

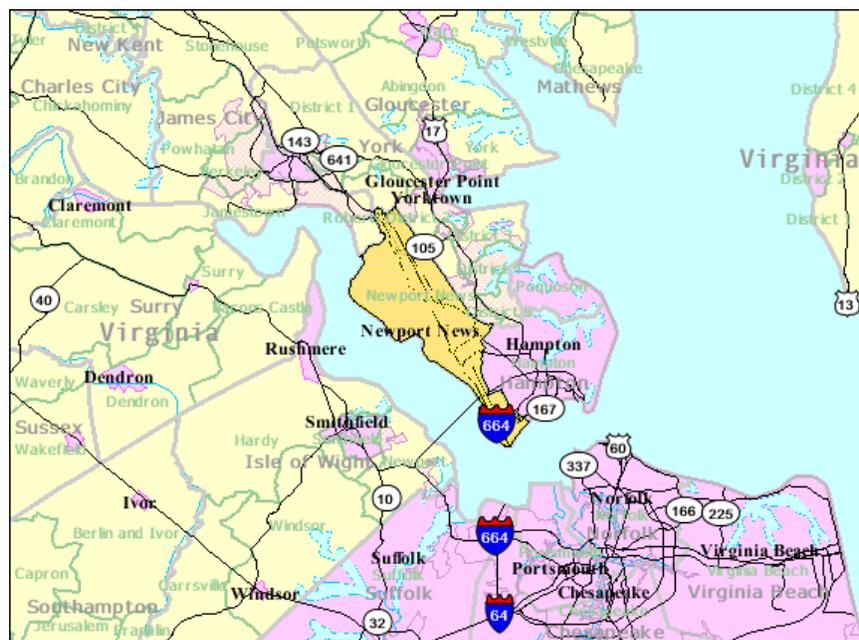
# NEWPORT NEWS, VA<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

The city of Newport News, Virginia (37.07° N, 76.48° W) is located on the Virginia Peninsula and is a consolidated city with the former Warwick County. The city is located 83 miles north of the North Carolina border and is on the northeast side of the James River, the southern-most major river that leads into the Chesapeake Bay (USGS 2008). The city encompasses 62.9 square miles of land area and has 43.5 miles of river shoreline (NNEDA nd). Newport News is part of the Hampton Roads area, which includes Newport News, Hampton, and Virginia Beach, as well as a number of other cities and towns whose inclusion varies by source.<sup>3</sup>



Map 1. Location of Newport News, VA (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

Irish colonists originally settled Newport News around 1620, but it did not become a large settlement until 1881 when it was “chosen as the Atlantic deep water terminus of the

<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).”

<sup>3</sup> NOAA/NMFS in its Fisheries of the US defines Hampton Roads as Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News and Seaford (Liz Pritchard, Fisheries Statistics, [Liz.Pritchard@noaa.gov](mailto:Liz.Pritchard@noaa.gov)). Hampton Roads Transit lists its destinations as Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach (<http://www.gohrt.com/schedulesandservices/busroutes.html>).

Chesapeake and Ohio Railway (C&O)” (City of Newport News nd). In 1886, the settlement’s shipbuilding industry began and since then, Newport News has become a major center for ship building and repair. Because of its safe harbor and strategic location in the Mid-Atlantic, the city is also a port for transatlantic and coastal shipping for products like oil, coal, tobacco, grain, and ores (Anon 2007). The defense industry has also been a strong influence in this city.

### Demographics<sup>4</sup>

According to Census 2000 data, Newport News had a total population of 180,150, up 5.9% from a reported population of 170,045 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.4% were males and 51.6% were females. The median age was 32.0 years and 67.7% of the population was 21 years or older while 11.9% was 62 or older.

Newport News age structure (see Figure 1) showed slightly more males than females for age groups zero to 29 years, but then more females 30 to 80+ years. The population was relatively even from age groups zero to 49 years, then showing a significant decrease in population which accelerated with older age groups. This implied either that men and women leave (move or die) Newport News around age 50 years, or that a younger population has moved into the town. The latter is more likely, especially since there is a large military presence in the city.

