

# SEA ISLE CITY, NJ<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

Sea Isle City (39.15°N, 74.70°W) is located along the Atlantic coast in Cape May County, New Jersey. It has an area of 2.5mi<sup>2</sup> of which 2.2mi<sup>2</sup> is land and 0.9mi<sup>2</sup> is water (USGS 2008). On its landward borders are the Townships of Upper, Dennis, and Middle, as well as the Borough of Avalon.



Map 1. Location of Sea Isle City, NJ (US Census Bureau 2000a)

#### Historical/Background

The barrier island of Sea Isle City was sold to Joseph Ludlum in 1692 by a Quaker group, the West Jersey Proprietors, and named Ludlum's Island. For nearly a century before its sale, Ludlum Island was covered in various types of trees and grasses. Ludlum divided the land into three sections; Ludlam's Island, Townsend's Inlet, and Corsen's Inlet before its sale in 1880 to a developer, Thomas Landis (Sawn 1964).

Thomas Landis transformed Ludlum Island into a vacation place modeled off of Venice, Italy. The island was connected to mainland New Jersey with roads and rail lines, and became a "Sea and Sand Family Vacationland" (Beachcomber 1998), which is how it is known today.

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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)."

Many hotels and restaurants were built near the beachfront providing for a development in tourism. Today, the town serves as a year round residency comprised mainly of middle-aged to elderly residents, and a summer vacationland for tourists. Sea Isle City is sometimes referred to as a “fishermen’s paradise” because of the large number of charter boats and the amount of fishing which occurs here (Beachcomber 1998).

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

According to the Census 2000 data<sup>4</sup>, Sea Isle City had a total population of 2,835, up 66.8% from a reported population of 1,700 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 47.8% were males and 52.2% were females. The median age was 51.3 years and 82.5% of the population was 21 years or older while 32.0% were 62 or older.

The population structure for Sea Isle City 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 grouping, but the number of children in the 0-9 and 10-19 age categories is small to begin with (see Figure 1). This paints a picture of Sea Isle City as largely a retirement community. The male population subtly decreases as age groups increase by decade, but females have an increase in the 70-79 age category.

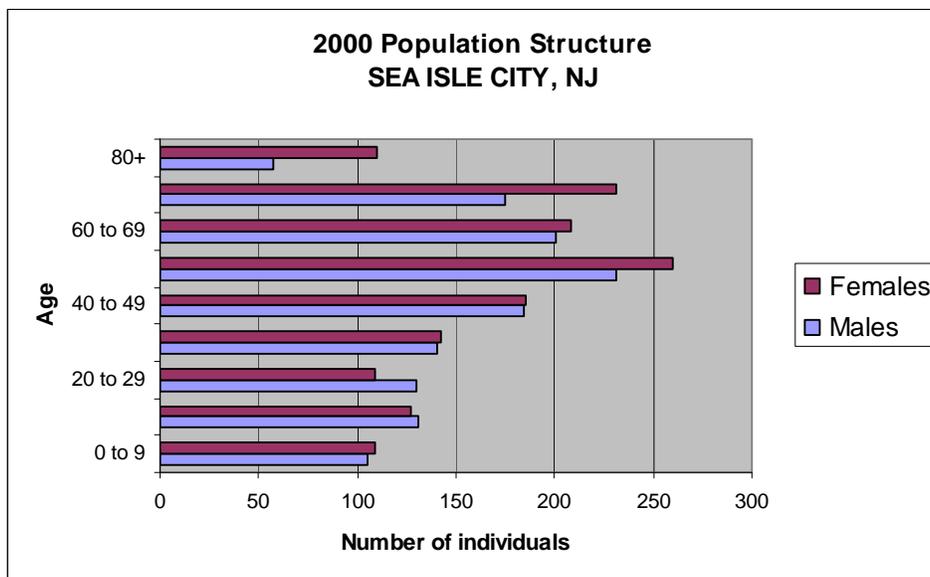


Figure 1. Sea Isle City’s population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

The majority of the population was white (98.8%), with 0.3% black or African American, 0.4% Asian, 0.4% Native American, and 0.04% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 1.1% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents link their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (38.9%), German

<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 Sea Isle City city, NJ

(24.1%), Italian (22.4%), and English (12.7%). With regard to region of birth, 35.2% of residents were born in New Jersey, 61.0% were born in a different state, and 0.4% were born outside the U.S. (all are US citizens).

