

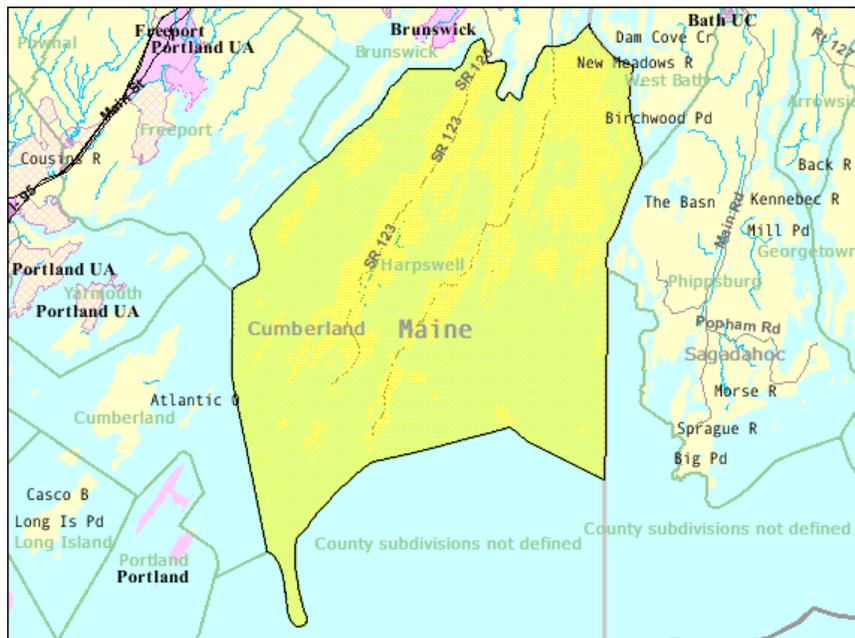
HARPSWELL, ME¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional Orientation

The town of Harpswell, Maine is located in Cumberland County on Casco Bay. The town of Harpswell is divided into a series of islands and peninsulas separated by bays, including Bailey Island, Great Island, and Orr Island. The town divided into five main villages: Cundy's Harbor, Harpswell, South Harpswell, Bailey Island and Orr's Island. (Note: Bailey Island and Cundy's Harbor are also profiled separately.)



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

Historical/Background

The town of Harpswell is made up of a ten-mile peninsula extending into Casco Bay, consisting of three large islands, Bailey Island, Orr Island, and Great (Sebascodegan) Island, and over 200 small islands, creating over 216 miles of coastline for the town. The town is geographically spread out, and is divided into five main villages: Cundy's Harbor, Harpswell, South Harpswell, Bailey Island and Orr's Island. Cundy's Harbor is the oldest lobstering community in Maine (TPL 2005). Harpswell was purchased from the Native Americans in 1659 and settled by Europeans; however, by 1714 only two settlers remained, after the rest

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."

were driven off by Indian raids. Harpswell was incorporated as a town in 1758, under what was then the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Many tall ships, sloops, and schooners were built here during the 1800s, and fishing has been an important economic activity for the town for centuries. Harpswell has served as a summer retreat for many famous artists and writers throughout the years, including Harriett Beecher Stowe and Edna St. Vincent Millay (HBA 2005).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Harpswell had a total population of 5,239, up from the reported population of 5,012 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this total, 50.9% were female and 49.1% were male. The median age for Harpswell in the year 2000 was 45.3 years and 78.4% of the population was 21 years or older while 23.1% of the population was 62 or older.

The most populous age bracket in Harpswell was between the ages of 50-59, followed closely by the 40-49 age bracket (Figure 1). There were also a number of residents aged 60-69, indicative of a slightly aging population. Like many similar communities, Harpswell shows a decline in population for residents between 20-29 years of age, as young people leave to go to college or in search of employment elsewhere.