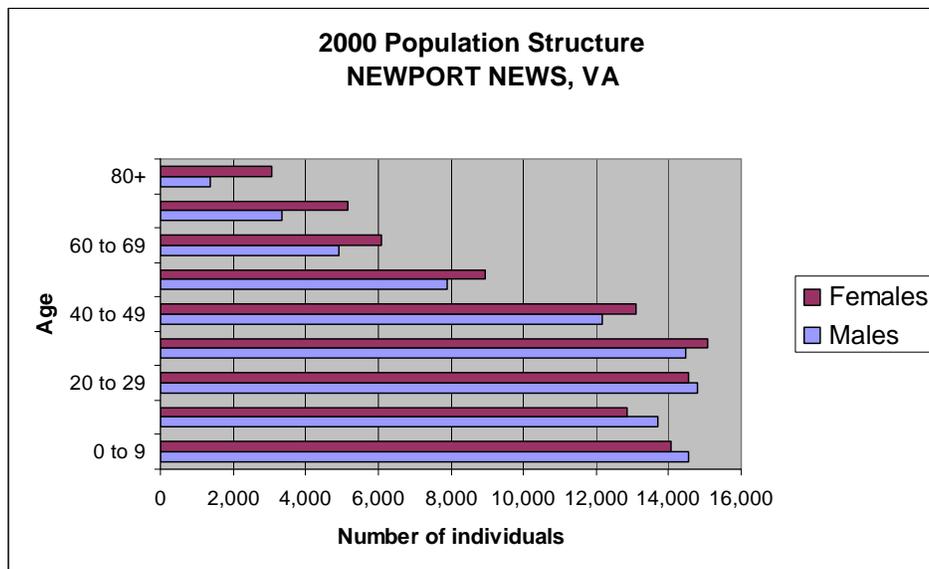


Figure 1. Newport News population structure by sex in 2000

The majority of the population was white (55.0%), with 40.2% black or African American, 2.4% Asian, 0.4% Native American, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 4.2% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: German (9.6%), English (8.3%), Irish (7.4%), Italian (3.2%), French (2.0%), and Scottish (1.6%). With regard to region of birth, 48.1% were born in Virginia, 44.4% were born in a

<sup>4</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.

different state and 2.7% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2.3% who were not United States citizens).