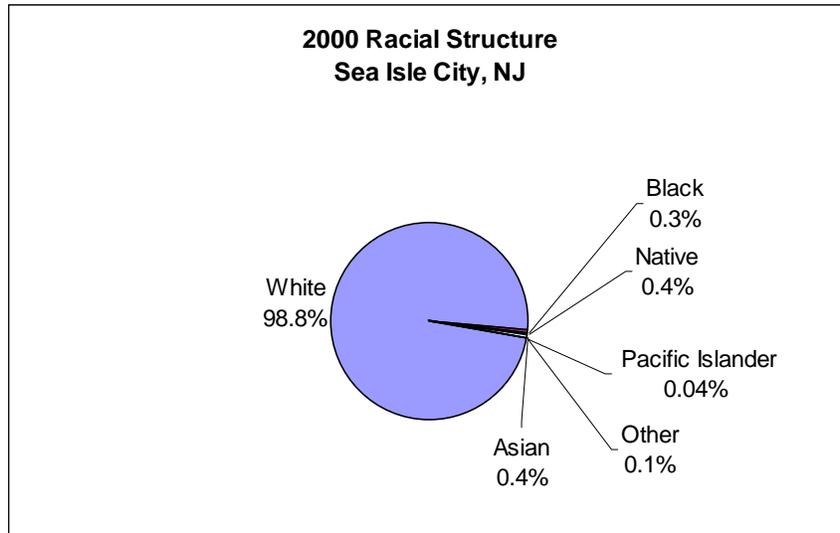


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

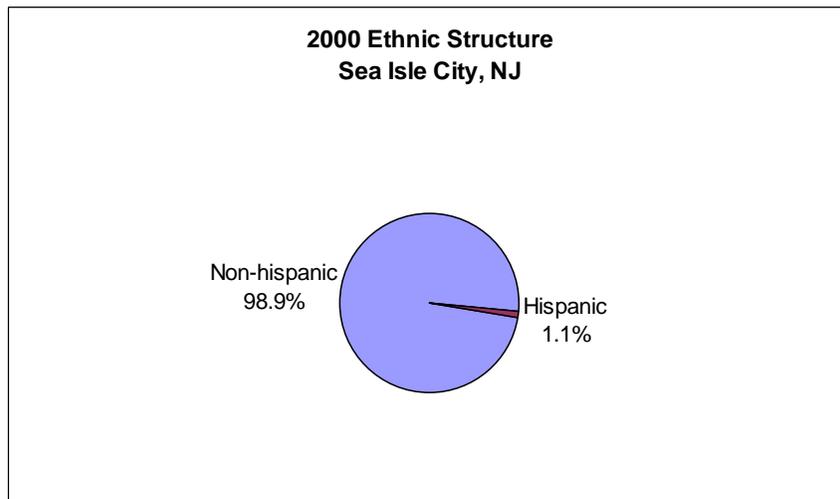


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

For 92.4% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 7.6% in homes where a language other than English is spoken, including 1.2% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 85.2% are high school graduates or higher and 28.3% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.4% did not reach ninth grade, 11.4% attended some high school but did not graduate, 32.8% completed high school, 17.1% had some college with no degree, 7.0% received an associate’s degree, 18.5% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 9.8% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through U.S. Census data, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (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 in the county were 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). The churches listed in Sea Isle City are the Messiah Lutheran Church, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Trinity Community Church, and United Methodist Church (Sea Isle City nd).

### **Issues/Processes**

Offshore wind farms have been proposed in four locations off of Cape May County, and fishermen are concerned about the impact wind turbines could potentially have on the fish or on their access to the fisheries (Curran 2005).

### **Cultural attributes**

The Annual Cape May Country Fishing Tournament has been held annually for the past 69 years is the longest continuously running tournament on the East Coast (Cape May County nd).

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

The largest industry in Cape May County is tourism, responsible for 91.5% of the county's employment, or 32,570 jobs, and 12% of the State's tourism dollars (Cape May County nd). Smaller employers in the area are mostly small businesses involved in the summer tourist industry. Larger employers include hotels or casinos, but are generally located north of Sea Isle City, near Atlantic City.

As far as private employers, the tenth largest employer (140 employees) in Cape May County is Snow's/Doxsee Inc. (CMCCC 1999), with an 86,000 square-foot plant in Cape May that produces clam products including chowder, soups, canned clams, clam juice, and seafood sauces. Snow's/Doxsee is the only domestic manufacturer to harvest its own clams, and the company maintains the largest allocation for fishing and harvesting ocean clams in the United States. Cold Spring Fish and Supply employs 500 people, and is the third largest private employer in the county. Other private employers in Cape May County include Cape Regional Medical Center (1,100), Acme Markets (600), WaWa (485), Holy Redeemer Visiting Nurse (250), and Super Fresh (250) (CMCCC 1999).

