

SPRUCE HEAD, ME¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The village of Spruce Head, Maine (44.01°N, 69.13°W) is located partly in the town of St. George, with the greater majority of the village in South Thomaston.³ Most people living in this area identify with one of the villages, rather than with a town (Watts, no date). It should be noted that the fishing infrastructure (Spruce Head Co-op) is located in South Thomaston.⁴ Because the village lies in both towns, information is provided for both. (Note: Port Clyde and Tenants Harbor, both located in the town of St. George, are profiled separately, as is South Thomaston.)



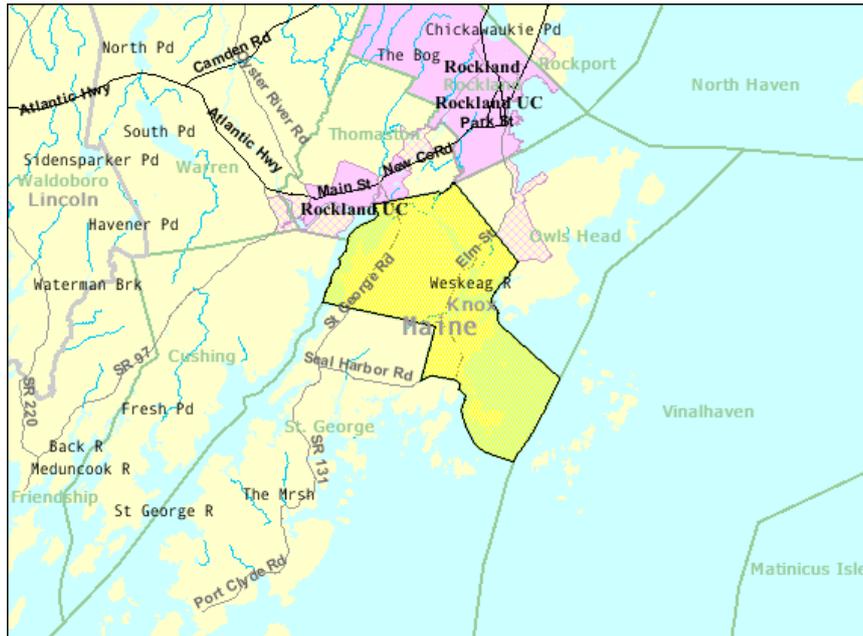
Map 2. Location of Spruce Head, ME in St. George (US Census Bureau 2000)

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."

³ Community Review Comments, David Schmanska, Harbormaster, Town of St. George, 3 School Street, PO Box 131, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860. September 4, 2007

⁴ Community Review Comments, David Schmanska, Harbormaster, Town of St. George, 3 School Street, PO Box 131, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860. September 4, 2007



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

Historical/Background

South Thomaston

South Thomaston occupies the area known to Native Americans as “Wessaweskeag”. This name was shortened twice, first to Weskeag and then to simply Keag. It was first settled by Europeans in 1776. Part of current day South Thomaston was settled in 1765, but the town lines have shifted over time. The town was incorporated on July 28, 1848 (PBRCC 2008). The first industry in the town was lumber and several saw mills were erected soon after the town’s formation. The Baptist Church and meeting-house were established before 1800 (Varney 1886).

St. George

In the spring of 1605, English explorer George Waymouth moored his boat, the *Archangel*, near the mouth of what is now known as the St. George River, to evaluate whether this area was suitable for settlement. He planted a garden on Allen’s Island, the first known attempt by the English at agriculture in the New World. The first permanent European settlers in St. George arrived in the 1760s and 1770s, from neighboring Cushing. In 1789, St. George and Cushing were incorporated together as the Town of Cushing, but were divided again in 1803 by the General Court of Massachusetts along the river, which presented a natural dividing boundary between the two. The original industries here involved timber and small-scale farming, but soon there were numerous granite quarries here, employing hundreds of men. Many shipyards operated in the town as well, with over sixty vessels built during the nineteenth century (Skoglund, no date). “The fishing industry has always been a mainstay for the people of St. George, and the industry is still going strong and provides jobs for local residents. Summer visitors began coming to the area almost 100 years ago and today over half of the town is owned by non-residents” (Watts, no date). The town of St. George is made up of several villages: Port Clyde, Martinsville, Tenants Harbor, Wildcat (Willardham), Long Cove, St. George (Wiley’s Corner), Glenmere, Harts Neck (Elmore), Wallston (Gabbletown), Clark Island, and half of the town of Spruce Head.