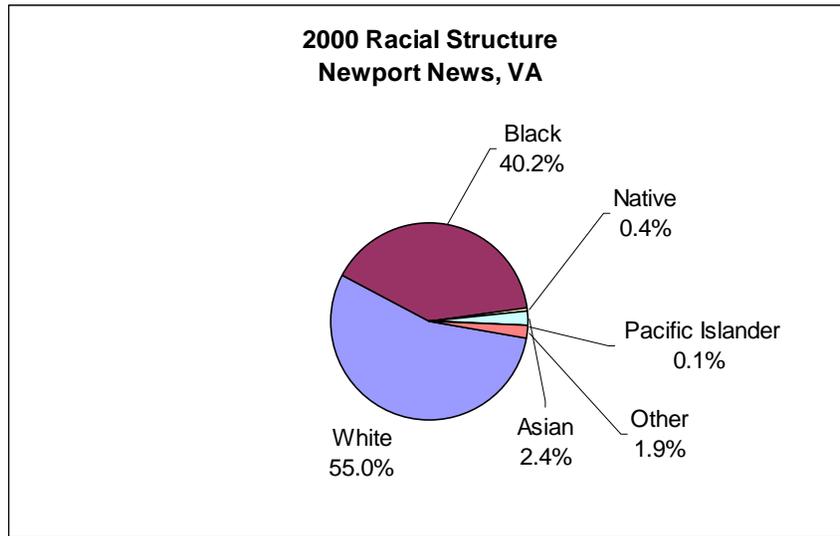


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

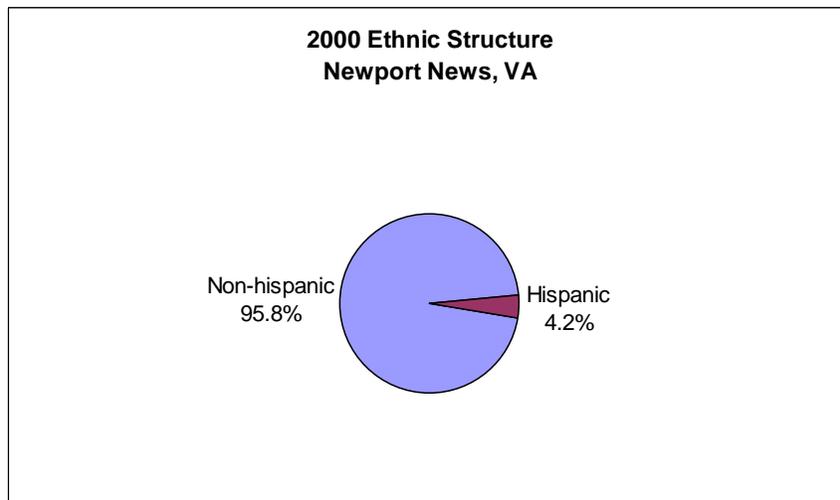


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 91.7% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 8.3% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 2.8% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 84.5% were high school graduates or higher and 19.9% had a Bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 4.2% did not reach ninth grade, 11.3% attended some high school but did not graduate, 30.1% completed high school, 27.2% had some college with no degree, 7.3% received their Associate degree, 13.4% earned their Bachelor’s degree, and 6.5% 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 Newport News County was Southern Baptist with 21

congregations and 19,296 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Catholic (4 with 11,414 adherents), and Methodist (11 with 7,478 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 0.5% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

### **Issues/Processes**

Fort Eustis in Newport News has been placed on the EPA National Priority List because of contamination of the surrounding watershed by chemicals leaching from the facility. There has been concern about recreational fishermen consuming fish taken from waterways around Fort Eustis, as some fish have been found to be contaminated with PCBs (DHHS nd).

The city's plans to construct a large reservoir in the Mattaponi River have been highly controversial, resulting from concerns that construction will harm an important spawning ground for shad in the river (Anon 2004)

### **Cultural attributes**

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) allocates funds (called the Recreational Fishing Development Funds) from the sale of recreational fishing licenses, to support a children's fishing clinic every July at the James River Pier with the Peninsula CCA.<sup>5</sup> There is also a popular Oyster Roast in October (NNDPRT nd). The Mariners' Museum holds weekly talks on maritime history, though few of these are related specifically to fishing (City of Newport News nd). Hampton, which is adjacent to Newport News, celebrates the [Hampton Bay Days](#) (a family oriented festival about Chesapeake Bay) and the Seafest (a large marine trade show) (City of Hampton 2004). Both of these events occur annually in early September.

The Mariners Museum noted above holds a large collection of artifacts and information about maritime history (Mariners Museum nd). The *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary has its headquarters at NOAA's Maritime Archaeology Center, which is on the grounds of the Mariners Museum. The actual National Marine Sanctuary is located 16 miles off-shore and was established to protect and preserve the remains of the U.S.S. Monitor (NOAA NOS nd).

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

The location of Newport News is strategic for its easy access and safe harbor for shipping and transport. It currently has a large defense sector (military bases, shipbuilding, and support industries), but has been working to diversify its economy for the past twenty years. The technology sector has increased, probably attracting younger workers (NNEDA nd).

In Newport News, the largest employers for manufacturing, distribution, teleservice and technology are Northrop Grumman (15,000+), Ferguson Enterprises (1000-2500) and Canon Virginia (1000-2500). The largest employers in the service industry include the U.S. Army Transportation Center at Fort Eustis (10,000+) and Newport News School System (5,000-10,000). "The largest employers in the retail industry and temporary employment agencies are Production System Services and Wal-Mart/Sam's Club" (both 500-1,000) (NNEDA nd). Also of interest, according to the 2000 census 19.9% of the civilian population 18 years or over had veteran status. The largest employer in not only the city but in all of Virginia is [Northrop Grumman](#), employing 19,000 people. The corporation boasts its status as "the nation's sole designer, builder and re-fueler of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and one of only two

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<sup>5</sup> Personal communication, Sonya Davis, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, 757-247-2200, 6/9/05

companies capable of designing and building nuclear-powered submarines. The sector also provides after-market services for a wide array of naval and commercial vessels.” (Northrup Grummond nd).

