

# SOLOMONS, MD<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

Solomons, Maryland (38.33°N, 76.43°W) (USGS 2008) is located in Calvert County at the confluence of the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay (Solomons Island 2008). Solomons Island is the name of the Southeastern tip of Solomons, separated from the mainland by a causeway only 23 feet in length.



Map 1. Location of Solomons Island, MD (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

Solomons Island has been known as Bourne's Island, Somervell's Island, and Sandy Island. After the Civil War, a man named Isaac Solomon established an oyster cannery at Solomons, and renamed the area "Solomons Island," building workers' houses and leasing small lots for related businesses. The first post office opened here in 1870. Conveniently located at the mouth of the Patuxent River, Solomons became a shipbuilding and seafood harvesting center, with a local fishing fleet of more than five hundred vessels. Captain Thomas Moore owned the largest private fleet in the state, with more than 100 vessels, and Solomons became the commercial capital of Calvert County. There was a steamboat which sailed from here to

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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)."

Baltimore twice a week. By the late 1920s, oyster harvests began to decline; many people moved elsewhere for jobs, and many of the shipbuilders went out of business. A 1933 storm submerged half of the island, destroying boats, packing houses, and oyster beds, further devastating the area's economy. During World War II, however, Solomons was chosen as a staging area for amphibious invasion training, and three naval bases were established here, bringing money to the area and increasing the population ten-fold. In the post-war period, hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, and marinas have been built here, and tourism has become an important driver for Solomons' economy (Solomons Island 2008).

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

According to Census data (US Census Bureau 2000a), Solomons CDP had a total population of 1,536 in 2000. Census data for 1990 are unavailable for Solomons Island. Of this 2000 total, 44.5% were males and 55.5% were females. The median age was 56.1 years and 85.7% of the population was 21 years or older while 44.0% were 62 or older.

The population structure for Solomons shows an aging population, with the largest number of residents in the 80+ age category, followed by the 70-79 age group. There are few children and young people in Solomons, consistent with this large number of retirees and elderly residents. [Asbury-Solomons Island](#) is one large retirement community located in Solomons.

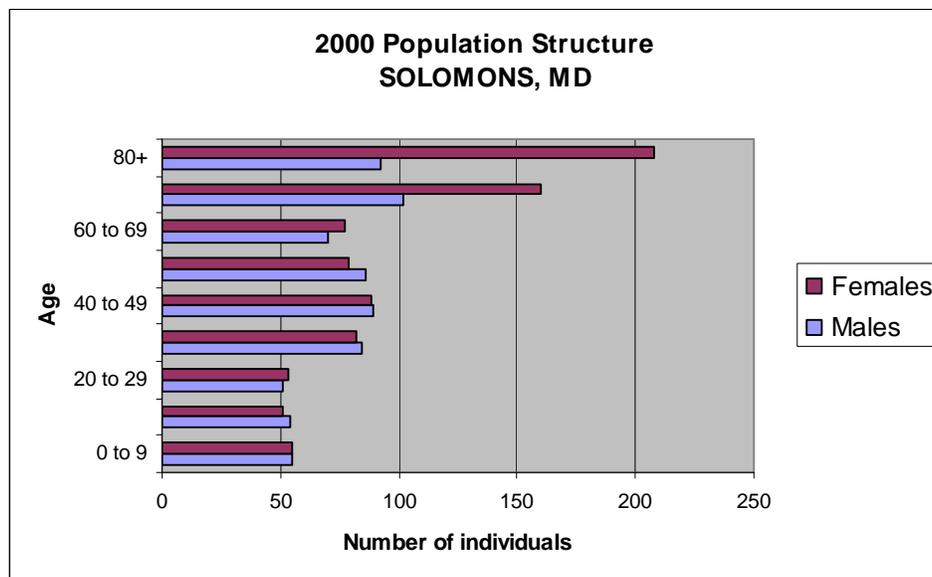


Figure 1. Solomons' population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population is white (90.7%) with 7.0 % of residents black or African American, 0.9% of residents Asian, 1.0% Native American, and no residents Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 0.8% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents traced their backgrounds to a few different ancestries including: Irish (17.1%), English (15.4%), German (13.6%), and Welsh (6.3%).

<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.

