

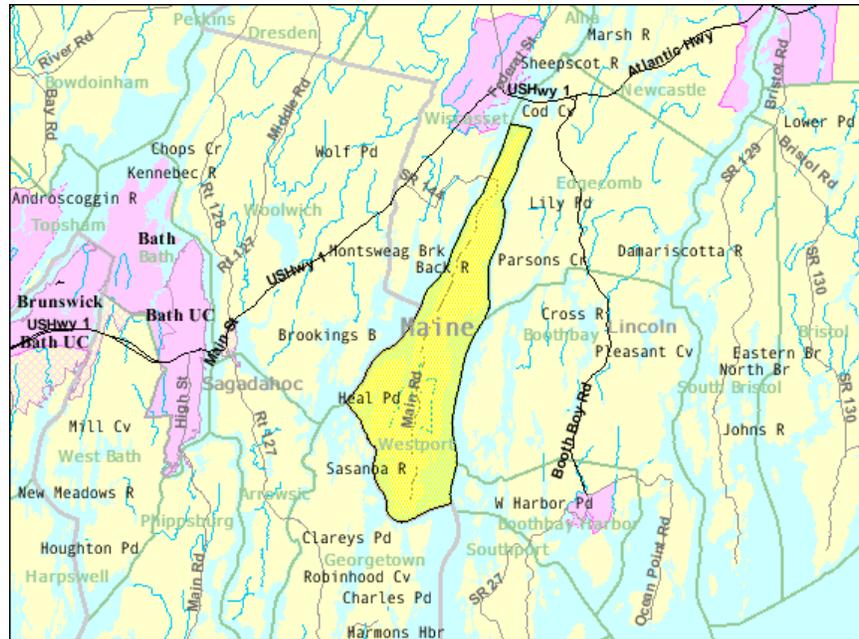
WESTPORT (ISLAND), ME¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional Orientation

The town of Westport Island (43.90° N, 69.70° W) is a town in Lincoln County in southeastern Maine (Westport Island 2004). It is located in the middle of the Sheepscot River and Booth Bay is to the east of the island.



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

Historical/Background

Westport is believed to have been visited by European explorers and fishers before the 17th century. Westport Island is actually called Jeremy Squam Island and reported to be purchased by John Richards in 1649. It was later bought by George Davie in 1734 as part of a larger purchase of Wiscasset from the Abnaki Tribe, part of the Algonquin Nation. Indian Wars eliminated all the settlements in the area.

In 1750, the first permanent settlement and settlers arrived. The Wiscasset Proprietors an investment group from Boston had purchased Jeremy Squam from Davie's granddaughter while at the same time the Kennebec Proprietors had laid claim to it as well. Litigation determined the Kennebec Proprietors the rightful owners. The group subsequently separated the island into

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."

thirty four 100 acre lots, which settlers were able to buy, although there were several squatters on the land already. Although Westport was considered to be primarily a farming community, fishing was also prominent. As one citizen was known for saying, “They fished and farmed - did both and neither.” In 1815 because Maine was still part of Massachusetts, property holders were made to pay 7½ cents per acre for their land. In the 1800s, Westport was involved in the ice industry with two ice ponds located on the island. The island was accessible by steamboat with two landings on the island. Today the island is accessible by bridge (Westport Island, no date). The town was incorporated in 1828 (State of Maine 2004). The name was changed from Westport to Westport Island by referendum in 2002 (Boynton 2002a).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Westport had a total population of 745, up 13.1% from the reported population of 659 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 49.5% were males and 50.5% were females. The median age was 44.8 years and 76.1% of the population was 21 years or older while 19.9% was 62 or older.

The age structure in Westport (see Figure 1) shows a severe drop in the population between the ages of 20-29, but almost doubles in the 40-49 age grouping. This may indicate an out-migration after high school, followed by a return home in the middle years. It is also interesting to note that females significantly outnumber males for the age groups 10-19 and 30-39, but that males outnumber females for every age group over 40, including in the older age groups in which females usually predominate.