According to the U.S. Census 2000<sup>5</sup>, 56.6% (1,372 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see

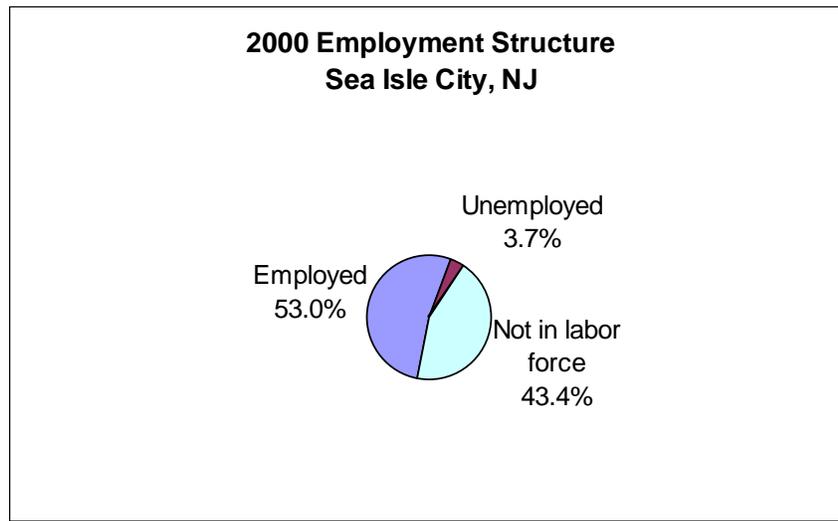


Figure), of which 3.7% were unemployed, none were in the armed forces, and 53.0% were employed. The fact that 43.4% of the population over the age of 16 is not in the labor force reinforces the idea that Sea Isle City serves as a retirement area to many.

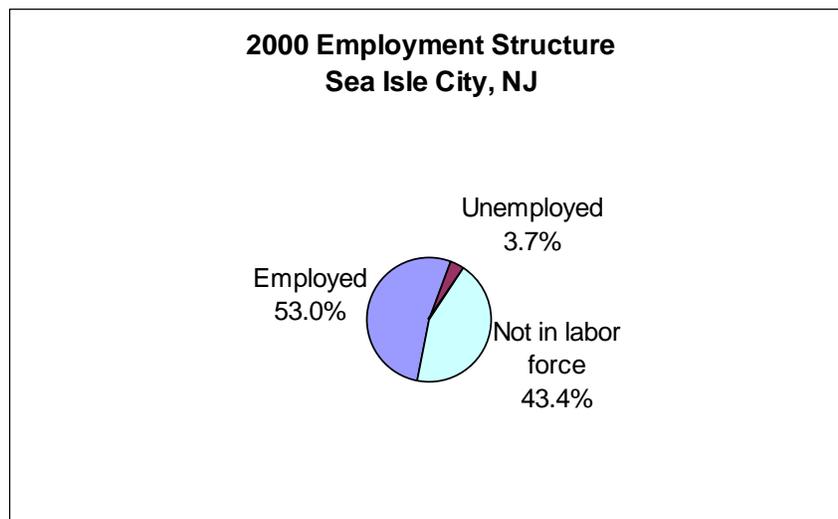


Figure 4. Employment structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for no jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 89 positions or 6.9% of jobs. Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing (9.4%), educational, health and social services (19.4%), retail trade (13.3%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (5.1%), and construction (7.1%) were the primary industries.

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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.

Median household income in Sea Isle City is \$45,708 (up 7.1% from \$32,218 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income is \$28,754. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 25.6% more per year than females.

The average family in Sea Isle City consists of 2.07 persons. With respect to poverty, 6.4% of families (up from 2.0% in 1990) and 7.6% 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 2000b). In 2000, 31.6% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Sea Isle City had a total of 6,640 housing units of which 19.8% were occupied and 20.7% were detached one unit homes. Approximately five percent (4.9%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc. accounted for 0.2% of the total housing units; 44.1% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was 280,100. Of vacant housing units, 73.5% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 23.1% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

A three-chair Board of Commissioners governs Sea Isle City (Sea Isle City nd).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

The Cape May County Planning Board supports the commercial fishing industry through a comprehensive plan that promotes land-use policies that are beneficial to the industry and opposes projects that may harm its economic or environmental condition (Cape May County nd).

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

[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 [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](http://www.jcaa.org)) also provides links for many NJ anglers associations.

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, and includes many boats located in Sea Isle City.

### *Fishing 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 nd).

### *Other fishing related organizations*

Information on other fishing related organizations in Sea Isle City is unavailable through secondary data collection.