According to the US Census 2000<sup>6</sup>, 68.3% (92,586 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 3.4% were unemployed, 7.2% were in the Armed Forces, and 57.7% were employed.

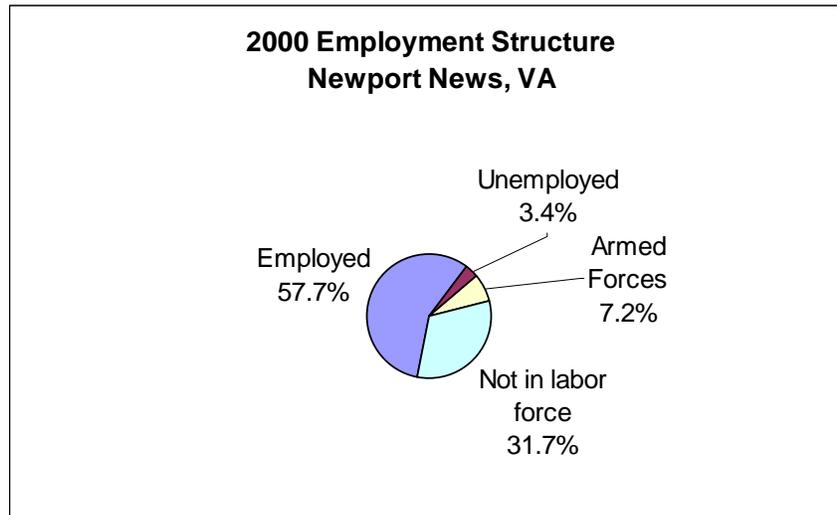


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 211 positions or 0.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, where fishermen might be found, accounted for 3,256 positions or 4.2% of jobs. Education, health, and social services (19.3%), manufacturing (15.3%), retail trade (12.8%) and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (10.0%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Newport News was \$36,597 (up 33.2% from \$27,469 in 1990) and per capita income was \$17,843. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 28.7% more per year than females.

The average family in Newport News consisted of 3.04 persons. With respect to poverty, 11.3% of families (down from 12.2% in 1990) and 13.8% 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). In 2000, 47.4% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Newport News had a total of 74,117 housing units, of which 94.0% were occupied and 50.7% were detached one unit homes. Only 5.2% of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs and vans accounted for 2.1% of the total housing units; 93.0% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$96,400. Of vacant housing units, 5.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 47.6% were renter occupied.

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<sup>6</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.

## **Government**

The City Manager and City Council govern Newport News. The City Manager oversees administration and day to day business of the city government. The city employs over 2,500 people and has a \$554 million budget (City of Newport News nd).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) is a State Agency established in 1875 to preserve Virginia's marine and aquatic resources, including all tidal waters. The VMRC's Fisheries Management Division aids in the planning of state, interstate, and federal management organizations. Its Fisheries Advisory Council helps agencies create and implement management plans for both commercial and recreational fishery species. The Commission's headquarters are located in Newport News (VMRC nd).

There are committees that advise the Commission on the needs and utilization of the recreational and commercial fisheries for blue crab, clam, finfish, and shellfish. Only the Shellfish Management Advisory Committee has a member who is Newport News resident. Also, there are committees to advise the Commission on spending the Marine Fishing Improvement Fund which is derived from commercial license fees. There is also the Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund which is derived from recreational license fees.<sup>7</sup> The latter recreational fishing advisory committee has one member who is a resident of Newport News. There are also committees that advise on the marine fish citation program and on the needs and utilization of intertidal and aquatic habitat in Virginia (VMRC nd).

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

At the federal commercial level, there are no apparent active fishery associations in the Hampton Roads area. At the State level, there are several regional "Waterman's" Associations, formed generally to address specific regulations being considered by the VMRC. These associations focus primarily on Chesapeake Bay fisheries.<sup>8</sup>

There are two sportfishing associations in Newport News. The Peninsula Saltwater Sportfishermen Association (PSSA) represents fishermen from the entire Virginia Peninsula and has about 400 members (2007).<sup>9</sup> The Virginia Coastal Conservation Association's (CCA) local Newport News chapter has many of the same members as the PSSA.<sup>10</sup> Barbara Stevenson's list of fisheries organizations reports two in Newport News: James River Watermen's Association and Virginia Marine Products Board, a division of the state Department of Agriculture responsible for promoting Virginia's seafood products (Stevenson nd).

