

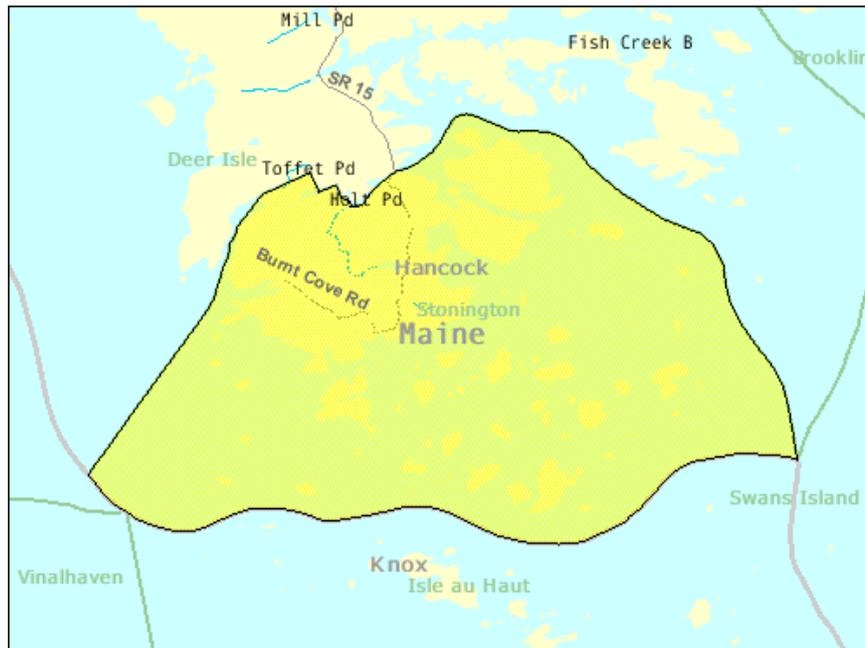
# STONINGTON, ME<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

The town of Stonington (44.09°N, 68.38°W) is located in Hancock County on Deer Isle in Downeast Maine. Stonington is 103 miles northeast of Augusta, ME and has a total area of 37.8 mi<sup>2</sup>, of which 28.0 mi<sup>2</sup> (74%) of it is water (State of Maine 2004).



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

#### Historical/Background

Prior to 1899, Stonington was part of Deer Isle Town. Originally Stonington's economy revolved around its high quality granite rather than fishing. Between 1870 and 1925, enormous quantities of granite were produced from quarries in Stonington and on Crotch Island. Stonington, originally known as Green's Landing, earned its new name because of this granite industry. Stonington granite can be found in the structures of Rockefeller Center, the Smithsonian Institution, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, and several New York City bridges, including the George Washington and the Triboro. But the granite industry declined and the quarries closed, and fishing became Stonington's most important industry (Maine Coast Guide 2002). Currently, clams, mussels, and lobster fishing activities have replaced a once-popular urchin fishery from Stonington's Pier in the 1990s (Ellsworth American 2002).

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<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)."

### Demographics<sup>3</sup>

According to the Census 2000 data<sup>4</sup>, Stonington had a population of 1,152, down 8.0% from the reported population of 1,252 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 46.9% were male and 53.1% were female. The median age was 41.6 years and 73.3% of the population was 21 years or older while 21.5% of the population was 62 or older. Stonington's age structure (Figure 1) showed a dip in population within the 20-29 year age group, similar to many small fishing communities, and then an increase -- with the highest percentage between 40-49 years. Females generally exceeded males in all age groups except the 20-29 and 50-59 age groupings.