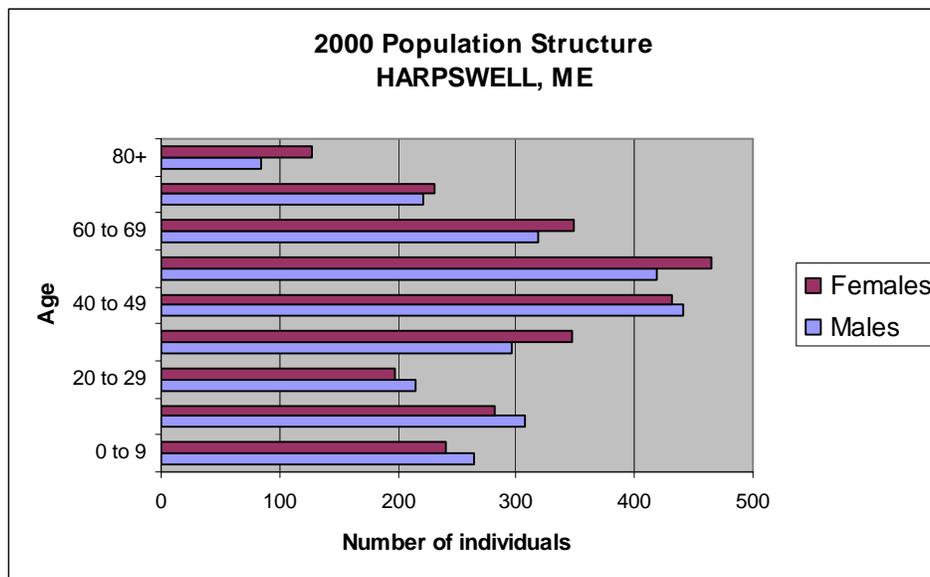


Figure 1. Harpswell's population structure by sex in 2000

The majority of the population of Harpswell in 2000 was white (97.8%), with 0.3% black or African American, 0.6% Native American, 0.7% Asian, and no residents Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 1.3% of the total population identified themselves as

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 Harpswell town

Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their heritage to a number of different ancestries including: English (26.5%), Irish (12.9%), French (10.3%), Scottish (7.8%), and French (7.1%). With regard to region of birth, 54.3% were born in Maine, 40.1% were born in a different state, and 4.2% were born outside of the US (including 1.3% who were not United States citizens).