### *Fishing assistance centers*

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries administers the sale of saltwater recreational fishing licenses, while the VMRC administers the Saltwater Recreational Fishing

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<sup>7</sup> Community Review Comments, Jack Travelstead, Virginia Marine Resource Committee, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, September 18, 2007

<sup>8</sup> Personal Communication, David Ulmer, NOAA Port Agent, P.O. Box 69043, Hampton, VA 23669, ([David.Ulmer@noaa.gov](mailto:David.Ulmer@noaa.gov)), July 21, 2006

<sup>9</sup> Community Review Comments, Jack Travelstead, Virginia Marine Resource Committee, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, September 18, 2007

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication, Sonya Davis, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, 757-247-2200, 6/9/05

Development Fund. A Board decides biennially how to allocate the funds. This fund has contributed towards increasing public access, improving boat ramps, and the annual Children's Fishing Clinic (see "Cultural Attributes" section). Some of the funds also go to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) research projects focusing on recreational fishing.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Other fishing-related organizations*

The Virginia Seafood Council is a professional trade organization consisting primarily of the state's shellfish growers and processors. The Council is registered as a lobby group in Richmond but is located in Newport News and represents the whole state (Virginia Marine Products Board nd). The Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) operates a state chapter out of Virginia Beach, VA. The CCA is a non-profit organization aiming to education the public about marine conservation, whose members are primarily saltwater anglers (Coastal Conservation Association nd).

#### **Physical**

Newport News is situated on a peninsula extending out into a portion of the Chesapeake Bay, about 180 miles from Washington D.C between Williamsburg and Virginia Beach. The town is located within easy access of the Hampton Roads Belt (Interstate 664) and the James River Bridge (Route 17) which cross over the Bay. The Williamsburg/Newport News airport is located in the city. There are also two international airports located nearby (Norfolk International and Richmond International Airports) (Google nd). Amtrak provides passenger railway service in and out of Newport News. This city has transportation systems by air, road, railway, and water (Newport News Tourism Development Office nd). Many of the fishing-related businesses are located in the Newport News Seafood Industrial Park (NNEDA nd).

A variety of public access sites are available for recreational fishing. The pier at Denbigh Park is available daily for saltwater fishing, and fresh water fishing on shore or with private or rental boats is available at Lee Hall and Harwood's Mill Reservoirs. Leeward Marina offers 200 slips for private recreational vessels of up to forty three feet in length (NNDPRT nd).

### **INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>12</sup>**

#### **Commercial**

While the commercial fishing data in this profile is specific to Federal fisheries, according to the VA Marine Resource Commission, there are 33 state registered commercial fishermen that reside in Newport News, most of whom are involved in crab potting, clamming, oystering, and gillnetting.<sup>13</sup> There are five bait and tackle stores, 12 fish and seafood markets,

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<sup>11</sup> Personal communication, Sonya Davis, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, 757-247-2200, 6/9/05

<sup>12</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.

<sup>13</sup> Community Review Comments, Jack Travelstead, Virginia Marine Resource Committee, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, September 18, 2007

and eight seafood wholesale and processing plants in Newport News, indicating a demand coming from the fishing industry. “Because of problems with Oregon Inlet, many seafood dealers have moved their marketing and processing operations from Wanchese to the Newport News/Hampton Roads region, both expanding their seafood buying capabilities and creating more integrated linkages between the two landing centers.”

There are ten state licensed seafood buyers in Newport News.<sup>14</sup> There are also several large seafood processing plants in Newport News (Virginia Marine Products Board, Virginia Seafood Suppliers Directory nd), two of the largest are [Chesapeake Bay Packing](#), specializing in scallops and conch, and [Icelandic USA, Inc.](#), “the largest importer of frozen groundfish for the foodservice industry in the U.S.” There are several other processing plants, wholesalers, and packing houses located in the Newport News Seafood Industrial Park (NNEDA nd).