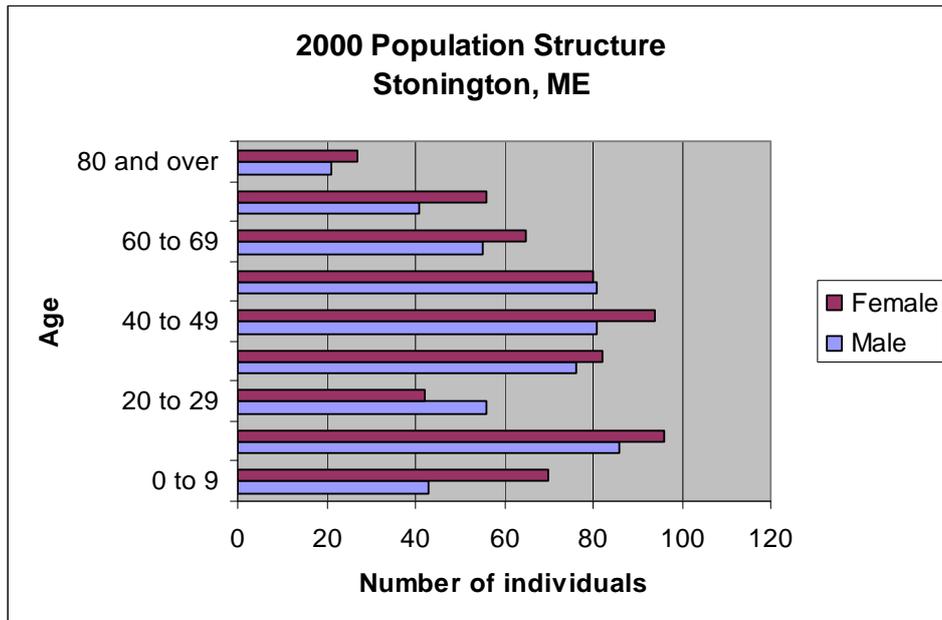


Figure 1. Stonington's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (96.8%), with 0.6% black or African American, 0.4% Asian, 0.6% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 0.9% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (25.8%), Irish (9.2%), French (7.1%), German (4.1%), and Scottish (3.4%). With regard to region of birth, 79.3% were born in Maine, 17.4% were born in a different state and 2.1% were born outside the U.S. (including 0.4% who were not U.S. citizens).

<sup>3</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>4</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 Stonington town, Hancock County, ME

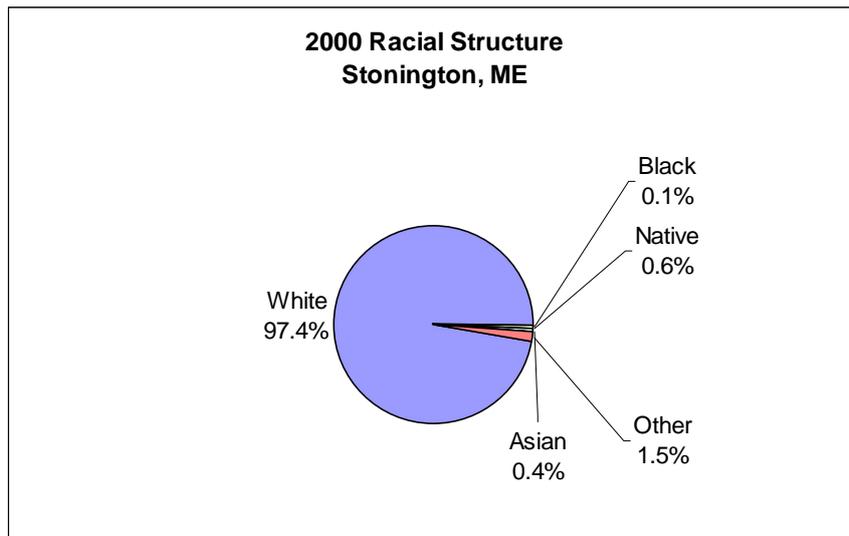


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

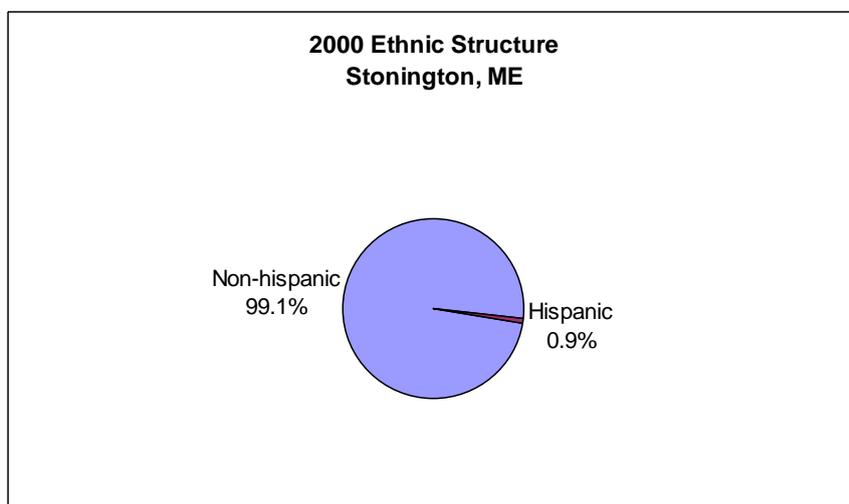


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 96.8% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 3.2% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 0.3% of the population who spoke English less than 'very well' according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 76.7% were high school graduates or higher and 15.6% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 8.3% did not reach ninth grade, 15% attended some high school but did not graduate, 42.9% completed high school, 14% had some college with no degree, 4.1% received an associate's degree, 10.3% earned a bachelor's degree, and 5.3% received a graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through US Census data, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations in Hancock County was Catholic with 10 congregations and 6,292 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were United Church of Christ (19 with 1,957 adherents), American Baptist Churches USA (17 with 1,774 adherents), and United Methodist (17 with 1,074 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 25.2% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