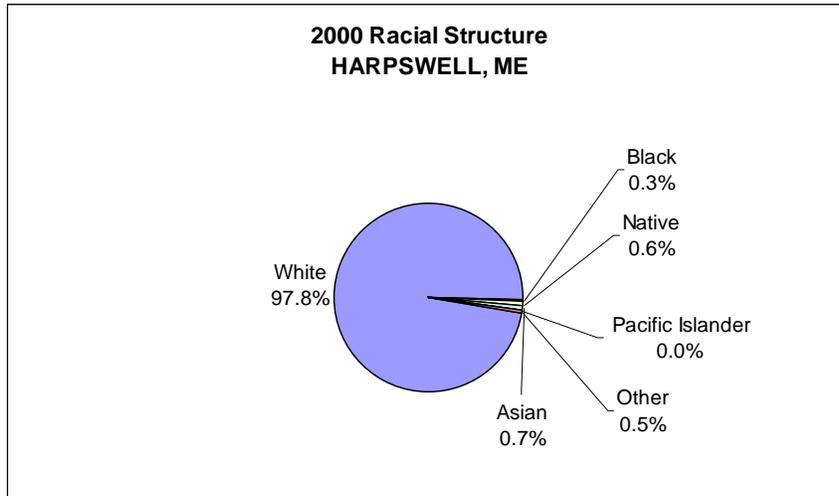


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

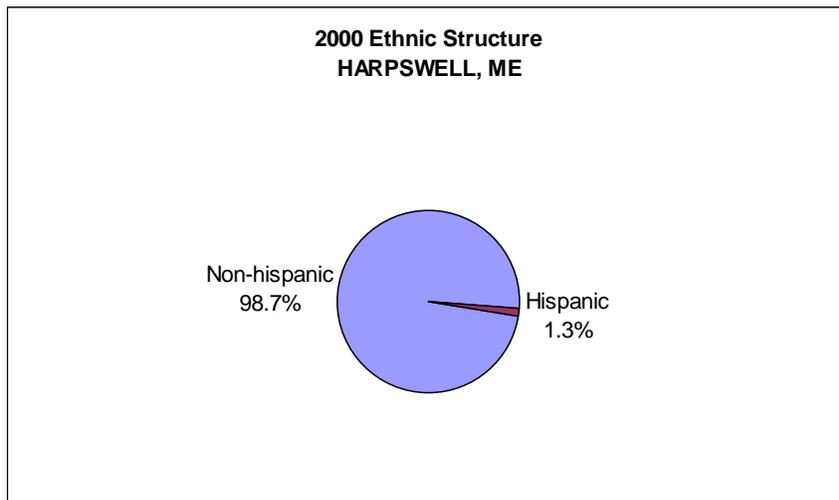


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 93.1% of the population 5 years old and older in 2000, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 6.9% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 2.1% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 88.9% were high school graduates or higher, and 42.2% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.9% did not reach ninth grade, 7.2% attended some high school but did not graduate, 23.8% completed high school, 16.6% had some college with no degree, 6.3% received an associate’s degree, 24.3% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 17.9% received a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through 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 Cumberland County was Catholic with 31 congregations and 61,495 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were the United Church of Christ (33 with 10,160 adherents), United Methodist Church (26 with 5,590 adherents), Jewish (4 with 6,000 adherents) and the Episcopal Church (11 with 4,577 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 24.6% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

Recently Holbrook's Wharf in Cundy's Harbor, the center of the oldest lobstering community in Maine, was put up for sale. A group called the Holbrook Community Foundation partnered with The Trust for Public Land to raise the \$1.5 million necessary to preserve this working commercial wharf and historical landmark. They successfully purchased the wharf and will ensure its protection as part of the working waterfront (HCF 2007). Cundy's Harbor is fortunate to have lost little waterfront access, but this danger still exists here. Like many similar communities in Maine, the working waterfront also faces the problems of escalating land values and property taxes, and increased user conflicts among fishing and non-fishing uses. The town of Harpswell has implemented exclusive zoning for commercial fishing activities, which may mitigate this threat somewhat (Coxe et al. 2004).

In the fall of 2005, there were a rash of lobster thefts around Harpswell, which was blamed on desperation of lobstermen brought on by a slower season and lower catch than usual (Fahrenthold 2005).

In 2006, the State of Maine passed the Working Waterfront Tax Law, to address the problem of working waterfront property being heavily taxed based on its projected market value. The goal of this tax is "to encourage the preservation of working waterfront land and to prevent the conversion of working waterfront land to other uses as the result of economic pressures caused by the assessment of that land for purposes of property taxation." The law requires the tax assessor to value the property based on what it is worth as working waterfront land, rather than what its market value would be if it were sold and converted to residential or other uses (State of Maine 2005).

Cultural attributes

The annual Harpswell Festival by the Bay is an old-fashioned celebration of the town, with music and a parade. The Festival has an emphasis on the participation and public awareness of the town's non-profit organizations, businesses, artists, and artisans. In 2005 the festival featured a quahog demonstration and a tidal pool touch tank among other events (Harpswell Festival 2006). Cundy's Harbor has its own celebration, Cundy's Harbor Day, which features a parade and lobster dinner (Ganong 2005).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

There are several major employers within a relatively short drive of Harpswell. Bath Iron Works, in Bath, is one of the nation's top ten defense contractors and Maine's largest employer, with 8,500 employees. The Naval Air Station Brunswick, located in neighboring Brunswick, is the city's second largest employer, with 4,710 civilian and military personnel, and provides over \$211 million to the local economy. Bowdoin College, also in Brunswick,

employs a number of people in the area (Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber 2005). Many of the residents also commute to jobs in Portland.

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 59.5% (2,582 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 1.3% were unemployed, 0.8% were in the armed forces, and 57.4% were employed.