The species with the highest dollar value landings in Newport News was scallops, with over \$26 million for the 1997 and 2006 average. Other significant landings included “Other” species, worth close to \$2 million, and summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass with \$1.3 million in landings during the same time period. Other significant landings in Newport News were red crab, monkfish, and dogfish as well as a wide range of other species (see Table 1). The number of vessels whose home port and whose owner’s city was Newport News generally increased between 1997 and 2006, ranging from 11 to 29 boats and 6-19 boats, respectively. The level of fishing home port value varied widely, from \$2 million to over \$25 million, while the level of fishing landed port value showed substantial increase from over \$15 million in 1997 to over \$53 million in 2004, declining again in 2005 and 2006 (see Table 2).

### Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value of Federally Managed Groups of landings in Newport News

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
<b>Scallop</b>	26,503,063	23,315,283
<b>Other<sup>15</sup></b>	1,938,247	457,587
<b>Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass</b>	1,299,688	1,085,575
<b>Red Crab</b>	198,726	CONFIDENTIAL
<b>Monkfish</b>	160,878	41,810
<b>Dogfish</b>	39,973	76
<b>Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish</b>	18,961	1,654
<b>Bluefish</b>	5,966	3,178
<b>Skate</b>	4,244	0
<b>Largemesh Groundfish<sup>16</sup></b>	2,280	0
<b>Lobster</b>	324	0
<b>Smallmesh Groundfish<sup>17</sup></b>	151	0

*Tilefish and herring are also landed, but data cannot be reported due to confidentiality*

<sup>14</sup> Community Review Comments, Jack Travelstead, Virginia Marine Resource Committee, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, September 18, 2007

<sup>15</sup> “Other” species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

<sup>16</sup> Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

<sup>17</sup> Smallmesh multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

## Vessels by Year<sup>18</sup>

Table 2. 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	11	9	2,652,367	15,194,635
1998	15	9	3,924,764	15,945,730
1999	16	6	8,904,712	19,190,220
2000	21	9	13,055,962	26,514,096
2001	20	11	13,598,770	29,745,272
2002	22	15	17,005,061	34,434,618
2003	24	15	16,431,790	38,385,487
2004	25	15	23,117,273	53,682,646
2005	29	19	25,565,816	43,645,426
2006	27	14	25,012,006	24,987,238

(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>19</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)

## Recreational

There are many businesses in Newport News that serve recreational boaters and fishermen, which could indicate a substantial dependency on the recreational fishing industry. These include boat dealers (20), boat cleaning services (2), boat repair (15), canoe and kayak dealers (1), marine engine repair (2), marine propeller repair (1), marine supplies and equipment (14), and retail outboard motors (4). There are also several charter fishing boats in the area. The James River Fishing Pier attracts fishermen from all over for fishing off the pier (Anon 2005).

Fish caught for recreation in Newport News include: black drum, bluefish, cobia, croaker, flounder, red drum, sea bass, spadefish, Spanish mackerel, spot, striped bass, tautog, trout and triggerfish.

In 2005, the economic impact generated by marine recreational fishing in Newport News was second highest in the state behind Virginia Beach. The total sales/economic activity for the Hampton Roads area was \$70,114,000, a cumulative income of \$39,189,000, and recreational fishing employed 999 people. In 2004, 20 % more marine recreational licenses were sold than in 1994 (Southwick Associates Inc. 2006).

The [Peninsula Salt Water Sport Fisherman's Association](#), based in Newport News, sponsors a variety of fishing tournaments throughout the year.

## Subsistence

Information on the subsistence fishing in Newport News is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist. However, according to the Virginia

<sup>18</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>19</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.

Marine Resource Commission, subsistence fishing is observed at local fishing piers or from the shoreline.<sup>20</sup>

## **FUTURE**

Between the years 2003-2005 in the Hampton Roads area, at least fifteen scallop vessels were sold to a New England processing company. Some fishermen see a trend where a few large companies are purchasing vessels, thus, creating a monopoly in the scallop industry. Concerns also exist that big business will squeeze small vessels out of the industry.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Community Review Comments, Jack Travelstead, Virginia Marine Resource Committee, Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607, September 18, 2007

<sup>21</sup> Personal communication, NOAA port agent George Mattingly, 1006N Settlers Landing Road, P.O. Box 69043, Hampton, VA 23669, 978 609-4150, May 12, 2006

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