## **Issues/Processes**

Stonington is one of the few Maine fishing communities that has secured waterfront access for commercial fishing. This is largely due to the fact that Stonington has not yet witnessed the rise in property values that southern and mid-coast Maine have experienced (Moore 2003). Steve Johnson of the Stonington Fish Pier pointed out that there aren't any problems other than dealers in Stonington. Allegedly, dealers will not sell gas or bait to fishermen if they sell their catch to the Stonington Pier (NEFMC 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**

Two of the major events held each summer are the Fourth of July parade and Fisherman's Day. Early in the morning of the Fourth of July, events include the 6K Road Race and Fun Run in Downtown Stonington. The parade is later in the morning in Deer Isle Village. The 3<sup>rd</sup> of July of each year, the Fish & Fritter Fry starts in the late afternoon on the Stonington Fish Pier followed by fireworks over Stonington Harbor at nightfall. The 18<sup>th</sup> of July the annual Lobster Boat Race takes place. The 25<sup>th</sup> of July is the annual Fishermen's Day celebration. It has become a popular event with a wide variety of activities for the whole family on and around the Stonington Fish Pier. These range from Coast Guard demonstrations to Wacky Rowboat Races to a very spirited Codfish Relay Race. The 30<sup>th</sup> of August the "Flash in the Pans" takes place at the Stonington Fish Pier to benefit Island Fishermen's Wives and the Island Community Center (DISCC, no date).

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

[Greenhead Lobster LLC](#) opened in 1997 at its shorefront buying station in Stonington. It supplies over a million pounds of Penobscot Bay lobsters to the national market each year. These lobsters are purchased daily from independent lobstermen in the area. GreenHead Lobster LLC has a chilled, aerated lobster holding tank with bio-bed filtration, capable of holding 8,000 pounds of live lobster. Federal Express and refrigerated trucks ensure the lobster delivery. Stonington Lobster Cooperative is another wholesale and retail vendor of seafood in Stonington (DISCC, no date). There are four shellfish dealers in Stonington: Carter's Seafood, Ingrid Bengis Seafood, Morning Star Seafood and Oceanville seafood (Maine DMR 2006). The biggest employer on the island is Billings Diesel and Marine Services, Inc. with 60 people located in Stonington (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

According to the US Census 2000<sup>5</sup>, 52.4 % (928 individuals) of the total population over 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 3.4% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and % were employed.

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<sup>5</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 104 positions or 22.9% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounts for 177 positions or 39.0% of jobs. Retail trade (15.2%), educational health and social services (10.8 %), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (10.3%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Stonington was \$28,894 (up 51.8% from \$19,038 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income in 2000 was \$15,634. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 30.7% more per year than females.

The average family in Stonington consisted of 2.78 persons. With respect to poverty, 9.6% of families (down from 13.2% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 12.7% 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, 51.1% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Stonington had a total of 911 housing units, of which 55.2% were occupied and 81.0% were detached one unit homes. Fewer than half (43%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes and boats accounted for 10.6% of the total housing units; 94.5% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$96,300. Of vacant housing units, 37.2% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 23.3% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

Stonington has a Board of Selectmen (5 individuals) and a town manager (SBPCIS, no date).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

Stonington has a harbormaster; further information on fishery involvement in government in Stonington is unavailable through secondary data collection.

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

Stonington Fisheries Alliance includes 44 participants from 6 ports in Maine. The association is a member of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA 2000). Other

associations are: Stonington Lobster Cooperative; Downeast Lobstermen's Association in Deer Isle; Deer Isle-Stonington Shellfish Committee; Island Fishermen's Wives Association; and the Maine Gillnetters Association in Stonington (Stevenson 2005).

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.

#### *Fishing assistance centers*

The Island Fishermen's Wives Association supports the fishing community in many ways. Some avenues of support include school programs and scholarships, emergency financial assistance to fishing people and their families, and survival and safety education with help from the U.S. Coast Guard. The Association is committed to preserving the fishing heritage of the island and educating the public about the industry (Changing Maine Directory 2008).

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 (Vote 4 Maine 2007).

#### *Other fishing related organizations*

The Maine Sea Grant Program, the School of Marine Sciences, and the Lobster Institute, are all located in Orono, ME. These organizations are involved in Stonington fisheries (Maine Fishermen's Forum 2007). The Commercial Fisheries News, the premiere monthly fishing industry newspaper for the Atlantic coast, is also located in Stonington (CFN, no date).

An interesting management tactic in Maine in general is the lobster zone councils. According to Northeast Sea Grant: "The first practical demonstration of co-management in the Northeast, the councils were empowered to set trap limits and other management techniques on a zone-by-zone basis, subject to the oversight of the state's Department of Marine Resources (Waterman 1999). Stonington is in the Lobster Zone C area.

