

AVALON, NJ¹

Community Profile²

People and Places

Regional orientation

The borough of Avalon, New Jersey (39.10°N, 74.72°W; USGS 2008), is located in Cape May County (see Map 1). Avalon is located on Seven Mile Beach, a barrier island that it shares with the borough of Stone Harbor (Boro of Avalon 2008). One on side of Avalon is the Atlantic Ocean; on the other a series of marshes that separate the island from the mainland.



Map 1. Map of Avalon's location in New Jersey (US Census Bureau 2000).

Historical/Background information

Seven Mile Beach, the barrier island on which Avalon is located, was purchased in 1723 by Aaron Leaming to use for cattle grazing and hunting. In 1887, Seven Mile Beach Company purchased much of the land here with the intent of creating a resort colony (Boro of Avalon 2008). They called Avalon “the jewel of the Jersey Coast” (AMHS nd). Avalon was named for the mythical resting place of King Arthur. West Jersey Railroad built a rail line running along the island, and the Avalon Hotel was built, cementing Avalon’s position as a resort destination. Avalon officially became a borough in 1892 (Boro of Avalon 2008). Avalon has one of the few remaining high dunes systems on the East Coast. In 2005, Philadelphia Style Magazine voted Avalon the number one Jersey Shore community (Boro of Avalon 2008).

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.”

Demographic Profile³

According to the Census 2000 data,⁴ Avalon had a total population of 2,143, up 18.5% from a reported population of 1,809 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this total in 2000, 48.7% were males and 51.3% were females. The median age was 56.0 years and 84.7% of the population was 21 years or older while 38.1% was 62 or older.

The population structure for Avalon (Figure 1) clearly shows an aging population, with the vast majority of residents in their 50s, 60s, and 70s, with quite a few residents in the 80+ category as well. Like many small communities, the population takes a dip for the 20-29 age category, but the number of children in the 0-9 and 10-19 age categories is also small. This paints a picture of Avalon as largely a retirement community.

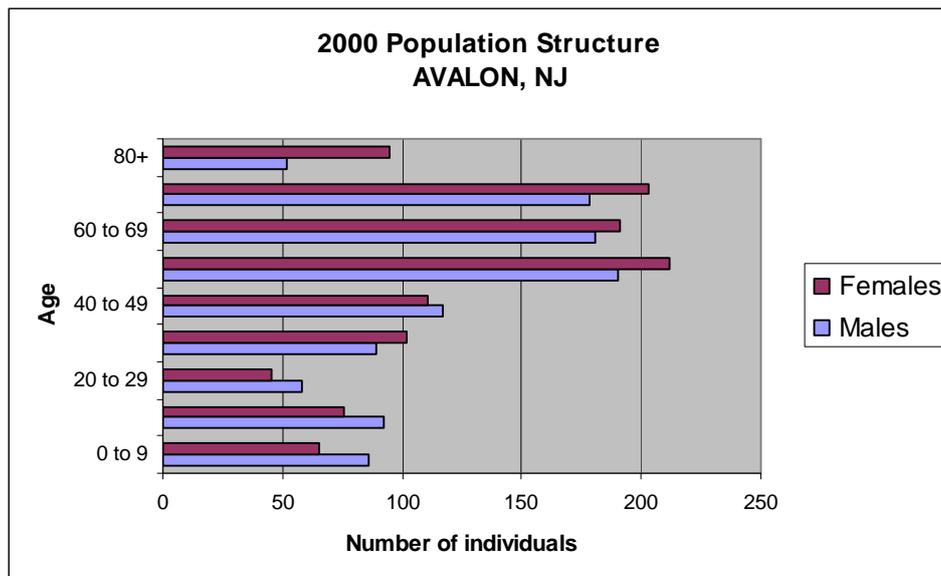


Figure 1. Avalon's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The vast majority of the population of Avalon was white (98.6%), with 0.3% black or African American, 0.2% Native American or Alaskan, 0.6% Asian, and 0.05% Pacific Islander or native Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 0.6% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their heritage to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (31.5%), German (21.7%), English (17.9%), and Italian (14.8%). With regard to region of birth, 27.1% of residents were born in New Jersey, 70.6% were born in a different state, and 1.7% were born outside the U.S. (including 0.4% 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 <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>; census data used are for Avalon borough

