME 04854, September 10, 2007

¹⁸ Profile review comment, Richard A. Carver, Lobster fisherman / Selectman, P.O. Box 128, Owls Head, ME 04854, September 10, 2007

¹⁹ Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

²⁰ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Owl's Head is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

FUTURE

Patrice McCarron of the MLA notes that prospects for the lobster industry in Owl's Head are good given its location in Knox County.²³

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²³ Profile review comment, Patrice McCarron, Executive Director, Maine Lobstermen's Association, 21 Western Ave., Suite 1, Kennebunk, ME 04043, October 2, 2007