Demographics⁵

*Spruce Head – St. George*⁶

According to Census 2000 data⁷, Spruce Head (St. George portion) had a total population of 593, down 15.9% from the reported population of 705 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 47.6% were males and 52.4% were females. The median age was 43.1 years and 74.4% of the population was 21 years or older while 26.1% was 62 or older.

Spruce Head's age structure (see Figure 1) shows the highest percentage of the population between the ages of 50-59 years. The 20 to 29 years age group was smaller than the 10 to 19 years and the 30 to 39 years age groups, showing that young people are leaving the community after high school. There were large numbers of residents in almost all other age categories, indicating that Spruce Head was home to many families as well as having a number of older retired residents.

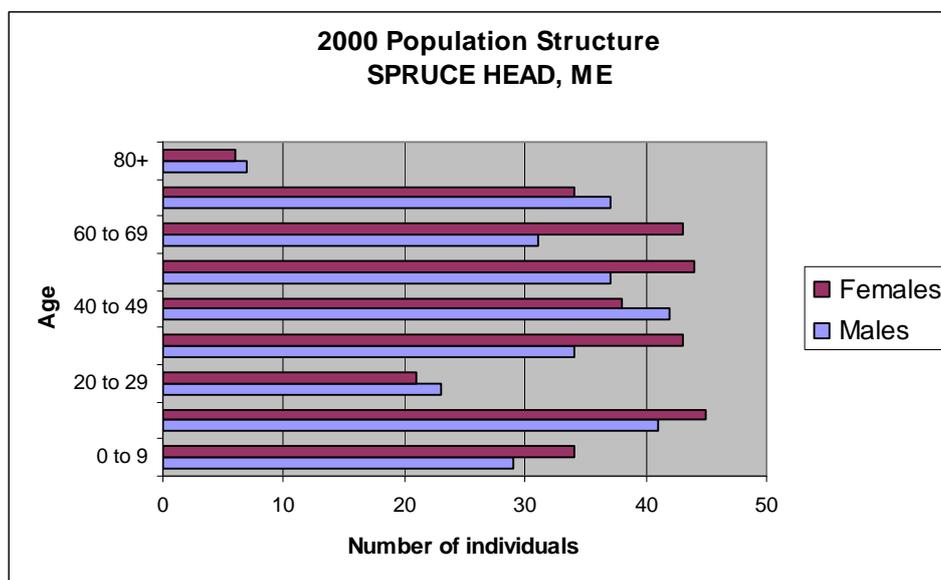


Figure 1. Spruce Head's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (98.3%), with 0.3% of residents black or African American, 0.8% Asian, 0.3% 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 (24.6%), German (10.9%), and Irish (8.8%). With regard to region of birth, 75.5% were born in Maine, 22.9% were born in a different state and 1.6% were born outside of the U.S. (including 1.6% who were not United States citizens).

⁵ 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.

⁶ Census data used are for Zip Code Tabulation Area 04859

⁷ 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>; (accessed July 26, 2007)