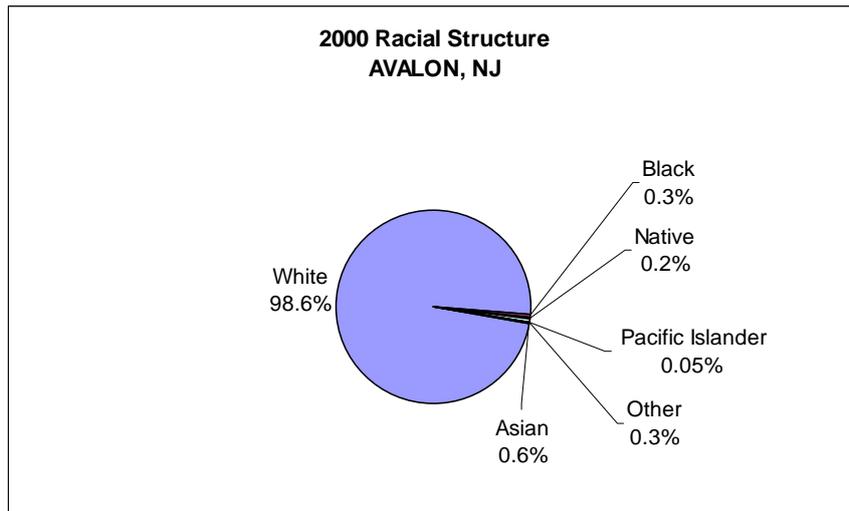


Figure 2. Avalon's Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

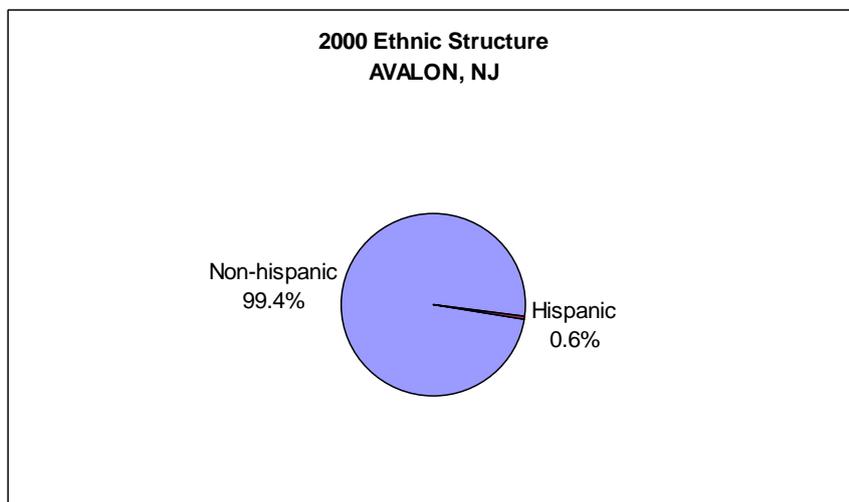


Figure 3. Avalon's Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 96.7% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 3.3% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 1.4% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 93.1% were high school graduates or higher and 37.9% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 0.3% did not reach ninth grade, 6.6% attended some high school but did not graduate, 28.1% completed high school, 22.0% had some college with no degree, 5.1% received their associate’s degree, 27.0% earned their bachelor’s degree, and 11.0% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through U.S. Census data, according to the Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA) in 2000 the religion with the highest number of congregations in Cape May County was Catholic, with 15 congregations and 32,307 adherents. Other prominent congregations included United Methodist (25 with 5,133 adherents), Episcopal (6 with 1,588 adherents) and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (6 with 2,142 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 15% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

There are four churches listed in Avalon: one Catholic, one Episcopal, one Presbyterian, and one Methodist (CMCCC 1999).

Issues/Processes

Offshore wind farms have been proposed for four locations off of Cape May County, and fishermen are concerned about the impact wind turbines could potentially have on fish or on their access to the fisheries (Curran 2005). In 2006, rising fuel costs were having a detrimental effect on the charter fishing industry, especially on those boats going further out for canyon fishing. The boat owners have been forced to raise their prices, and many potential customers are thinking twice about taking a trip offshore (McCann 2006).

Cultural attributes

The [Cape May County Fishing Tournament](#) is one of the longest continuously running fishing tournaments on the East Coast (Cape May County 2008). The [Jersey Shore Classic](#) is an annual inshore/offshore fishing tournament to benefit breast cancer charities. [Wings 'n Water](#) is a wildlife arts festival held each September; it was named the best event in New Jersey at the Governor's Conference on Tourism. It features a number of events including fly casting clinics and boat tours designed to educate the public about the wetlands surrounding this barrier island.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

By far the largest industry in Cape May County is tourism, responsible for 91.5% of the county's employment, or 32,570 jobs (Cape May County 2008; Table 1). While Avalon does not have much commercial fishing, commercial fishing remains the second largest industry in Cape May County (Cape May County 2008).