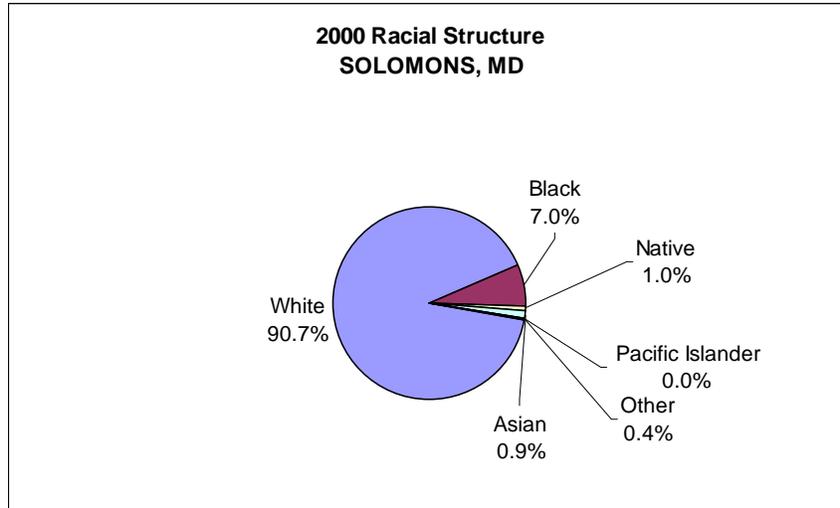


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

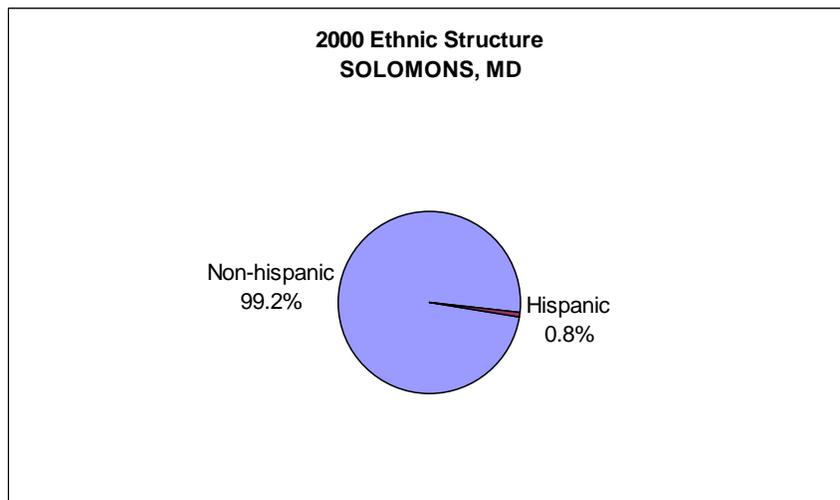


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

With regard to region of birth, 32.2% were born in Maryland, 63.1% were born in a different state, and 4.7% were born outside the US (including 1.3% who are not US citizens).

For 95.1% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 4.9% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, none of whom spoke English less than “very well” (US Census Bureau 2000).

Of the population 25 years and over, 89.3% were high school graduates or higher, and 37.9% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Of the population 25 years and over, 5.5% did not reach ninth grade, 5.2% attended some high school but did not graduate, 25.3% completed high school, 20.2% had some college with no degree, 5.9% received their associate’s degree, 22.8% earned their bachelor’s degree, and 15.1% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through the US Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA) in 2000 the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Calvert County was the Catholic Church, with 6 congregations and 18,062 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were the United Methodist Church (20 congregations with 7,501 adherents), Southern Baptist Convention (4 with 2,106

adherents), and the Episcopal Church (4 with 1,546 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 96.9% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

### **Issues/Processes**

As of 2007 blue crab numbers in the Chesapeake had fallen 70% since the 1990s, and scientists continue (in 2008) to be concerned about a possible crash in the population. Poor water quality and overharvesting are considered causes of the decline; of particular concern is the number of female crabs being harvested by watermen. While the Chesapeake Bay's crabs are not likely to go extinct, crabbers are having a tough time making ends meet between the rising cost of fuel and an influx of imported crab meat; both Maryland and Virginia are seeking disaster funds to aid watermen and processors (MD DNR 2008).

As numbers of fish and shellfish in the Chesapeake decline, there are stricter fishing regulations and rules (Nitkin 2007, Kobell 2008). Recently, the State imposed additional regulations for catching female crabs (DNR 2008), upsetting local watermen who feel they have a difficult enough time making a living<sup>4</sup> (Kobell, 2008).

In August 2008 there were ongoing debates over whether to permit the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant in nearby Lusby to expand by building a third reactor, which would double its output. Proponents cited the high cost of electricity, as well as the project's potential to bring new jobs to the area, as benefits of the expansion, while others were concerned about changing the rural character of Calvert County (Mitrano 2008).