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**

Stonington is situated about 159 miles northeast of Portland, ME, and 265 miles northeast of Boston, MA. At the southern end of Deer Isle, Stonington is accessible via Maine's meandering Route 15, 36 miles south of the intersection of Route 15 with U.S. Route 1. Stonington has a general aviation airport. Bar Harbor in Hancock County (52 miles from Stonington), also has a [national airport](#). The city of Bangor in Penobscot County (58 miles

from Stonington), has an [international airport](#). The Isle au Haut mailboat provides service between Stonington and the town landing at Isle au Haut, with summer service to the Acadia National Park campground at Duck Harbor. Downeast Transportation operates bus services to Ellsworth from Stonington, Bucksport, Otis, and Winter Harbor (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Stonington's fish pier, built with federal funds in 1984 at a cost of approximately \$3 million to support commercial fishing, maintains public space for fishermen to keep skiffs, park trucks and unload their catch. The pier has space for about 80 punts (flat-bottomed boats) and parking for 58 trucks. The fish pier serves as a place for lobstermen, urchin divers and mussel harvesters to haul out their catch. Few groundfish boats are still working out of Stonington, mostly because of a combination of federal regulations and groundfish scarcity (Ellsworth American 2002). However, the waterfront has 380 fishing vessels in the area (PBPCIS, no date).

## INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>6</sup>

### Commercial

Stonington promotes itself as a town known for high quality fish. According to the [Stonington Sea Products](#)' web site, an influx of nutrients from the Gulf of Maine along with upwelling make this area a good habitat for lobsters, crabs, scallops, and mussels as well as native species of finfish like halibut, mackerel, cod and haddock.

In 2002 recorded annual landings for the state of Maine, according to National Marine Fisheries Service data, totaled 197 million pounds with a landed value of \$279.4 million (NMFS 2003). Lobster landings were by far the most valuable landings in Stonington, with 2006 landings close to double the 1997-2006 average values (Table 1). Landings of "other" species and herring were also valuable, and landings of both were higher in 2006 than the ten-year average values. Landings in Stonington were at their highest in 2006, while landings for home port vessels were relatively low. The number of home port vessels saw a large increase in the ten-year time period, from 44 in 1997 to 80 in 2005. The low value of home port values seems to indicate that few vessels from Stonington are landing here; this may be inconsistent with the rise in home ported vessels. The number of home ported vessels was higher than the number of owner's city vessels, meaning that residents of other communities keep their vessels here.

The Maine purse seine fleet consists of five vessels with principal ports of Addison, Prospect Harbor, Rockland, and Stonington. This sector made 340 trips and landed 20,256 mt of herring in 2003. The majority of the landings were from vessels with a port designation of Rockland or Stonington. Ninety five percent of the landings by this sector came from Area 1A (adjacent to Stonington) in 2003. Eighty two percent of the total revenues for this sector came from Atlantic herring in 2003. Maine had the highest reported landings (46%) in 2003,

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<sup>6</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.

followed by Massachusetts (38%), New Hampshire (8%), and Rhode Island (7%) (NEFMC 2007).

### Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value by Federally Managed Groups of Landings in Stonington

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Other <sup>7</sup>	2
Herring	3
Scallop	4
Largemesh Groundfish <sup>8</sup>	5
Monkfish	6
Skate	7
Smallmesh Groundfish <sup>9</sup>	8
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	9
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	10
Bluefish	11

(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>10</sup>

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	44	36
1998	44	33
1999	46	33
2000	49	35
2001	52	33
2002	59	40
2003	66	45
2004	71	46
2005	80	51
2006	76	49

(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>11</sup>)

<sup>7</sup> "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

<sup>8</sup> Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

<sup>9</sup> Smallmesh multi-species : red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

<sup>10</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>11</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.

## **Recreational**

One company specializing in kayak rentals ([Old Quarry](#)) also runs eco-tours from a lobster boat which includes pulling traps and selling the lobsters to passengers in Stonington.

## **Subsistence**

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

## **FUTURE**

Currently there are plans for a community marine resource center in Stonington. The Center will serve fishermen in the Lobster Zone C area, including North Haven, Vinalhaven, Matinicus Island, Isle au Haut, Deer Isle and the Blue Hill peninsula (Amory 2003). Also in the works is a lobster hatchery which is estimated to produce as many 150,000 lobsters to be distributed evenly throughout the area (Hewitt 2005).

Many lobstermen in 2004 believe economic conditions will worsen due to more stringent regulations. However, many have accepted regulations and note little if any ill effect on their own economic condition (Hall-Arber et al. 2001). The main concern of Stonington fishermen is the threat of the lobster fishery crashing. This is pronounced in Stonington because the community's future is completely dependant on the recent record-setting lobster catches. Many fear that a loss of this dependence on the lobster fishery will force Stonington to transform from a working fishing community to a summer resort or retirement community (Richardson 2003).

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