Table 1. The top ten private employers in Cape May County (CMCCC nd)

Name	Community	Employees
Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital	Cape May Court House	1,204
Acme Markets	Cape May	600
Cold Spring Fish & Supply	Cape May	500
WAWA	Multiple locations	485
Holy Redeemer Visiting Nurse	Swaiton	250
Super Fresh	Multiple locations	250
Shop Rite	Multiple locations	200
Victoria Manor Nursing Center	North Cape May	170
Lutheran Home at Ocean View	Ocean View	145
Snow's Doxsee Inc.	Cape May	140

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 47.5% (890 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 1.5% were unemployed, 0.3% were in the armed forces, and 45.6% were employed. The fact that 52.5% of the population over the age of 16 is not in the labor force reinforces the idea that Avalon serves as a retirement community to many.

⁵ Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

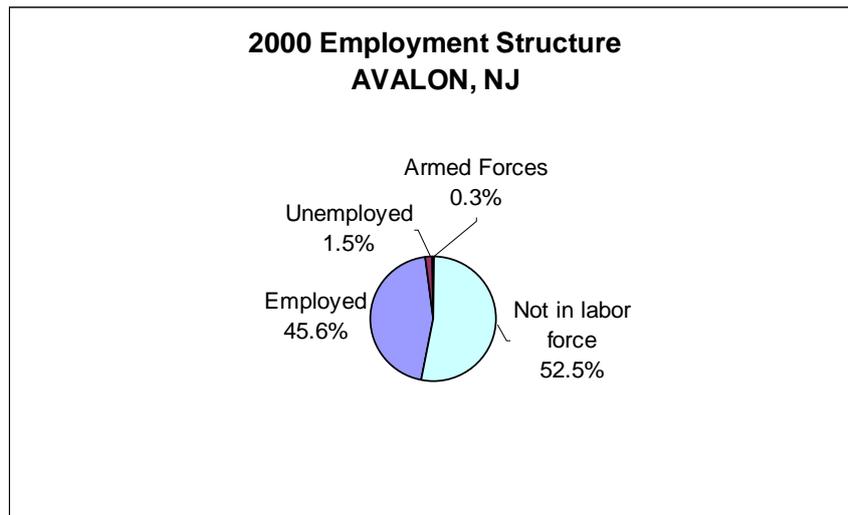


Figure 4. Avalon's employment structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 17 positions or 2.0% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 95 positions or 11.1% of jobs. Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing (17.7%), educational, health and social services (13.8%), retail trade (12.2%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (11.1%), and construction (10.6%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Avalon was \$59,196 (up 59.6% from \$37,097 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$50,016. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 60.0% more per year than females.

The average family in Avalon consisted of 2.56 persons. With respect to poverty, 2.2% of families (up from 2.0% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 4.3% of individuals were 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 2000b). In 2000, 16.2% of all families in Avalon (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Avalon had a total of 5,281 housing units of which 19.8% were occupied and 65.4% were detached one-unit homes. Just over five percent (5.4%) of these homes were built before 1940. There are no mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc. listed for Avalon; 83.4% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$443,300. Of vacant housing units, 87.3% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 13.1% were renter occupied.

Avalon reportedly has some of the most coveted and valuable real estate on the Jersey Shore (Raymond 2003). In 2005, it was rated the least affordable resort community in New Jersey (Levin 2005).

Government

Avalon is a borough within Cape May County, governed by a five-member council and a mayor (Boro of Avalon 2008).

Fishery involvement in government

The Cape May County Planning Board expresses in the comprehensive plan its policies regarding commercial fishing, which include promoting and encouraging land use policies which benefit the commercial fishing industry and protecting the fishing industry

from economic or environmental harm by opposing projects which may have a negative effect (CMCPD 2002).

Institutional

Fishing associations

The [Garden State Seafood Association](#) in Trenton is a statewide organization of commercial fishermen and fishing companies, related businesses and individuals working in common cause to promote the interests of the commercial fishing industry and seafood consumers in New Jersey. The [Cape May County Party and Charter Boat Association](#) is an organization of small recreational fishing boats located along the coast of Southern New Jersey. They represent a number of boats in Avalon.

The [Jersey Coast Anglers Association](#) (JCAA) is an association of over 75 saltwater fishing clubs throughout the state. Founded in 1981, the purpose of the organization is to unite and represent marine sport anglers to work towards common goals. The JCAA website (www.jcaa.org) also provides links for many NJ anglers associations.

Fishery assistance centers

“In an effort to maintain a healthy and safe fishing industry the Board of Chosen Freeholders along with the State of New Jersey developed the Cape May County Revolving Fishing Loan Program. This program was instituted in 1984 and is designed to help commercial, charter and party boat fishermen with low interest loans for safety and maintenance of fishing vessels. More than \$2.5 million has been loaned out to help strengthen the local fishing industry” (Cape May County 2008).