### **Cultural attributes**

The [Calvert Marine Museum](#), located in Solomons, is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the cultural and natural history of Southern Maryland. The museum includes a collection of wooden vessels, and exhibits to educate visitors about topics such as the history of human activity on the Patuxent River and the history of the area's seafood packing industry (Calvert County 2008). The J.C. Lore and Sons Oyster House is operated by the Marine Museum, and presents the history of seafood harvesting and processing in Southern Maryland. The Oyster House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, and in its day was one of the largest and most successful seafood packing houses in Southern Maryland (NPS 2006). The Flag Ponds Nature Park (MCPS 1999, CCNP nd), ten miles away and operated by the Calvert County Department of Parks and Recreation, has a fishermen's shanty with exhibits about pound-net fishing in the Chesapeake Bay and a fishermen's trail in the park.

Solomons hosts the annual [Patuxent River Appreciation Days](#) (Hurrey 2008), which celebrates and promotes the historical, natural, economic, social, and recreational impact of the river on the people who live there. Events include scientific and historical exhibits, a parade, harbor cruises on historic vessels, and the State of the River Summit, which in 2008 will bring together scientists, policy makers, watermen, and others to discuss the future of the Eastern oyster (Goodman 2008). In May, Solomons hosts the Solomons Maritime Festival, celebrating Southern Maryland traditions. Solomons also has a watermen's memorial (Solomons Island 2008). Another related event is the Calvert County Watermen's Day Festival, held each October in Solomons at the Watermen's Wharf (Perry 2008). The [Solomons Charter Captains Association](#) hosts the annual Reef Project Fishing Tournament in August.

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<sup>4</sup> Community Reviewer comment, Ruth Hazen, August 18, 2008, Collections Manager, Deale Area Historic Society.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 Census<sup>5</sup>, 43.6% (553 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 1.7% were unemployed, 3.2% were in the Armed Forces, and 38.6% were employed.

According to US Census Bureau (2000), jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 7 positions or 1.4% of all jobs. Self-employed workers – a category where fishermen might be found – accounted for 14 positions or 2.9% of jobs. Public administration (24.9%), educational, health and social services (20.8%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (11.6%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (10.6%) were the other primary industries.

The Patuxent River Naval Air Station is located across the Patuxent River, about 12 miles from Solomons, and is likely to be a significant employer of residents of Solomons and neighboring communities. The Air Station has a workforce of 3,100 active duty service members, approximately 7,600 civilian employees (NavAir 2008). The top ten employers in Calvert County, where Solomons residents may be employed, are as follows: Calvert County Board of Education (2,211 employees); Calvert Memorial Hospital (1,040 employees); Calvert County Government (1,030 employees); Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant (800 employees); ARC of Southern Maryland (344 employees); Wal-Mart (304 employees); DynCorp (277 employees); Recorded Books (251 employees); DirectMail.com (250 employees); and Calvert Nursing Center (194 employees). The two largest employers in Solomons are Asbury Solomons Island, the retirement community, with 158 employees, and Solomons Nursing Center, with 147 employees (CCDED 2006).

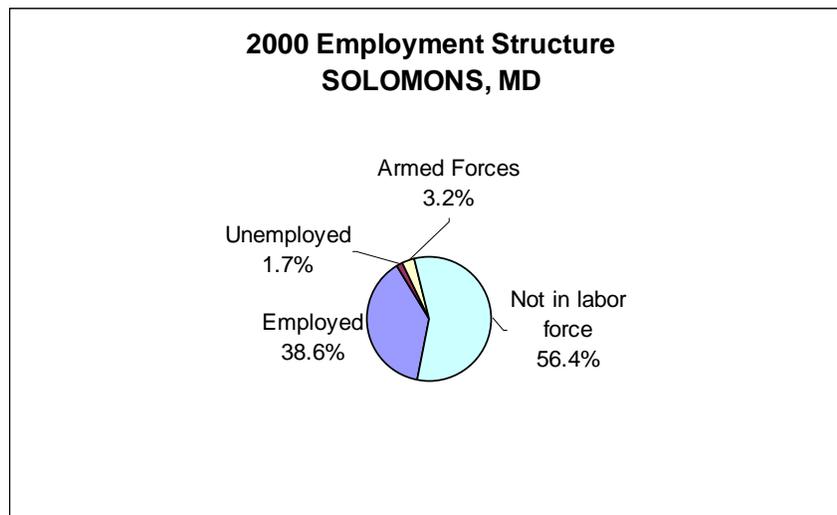


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

<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 2000 household income in Solomons was \$48,532 (Census data for 1990 are unavailable for Solomons Island) and median per capita income was \$33,049. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 88.9% more per year than females.