### **Physical**

Sea Isle City is accessible via the Garden State Parkway South, Exit 17 to Sea Isle Boulevard (East) (Mapquest nd). In proximity to major cities, Sea Isle City is 66.4 miles from Philadelphia, PA and 31.7 miles from Vineland, NJ. Closer in-state areas include Avalon (4.1mi), Stone Harbor (7.8mi), Cape May Court House (9.8mi), and Ocean City (11.0mi). The nearest public-use airports are Woodbine Muni (8mi), Ocean City Muni (10mi), and Cape May County Airport (18mi). Hospitals closest to Sea Isle City are Cape Regional Medical Center (11mi), Shore Memorial Hospital (14mi), and Atlantic City Medical Center (24mi) (MapQuest nd).

There are various marinas in Sea Isle City, including Larson's Marina and Minmar Marina (Sea Isle Blvd), Pier 88 Marina (88<sup>th</sup> St), Municipal Marina (82<sup>nd</sup> St), and Sunset Pier (86<sup>th</sup> St). Boat towing is available from North Star Marine, which is located on Landis Avenue (NJ Realty 2005).

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

### **Commercial**

Sea Isle City has a small commercial fishing port, which is entirely dependent on a highly dynamic inlet for access to the sea. There is a small offshore longline fishery out of Sea Isle City which targets tuna and swordfish, as well as offshore pot fisheries targeting lobster, conch, and black sea bass, and gillnetting for monkfish (McCay and Cieri 2000).

The most significant landings category in Sea Isle City is the "other" grouping, which reflects the longlining for tuna and swordfish, as well as the conch fishery. Landings in this grouping in 2006 were lower than the average values for 1997-2006. Lobster makes up the next most valuable species group, and landings of lobster in 2006 were more than double the ten-year average (see Table 1). Landings overall in Sea Isle City were variable, with the greatest landings values in 2006, at over \$1.9 million. In most years, the landings here were much higher than the level of home port fishing, meaning vessels are coming from elsewhere to land their catch in Sea Isle City. The number of home ported vessels here remained relatively consistent; 18 vessels in 1997 were down to 14 in 2002, but back to 18 in 2005 (see Table 2). The number of home ported vessels dropped back to 14 in 2006, however. There were many more vessels home

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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.

ported here than there are vessels with owners that live in Sea Isle City; most fishers likely live elsewhere because of the high price of purchasing a home here.

### Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value by Federally Managed Groups of Landings in Sea Isle City

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Other <sup>7</sup>	831,137	758,194
Lobster	344,977	883,608
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	147,461	238,662
Monkfish	34,988	31,711
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	8,950	0
Scallop	7,248	916
Skate	3,079	0
Bluefish	2,055	1,831
Tilefish	1,714	0
Dogfish	1,570	100
Largemouth Groundfish <sup>8</sup>	1,006	0
Smallmouth Groundfish <sup>9</sup>	191	0

### Vessels by Year <sup>10</sup>

Table 1: All columns represent vessel permits or landings value combined between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)	Level of fishing home port (\$)	Level of fishing landed port (\$)
1997	18	9	1,001,242	1,062,428
1998	15	10	716,079	1,193,105
1999	15	8	665,568	1,646,613
2000	14	8	786,404	1,498,227
2001	16	6	1,408,851	1,801,031
2002	14	5	649,801	1,047,161
2003	15	5	465,846	769,442
2004	15	5	813,972	1,588,584
2005	18	4	854,644	1,322,130
2006	14	4	1,470,959	1,915,022

(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>

Level of fishing home port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries associated with home ported vessels

Level of fishing landed port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries landed in location)

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

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

<sup>9</sup> Smallmouth 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

Recreational fishing is available both near-shore and deep-sea from Sea Isle City. Many Recreational boats that depart from Sea Isle City are members of the Cape May County Party and Charter Boat Association. The [Capt. Robbins](#), under Captain John Sullivan, departs from Ludlum Landing Road and fishes for sea bass, blackfish and flounder, spring through fall. The [Starfish](#), Capt. Bob Rush Jr., offers day and night fishing for bluefish, flounder, sea bass, weakfish, and shark, as well as nature cruises where it nets many benthic and pelagic species. The charter boat [Ursula](#), run by Capt. John Pratt, offers whale watching and sightseeing tours. Surfcasting is also popular in Sea Isle City, at beach locations at 93<sup>rd</sup> Street and North of 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and fishing piers at 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Sounds Avenue (Shore Internet nd).

In New Jersey, the charter/party fleet is the largest on east coast. Many vessels are over 120ft long and carry over 150 people.<sup>12</sup>

## Subsistence

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

## Future

Sea Isle City, like most places of the New Jersey Shore, experiences severe annual coastal zone erosion. Erosion and other coastal hazards threaten the physical structure and livelihood of communities, pressing for continued development of coastal zone management (Psuty and Ofiara 2002).

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<sup>12</sup> Community Review Comments, Bruce Freeman, NJ Coast Anglers Association, October 2, 2007

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