Other fishing related institutions

The [Wetlands Institute](#) in neighboring Stone Harbor is a non-profit organization featuring a visitor’s center, regular events and educational programs designed to teach the public about the importance of conserving and protecting the area’s wetlands.

Physical

Avalon is 4 miles from Sea Isle City, 20 miles from Cape May, 36 miles from Atlantic City, and 82 miles from Philadelphia. Atlantic City International Airport is 32 miles away by car. There are two roads leading off Seven Mile Beach Island which connect to the Garden State Parkway. In addition, one bridge on the south end of the island connects to Wildwood, and another to the north connects Avalon with Sea Isle City (MapQuest nd). The Great American Trolley Company operates a trolley service between Avalon and Stone Harbor during the summer months (Boro of Avalon 2008). There is a bus which runs between Cape May and Philadelphia, making a stop in Avalon (NJ Transit 2008). There is also a [ferry from Cape May to Lewes, Delaware](#).

There are at least four marinas in Avalon (ACC nd). Avalon Bay Park Marina is a municipal marina with a boat ramp (Boro of Avalon 2008). The Avalon Sportfishing Center is home to several charter boats and a party boat, as well as Moran’s, a bait and tackle shop. The sportfishing center is located in Cornell Harbor, in the canal on the bay side of the barrier island (Moran’s Dockside nd). [Avalon Marine](#) is home to Avalon Pointe Marina, Pipe Towers, Inc., a marine welding shop specializing in custom marine aluminum, Martek, a marine electronics store, and a boating supply store. [Commodore Bay Marina](#) is another marina in Cornell Harbor with 110 boat slips.

There are a number of public docks in Avalon from which the public can fish or crab (AHP nd).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁶

Commercial

While the nearby ports of Cape May and Wildwood are some of the most significant fishing ports in New Jersey, most of the recent fishing history for Avalon shows very little commercial fishing. While there were home ported boats listed for every year from 1997 through 2006, including a maximum of eight boats in 2005 (see Table 2), there were federal landings listed for these vessels only in 1998. Avalon showed no landings at all from 1997 through 2003, yet in 2005 and 2006 there were significant landings. Most of these landings are scallops, judging by the landing by species data, followed by monkfish (see Table 3). There is a small commercial fishing industry in Sea Isle City, the next barrier island to the North; some of the commercial fishing reported for Avalon here may be a part of Sea Isle City's activity. According to a NMFS Port Agent, commercial fishing activity in Avalon is minimal to non-existent, and there should be no landings for 1998, 2005, or 2006. While there should be no landings in Avalon, some vessels may indeed be homeported there.⁷

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Scallop	1
Monkfish	2
Lobster	3
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	4

(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.)

⁶ In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

⁷ Community Review Comments, Walter Makowski, NMFS Port Agent, 1382 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 624, Cape May, NJ 08204 August 8, 2007

Vessels by year⁸

Table 3. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	6	2
1998	5	4
1999	4	3
2000	5	5
2001	5	5
2002	5	5
2003	6	6
2004	6	6
2005	8	7
2006	6	5

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport
Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence⁹)

Recreational

In NJ the charter/party fleet is the largest on east coast. Many vessels are over 120ft long and carry over 150 people.¹⁰ Avalon has a number of charter boat companies listed, as well as a fishing pier (ACC nd). Between 2001-2005 there were a total of seven charter and party boats that logged trips in Avalon, carrying a total of 21,142 anglers on 1,046 different trips (NMFS VTR data). There are seven charter boats and one party boat in Avalon which belong to the [Cape May County Charter and Party Boat Association](#). Much of Avalon's recreational fishing is centered around the Avalon Sportfishing Center. This marina is home to several charter boats, the party boat Miss Avalon, and Moran's, a bait and tackle shop. The charter boats offer deep-sea fishing tours, including overnight trips, while the Miss Avalon has both half- and full-day inshore fishing trips. Moran's also hosts several fishing tournaments throughout the year (Moran's Dockside nd). Inshore trips from Avalon run nearly year-round, fishing for seabass, blackfish, flounder, weakfish, bluefish, croaker, scup, and striper depending on the season (Moran's Dockside nd); offshore trips target tuna, marlin, and swordfish (CMCPCBA nd). Avalon Hodge Podge is another bait and tackle shop in Avalon, which sells fishing, crabbing, and clamming supplies (AHP nd). Avalon has a number of large fishing tournaments, including the Jersey Shore Classic and the Cape May County Fishing Tournament. Surf fishing is popular here as well; one website suggests North Point as the prime location (CMCDT nd).

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

Information on the future in Avalon is unavailable through secondary data collection.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Community Review Comments, Bruce Freeman, NJ Coast Anglers Association, 1201 Route 37 East, Suite 9, Toms River, NJ 08753, October 2, 2007

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