The average family in Solomons consisted of 2.56 persons. With respect to poverty, 2.1% of families and 3.4% of individuals were below the US 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, 15.1% of all families of any size earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000 Solomons had a total of 881 housing units, of which 78.2% were occupied and 42.0% were detached one-unit homes. Less than ten percent (7.2%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 2.0% of housing units; 94.8% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$202,800. Of vacant housing units, 35.4% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 43.5% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

Calvert County is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, elected to four-year terms, and a County Clerk, appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Solomons does not have its own government (Calvert County 2008).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

Information on fishery involvement in government in Solomons was either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

“The [Maryland Watermen's Association](#) is dedicated to the interests of all who derive beauty & benefit from Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Waters”. While the Association focuses primarily on bay fishing issues, they also represent ocean fishermen where necessary. The MWA still broadly represent all those who work on the water in/of Maryland. The President of the Association also serves on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council which focuses on bay and ocean fisheries issues.<sup>6</sup> The Association is based in Annapolis, MD. The [Solomons Charter Captains Association](#) is a group of charter fishing captains who maintain a fixed price on charter trips and organize an annual fishing tournament.

### *Fishing assistance centers*

Information on fishing assistance centers in Solomons was either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

### *Other fishing related organizations*

The Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (CBL) at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science is located in Solomons. Research conducted at the CBL includes ecosystem studies and restoration science, and fisheries science. The Southern Maryland regional

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<sup>6</sup> Community Review Comments, Kelly Clements Barnes, Administrative Assistant, Maryland Watermen's Association, September 13, 2007

office of the Maryland Sea Grant Extension program is based here. They offer a variety of outreach programs here including seminars and a teacher training course (CBL 2008).

### **Physical**

Solomons is located at the Southern tip of Calvert County, at the end of Maryland Route 2. It is connected to St. Mary's County by Maryland Route 4 over the Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge, which crosses the Patuxent River. Solomons is about 20 miles from Prince Frederick, Maryland, 62 miles from Washington, DC, 66 miles from Annapolis, MD, and 80 miles from Baltimore. The closest major airport is the Reagan National Airport outside of Washington, about 67 miles from Solomons (Google 2008). Calvert County runs regular bus service between Solomons and Prince Frederick, the County Seat (Calvert County 2008)

Solomons has a number of marinas, including [Solomons Yachting Center](#), with over 100 slips, [Spring Cove Marina](#), with 246 slips and a full service boat yard, [Zahniser's Yachting Center](#), which houses the Dry Dock restaurant, a ship supply store, and [Calvert Marina](#), home to Washburn's Boat Yard. The [Calvert Marina Charter Dock](#) houses fourteen different fishing charter boats. There is a public boat ramp located in Solomons, and Solomons Pier, a local fishing pier (CCDED 2006). The majority of marinas and docks in Solomons are located in the area known as Back Creek, on the backside of the island. Solomons also has a Waterman's Wharf (Calvert County 2001).

## **INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>7</sup>**

### **Commercial**

Maryland federal landings data, which come primarily from Ocean City, are reported with a county and port. State entered data are reported under "MD unclassified" and Potomac River data are reported with county and port - the port code being the name of a river or a creek rather than an actual port. Thus no Solomons landings, or even complete Calvert County landings, can be disaggregated for report here.

Similarly, only federally-permitted vessels are in the federal permit database. Vessels which are permitted at the state level only will not appear in the tables below. There are no federally permitted home ported vessels listed for Solomons.

### **Recreational**

Solomons has a large number of charter boat operations; recreational fishing appears to be an important activity for residents and visitors alike. The Calvert Marina Charter Dock has

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<sup>7</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.

fourteen charter boats based out of the dock. The Solomons Charter Captains Association lists 27 charter boats on their website as part of the association. The association books charters on the members' boats, maintaining a fixed price, and organizes a yearly fishing tournament. [Bunky's Charter Boats](#) calls itself "longest continuously operated charter boat business in Solomons"; they and their predecessors have been taking passengers fishing since 1930. They have three boats for charter fishing and a head boat which makes two trips a day. Boats fish in either the Patuxent River or in the Chesapeake, and target spot, croaker, white perch, bluefish, rockfish, and trout. They also have a bait and tackle shop on the premises. [Fin Finder Charters](#) in Solomon specializes in light tackle, and operates out of the Calvert Marina Charter Dock. [Chesapeake Bay Adventures](#) is another charter fishing operation offering fly fishing and light tackle fishing excursions for striped bass, trout, bluefish, and drum. Chesapeake Bay Adventures is based at the Solomons Boat Ramp. Solomons also has a public fishing pier that residents and visitors use for fishing and crabbing (CCDED 2006).

### **Subsistence**

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

### **FUTURE**

Information on the future in Solomons was unavailable through secondary data collection.

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