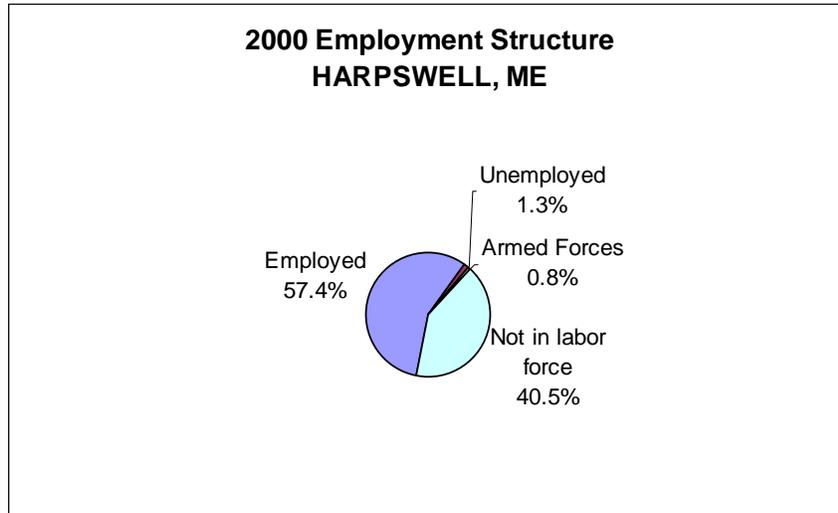


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 203 positions or 8.1% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 582 positions or 23.4% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (21.6%), retail trade (12.9%), construction (10.6%) and manufacturing (10.0%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Harpswell in 2000 was \$40,611 (up 33.4% from \$33,298 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$30,433. For full-time year round workers, men made approximately 13.9% more per year than women.

The average family in Harpswell consisted of 2.69 persons. With respect to poverty, 3.3% of families (up from 3.0% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 5.6% 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 2000a). In 2000, 30.8% of families in 2000 earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000 Harpswell had a total of 3,701 housing units, of which 63.2% were occupied and 87.7% were detached one-unit homes. Just over one quarter (27.7%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 7.2% of the total housing units; 89.4% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$162,500. Of vacant housing units, 89.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 21.2% were renter occupied.

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.

Government

Harpswell is governed by a Town Meeting form of government, as well as a board of three Selectmen, elected to three-year terms. The town was incorporated in 1758 (State of Maine 2004). The town offices are located on Great Island (Town of Harpswell 2006).

Fishery involvement in government

Harpswell has more shoreline than any other municipality in Maine, so many of the town's municipal activities relate to the use of the coast, including the management of harbors, the regulation of shellfishing, the placement of moorings, and other relevant activities. The town has a Harbor and Waterfront Committee, a Marine Resources Committee, and a Marine Resources Ordinance, as well as a Shellfish Conservation Warden and a harbor master (Town of Harpswell 2006). The town has also been very active in preserving its working waterfronts, and has implemented exclusive zoning for the commercial fishing industry along the waterfront (Coxe et al. 2004).

Institutional

Fishing associations

The Maine Fishermen's Cooperative Association is located in Cundy's Harbor (Stevenson 2005). The Association "was initiated in the late 1960s and has a long-standing history of being involved in critical groundfish issues" (Commercial Fisheries News 2003).

The [Maine Lobstermen's Association](#) (MLA) was founded in 1954, and works to protect the lobster resource and the lobstermen's way of life. The association was founded by lobstermen with a goal of empowering Maine's lobster industry by representing lobstermen with a united front. The MLA is the largest commercial fishing industry group on the east coast, and represents the interests of 1200 lobstermen.

Fishery assistance centers

The Maine Fishermen's Wives Association is based in Cundy Harbor (MLA 2007). They "advocate for the seafood industry, providing educational programs for schools and communities, and hold a seat on the Maine Fisherman's Forum Board" (Gulf of Maine Times 1997).

The Working Waterfront Coalition is a statewide collaboration of various industry associations, non-profits, and government agencies with the goal to support Maine's working waterfronts. The [Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program](#) (WWAPP), administered by the Department of Marine Resources, provides money to applicants such as municipalities, fishing co-ops, private commercial fisheries businesses and more, ranging from \$7,000 to \$475,000. The intention of the program is to preserve commercial fisheries working waterfronts and to help secure property for these businesses. As of December 2007, the \$2 million pilot program has reportedly supported over 400 jobs, 194 boats, and assured access to clam flats, parking, wharfage and fisheries in six towns (Maine DMR 2005). Voters [approved an additional \\$3 million](#) to continue the program in 2007.

Other fishing related organizations

The Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT) is working to preserve public access to the waterfront, and to protect open space in Harpswell, and its mission is "to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of Harpswell through education, conservation, and land owner assistance" (HHLT 2006).