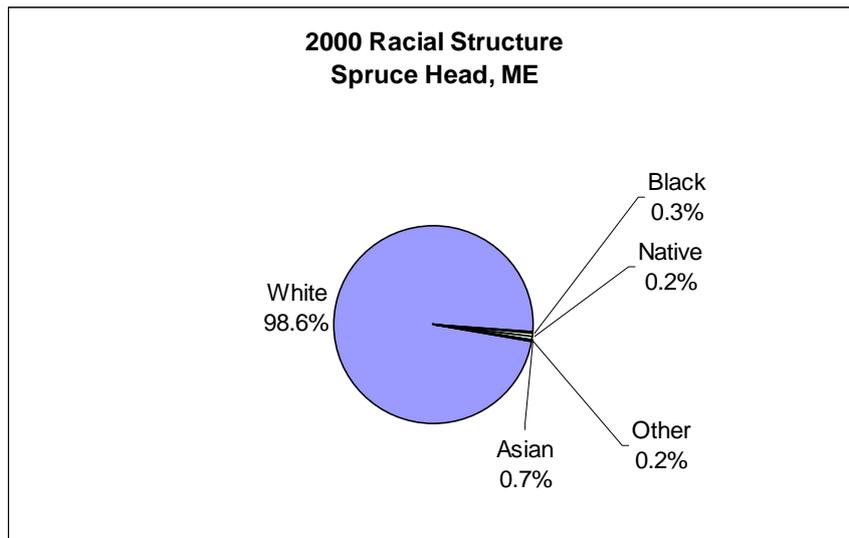


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

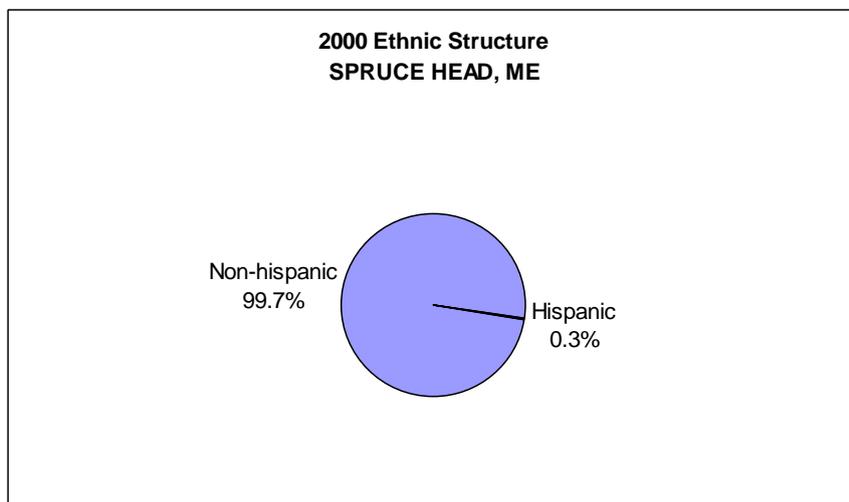


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 97.5% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 2.5% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 0.6% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 90.7% were high school graduates or higher and 22.9% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.5% did not reach ninth grade, 5.8% attended some high school but did not graduate, 42.8% completed high school, 16.4% had some college with no degree, 8.6% received an associate’s degree, 16.0% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 6.9% received a graduate or professional degree.

South Thomaston

According to Census 2000 data⁸, South Thomaston had a total population of 1,416, up 15.4% from the reported population of 1,227 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.2% were males and 51.8% were females. The median age was 41.1 years and 74.6% of the population was 21 years or older while 19.8% was 62 or older.

⁸ 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 South Thomaston town (cited Jul 2007)

The most populous age group (see Figure 4) for both men and women was the 40-49 year old grouping, followed closely by both the 30-39 and 50-59 age group. The number of females generally exceeded the number of males in the majority of the age groupings. South Thomaston also experiences a dip in the population of 20-29 year old residents, a trend seen in other fishing communities in the northeast U.S.

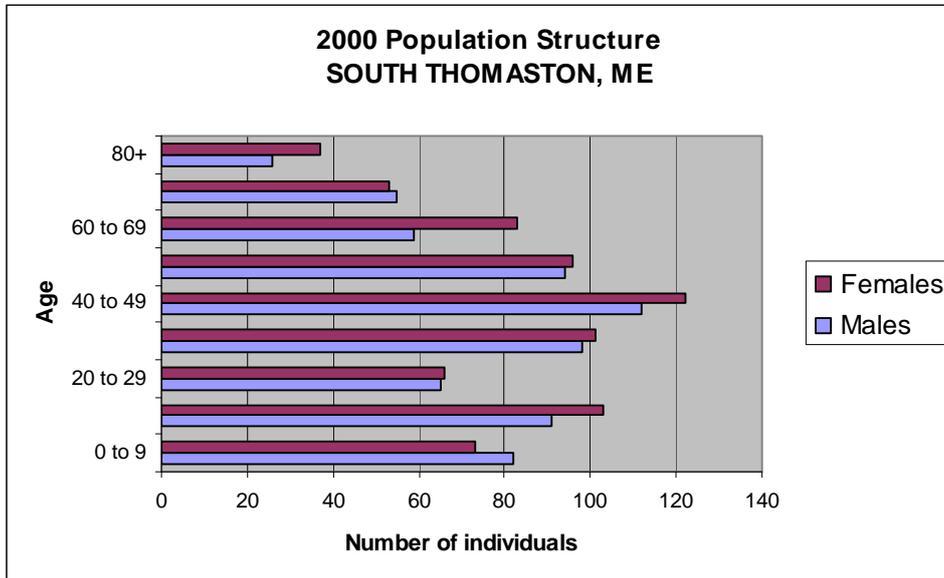


Figure 4. South Thomaston's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (99.1%), with 0.4% of residents black or African American, 0.4% Asian, 0.1% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 5). Only 0.3% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 6). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (24.8%), Irish (14.0%), German (9.3%), and French (7.1%). With regard to region of birth, 67.3% were born in Maine, 29.8% were born in a different state and 2.0% were born outside of the U.S. (including 0.1% who were not United States citizens).