The [Maine Fishermen's Forum](#) was founded in 1976, and its goal is to provide continuous opportunities to educate the public and the fishing industry about marine resource issues and fisheries, as well as to provide a platform for discussion and decision making. The Forum also holds an annual three day event which focuses awareness on issues that affect the commercial fishing industry (Maine Fishermen's Forum 2007).

Physical

Harpswell is made up of a long peninsula and over 200 islands, creating a number of coves and harbors throughout the town. Route 24 is the major road running through the town, joining up with Route 1, which runs through Bath, Brunswick, and all along the Maine coast. Harpswell is about 10 miles from Brunswick, 14 miles from Bath, and 36 miles from Portland. The closest airport is the Portland International Jetport (MapQuest 2006). Both [Concord Trailways](#) and [Greyhound](#) operate bus services that stop in Bath and Brunswick. [Vermont Transit](#) also has buses running from Brunswick. [Amtrak](#) offers train service from Portland to Boston and the rest of the eastern seaboard.

Harpswell has a number of deep water harbors; Cundy's Harbor and Mackerel Cove (on Bailey Island) are two harbors/communities where most of the working fishing boats can be found (Curtis Memorial Library 2005). There are a total of nine commercial wharves in Cundy's Harbor, including Holbrook's, Hawke's, and the Cundy's Harbor Wharf, where the co-op is based. Many residences also have private docks used in small commercial fishing operations (Coxe et al. 2004). Holbrook's Wharf in Cundy's Harbor has a restaurant, general store, and post office (TPL 2005). There is a town landing with a boat ramp off Holbrook Street in Cundy's Harbor (Coxe 2004). Finestkind Boatyard is located in Basin Cove, Harpswell (Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber 2005). [Great Island Boat Yard](#) can be found on Great Island, which also offers a number of moorings and slips, primarily for recreational vessels. The [Dolphin Marina](#) in South Harpswell has a boat launch, dock service, and fuel, ice, and water.

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁶

Commercial

Much of the commercial fishing industry is in Cundy's Harbor (Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber 2005); there is likely to be some interdependence among Cundy's Harbor, Bailey Island, and the rest of Harpswell. The nine commercial wharves here include Cundy's Harbor, Holbrook's, Hawkes, Mill's Ledge Seafood, Watson's, and Oakhurst Island; all of these offer loading and unloading, ice, and docking, and some also have fuel facilities. These businesses all serve as seafood wholesalers as well to sell the catch. Some nearby businesses

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.

offer bait (Coxe et al. 2004). A small number of commercial vessels are also present in South Harpswell (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Like many other fishing communities in Maine, lobster is by far the most valuable species landed in Harpswell, followed species in the “other” category (Table 1). However, lobster dominates the landings values for the town. Harpswell has a large number of home ported vessels, which increased over the ten-year period to a high of 76 in 2006. There are an even larger number of vessel owners present in Harpswell, with a high in 2006 of 85 vessels (Table 2).

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Other ⁷	2
Largemesh Groundfish ⁸	3
Monkfish	4
Herring	5
Scallop	6
Dogfish	7
Skate	8
Smallmesh Groundfish ⁹	9

(Note: Only rank value is provided because value information is confidential in ports with fewer than three vessels or fewer than three dealers, or where one dealer predominates in a particular species and would therefore be identifiable.)

Vessels by Year¹⁰

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	46	30
1998	46	32
1999	51	41
2000	52	59
2001	53	64
2002	59	74
2003	59	73
2004	71	80
2005	73	82
2006	76	85

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹¹)

⁷ “Other” species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

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

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

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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

The town of Harpswell has both commercial and recreational shellfishing managed through the Marine Resources Committee (Town of Harpswell 2006). Captain Jay McGowen's Sport Fishing Charters leave from Orr Island in Harpswell (Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber 2005).

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

The Holbrook Community Foundation, which recently purchased Holbrook's Wharf, has plans to maintain the restaurant and make necessary repairs to the wharf, in addition to leasing space on the wharf to commercial fishing-related businesses. They intend the wharf to be a self-sustaining business (HCF 2007). Harpswell is currently in the process of implementing a comprehensive plan for the town which will encourage smarter growth within the town by focusing development within designated village areas (HBA 2005).

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