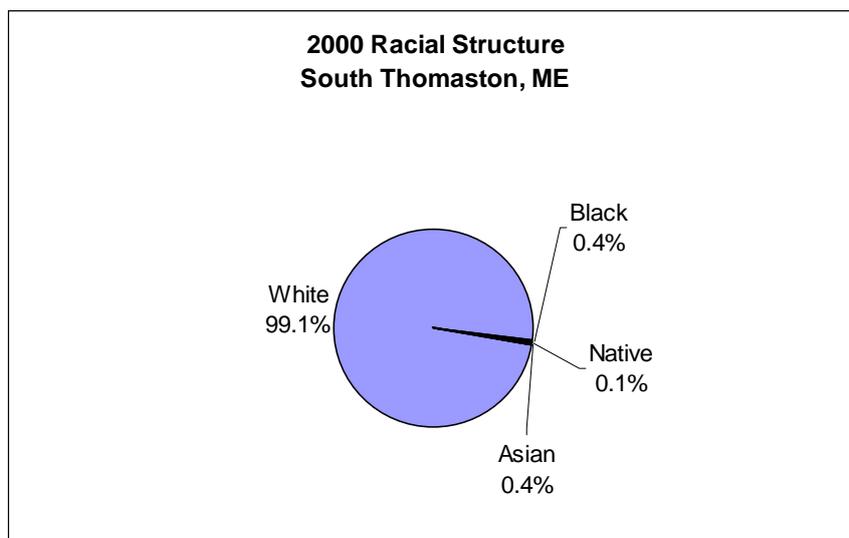


Figure 5. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

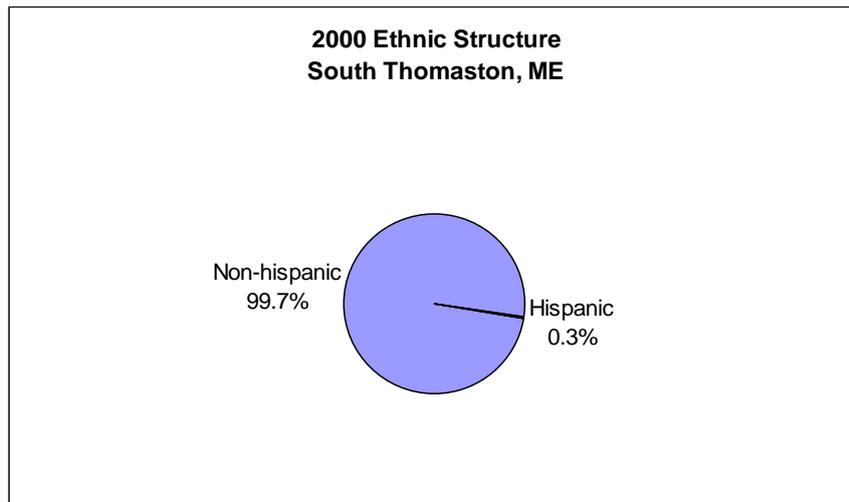


Figure 6. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.4% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 4.6% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 1.6% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 87.9% were high school graduates or higher and 20.6% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.1% did not reach ninth grade, 9.0% attended some high school but did not graduate, 40.4% completed high school, 18.8% had some college with no degree, 8.0% received their associate’s degree, 14.9% earned their bachelor’s degree, and 5.7% 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 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 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).

To help rectify the ongoing problem of waterfront access throughout Maine, a \$2 million bond initiative was approved in 2005 to help fishermen buy their own waterfront access which would remain forever open to the fishermen. The lobstermen at Spruce Head Fishermen's Co-op applied for the funding. The 50 co-op members, who share a dock, office, and parking lot, have leased their waterfront site for 35 years. As of July 2007, the lobstermen prevailed and in exchange for their promise to preserve ocean access for fishermen into the future, the state is willing to give them \$475,000 of the nearly \$1 million they would need to purchase the quarter-acre waterfront site (Russell 2007).

Cultural attributes

The Art of the Sea Gallery is located on Rt. 73 in South Thomaston and has many visual arts relating to the ocean and sea side life (Maine Arts Commission 2002). Additionally, the Maine Watercraft Museum, which displays various boats and water-going vessels, is located in Thomaston (Maine Harbors 2007).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

The [William Atwood Lobster Company](#), located in South Thomaston, is the largest lobster distributor in the state of Maine, selling about four million pounds of lobsters each year. Clients include Red Lobster and European restaurants and grocery stores in addition to many restaurants and stores in the United States. They employ 50 people during the summer months, and about 30-35 during the winter.⁹

Spruce Head – St. George

According to the U.S. Census 2000¹⁰, 64.6% (325 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 7), of which 1.8% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 62.8% were employed.

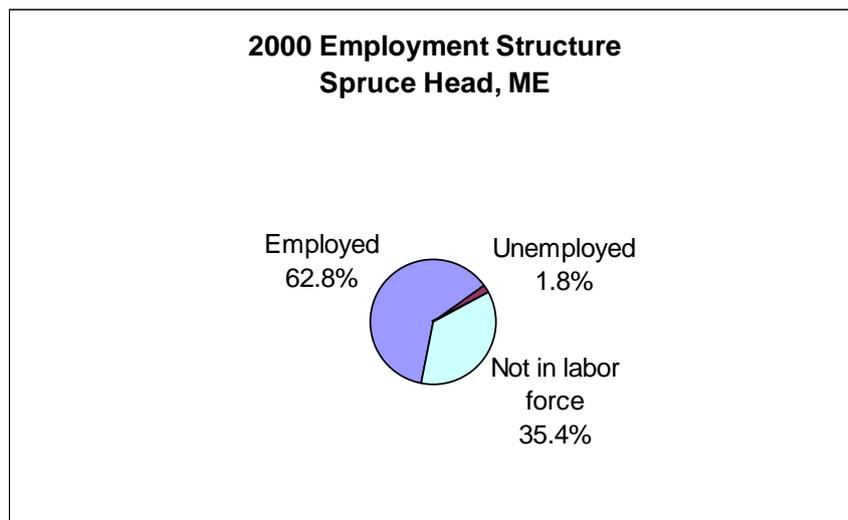


Figure 7. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 57 positions or 18.0% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 98 positions or 31.0% of jobs. Educational, health, and social services (15.5%), other services (14.6%), retail trade (9.2%), manufacturing (9.2%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (9.2%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Spruce Head was \$46,094 (up 85.6% from 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$21,000. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 53.2% more per year than females.

The average family in Spruce Head consisted of 2.77 persons. With respect to

⁹ Personal communication, Karen, William Atwood Lobster Co., 278 Island Road, South Thomaston, ME 04858, 1/24/06

¹⁰ 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.

poverty, 3.8% of families (down from 12.3% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 9.8% of individuals earned 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, 32.5% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Spruce Head had a total of 377 housing units of which 69.0% were occupied and 81.5% were detached one unit homes. Less than one-quarter (22.1%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, vans, and boats accounted for 14.7% of the total housing units; 94.7% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$162,900. Of vacant housing units, 31.0% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 10.9% were renter occupied.

South Thomaston

According to the U.S. Census 2000, 62.7% (714 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 8), of which 1.6% were unemployed, 0.8% were in the Armed Forces, and 60.4% were employed.

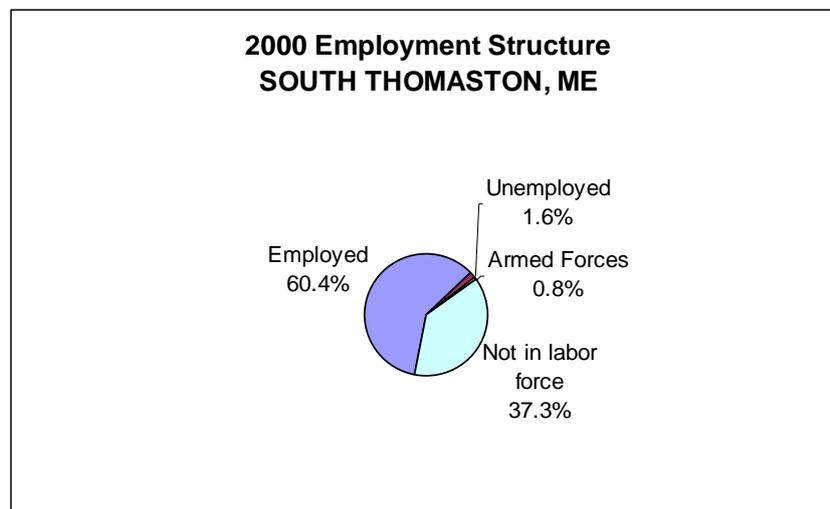


Figure 8. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 5 positions or 0.9% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 73 positions or 10.6% of jobs. Education, health, and social services (19.4%), retail trade (13.5%), manufacturing (11.2%), and finance, insurance, real estate and rental leasing (6.6%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in South Thomaston was \$43,594 (up 60.6% from \$26,402 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$21,303. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 28.4% more per year than females.

The average family in South Thomaston consisted of 2.78 persons. With respect to poverty, 5.0% of families (up from 0.4% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 7.9% 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, 30.2% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, South Thomaston had a total of 804 housing units of which 73.9% were occupied and 85.6% were detached one unit homes. Just over one quarter (30.3%) of these

homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, vans, RVs, etc. accounted for 10.6% of housing units; 89.6% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$126,600. Of vacant housing units, 21.4% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 17.3% were renter occupied.

Government

South Thomaston has a Town meeting-selectman form of government. There is an annual town meeting in March (Town of South Thomaston 2000). St. George has board of selectmen and a municipal clerk (State of Maine 2004). The seat of the town government is located in Tenant's Harbor, the largest and most centrally located of the villages.

Fishery involvement in government

There has been legislation passed in the town concerning the management of shell fish fisheries (Town of South Thomaston 2002). Additionally, the Chair of the Maine Commercial Fishing Safety Council is from South Thomaston (April 2007). There are 16 members on the Council which is part of the Maine Department of Marine Resources (Maine DMR 2007). There is also a Harbormaster listed for Thomaston (about 4 miles from South Thomaston [Maine Harbors 2007]), as well as a Harbormaster in St. George.

The 2004 Georges River Regional Clam Management Plan in conjunction with the towns of Cushing, Thomaston, South Thomaston, and Warren, provides for the regional management and sustainable harvest of the shellfish resources shared by each of these communities (Town of Cushing 2004).

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 'Keag Store in South Thomaston is a supporter of the MLA; members often get discounts at affiliated businesses such as 'Keag Store. The president of the Maine Lobstermen's Association resides in Spruce Head (Hoey 2005).

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 [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).

[Coastal Documentation](#) is a business in Spruce Head that can be hired to complete all the necessary paperwork to have commercial vessels documented, according to the legal standards.

Physical

Spruce Head is roughly 7 miles from Rockland, 47 miles from Bath, and 81 miles from Portland. Spruce Head is about 7 miles from US Route 1. Despite being in the same town, Port Clyde is about a 12 mile drive from Spruce Head. The nearest airport is the Knox County Municipal Airport, about 6 miles from Spruce Head (MapQuest 2006).

The several locations for fishermen to unload their catch are in South Thomaston: William Atwood Lobster, Miller's Lobster Company, McLoon's, Maine Coast Lobster, and the Spruce Head Co-op.¹¹ The William Atwood Lobster Company has two docks, one in Spruce Head and one in Tenants Harbor, where lobstermen sell their catch, and where they are provided with diesel and bait.¹² Fishermen in Spruce Head also tie up and unload their catch at the wharf located by [Miller's Lobster Company](#). Spruce Head also has a boatyard, Spruce Head Marine.

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES¹³

Commercial

The [William Atwood Lobster Company](#) is a large lobster wholesale and retail facility located in the area of Spruce Head located in South Thomaston, buying lobster from fishermen in Spruce Head, Tenants Harbor, and from the surrounding communities including St. George and Friendship.¹⁴ Lobster was by far the most valuable species landed in Spruce Head with 2006 landings far exceeding the average values for 1997-2006 (see Table 1). Overall landings in Spruce Head varied, with their peak in 2004. According to the Harbormaster, there have been no landings of groundfish in Spruce Head.¹⁵ The number of vessels home ported in Spruce Head varied from a low of 29 in 1997, to a high of 35 in 1998, 2004, and 2005. Owner's city vessels in Spruce Head were similar, but increased over this time period, to a high of 38 in 2006 (see Table 2). (Please also see the community profiles for Tenants Harbor and Port Clyde, each profiled separately, as there is likely to be some

¹¹ Community Review Comments, David Schmanska, Harbormaster, Town of St. George, 3 School Street, PO Box 131, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860. September 4, 2007

¹² Personal communication, Karen, William Atwood Lobster Co., 278 Island Road, South Thomaston, ME 04858, 1/24/06

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, Karen, William Atwood Lobster Co., 278 Island Road, South Thomaston, ME 04858, 1/24/06

¹⁵ Community Review Comments, David Schmanska, Harbormaster, Town of St. George, 3 School Street, PO Box 131, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860. September 4, 2007

interdependence in fishing activity among these communities, as well as the information provided in the South Thomaston community profile.)

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 ¹⁶	2
Scallop	3
Largemesh Groundfish ¹⁷	4
Monkfish	5

(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 Year¹⁸

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	29	31
1998	35	31
1999	34	34
2000	32	32
2001	32	33
2002	33	32
2003	33	32
2004	35	37
2005	35	36
2006	32	38

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁹)

Recreational

Information on recreational fishing in Spruce Head is unavailable through secondary data collection. However, there are both fresh and salt-water fishing available in South Thomaston. The Weskeag River is a popular spot to fish for striped bass, and there is access to the shore for saltwater fishing (Maine DMR 2006).

Subsistence

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

¹⁶ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

¹⁷ Largemesh Groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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

South Thomaston has a Comprehensive Planning Committee that meets once a month. The meeting is open to all town members (Town of South Thomaston 2000)

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