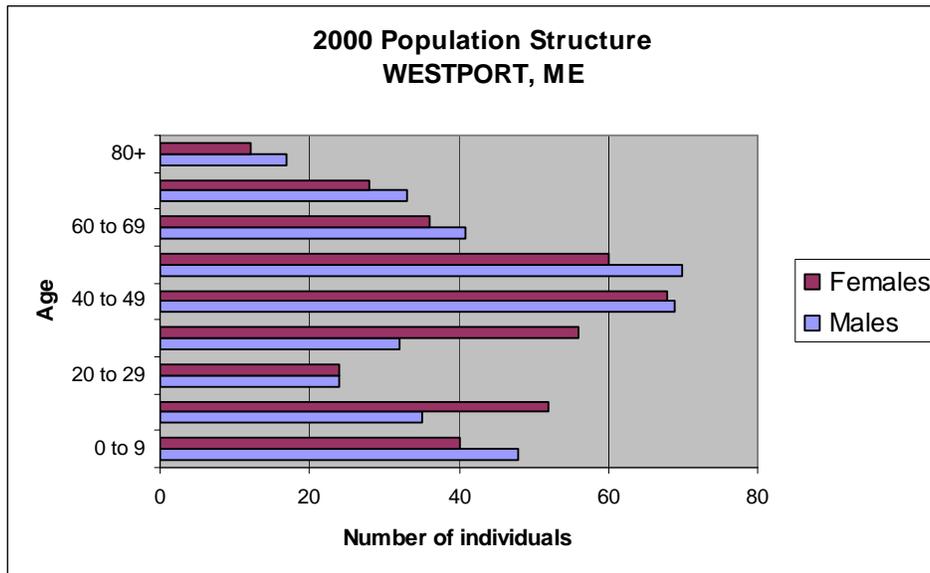


Figure 1. Westport’s population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (99.2%), with 0.1% black or African American, none Asian, 0.7% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). None of

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 U.S. Census: American Factfinder 2000 <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>; census data used are for Westport town; (accessed July 13, 2007)

the population identified themselves as Hispanics/Latinos (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (32.6%), Irish (15.2%), German (11.0%), and Scottish (8.0%). With regard to region of birth, 55.7% were born in Maine, 41.0% were born in a different state, and 3.1% were born outside of the United States (including 1.1% were not US citizens).

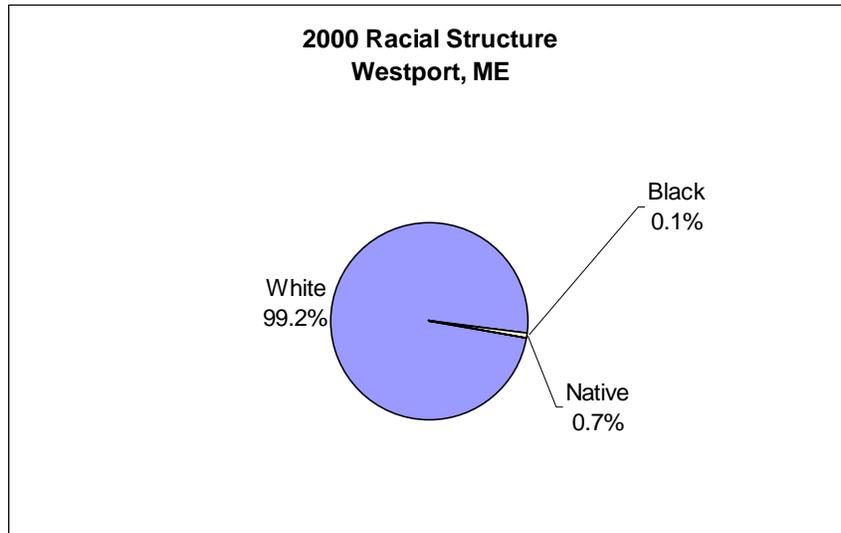


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

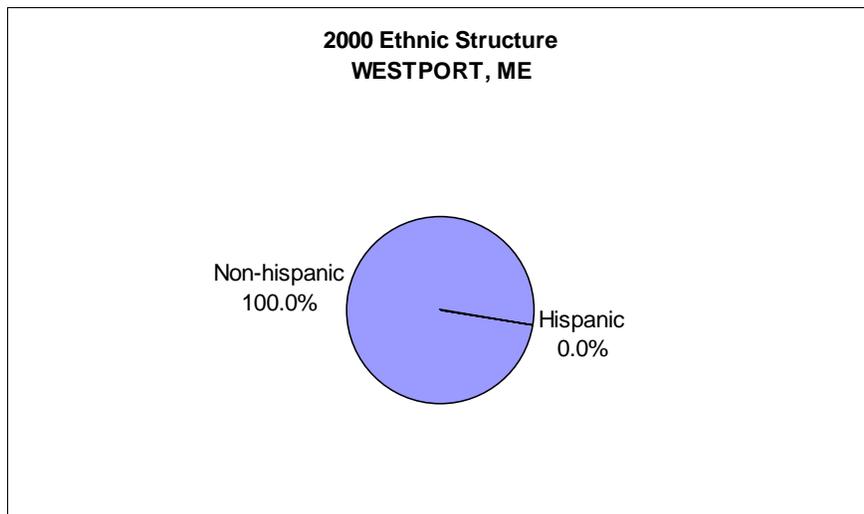


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 97.9% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 2.1% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 0.6% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 85.0% were high school graduates or higher and 25.0% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.5% did not reach ninth grade, 11.5% attended some high school but did not graduate, 33.1% completed high school, 16.8% had some college with no degree, 10.2% received an associate’s degree, 15.0% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 10.0% received 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 Lincoln County was the United Church of Christ with 8 congregations and 1,104 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were United Methodist Church (8 with 1,100 adherents), American Baptist USA (7 with 775 adherents), Episcopal Church (4 with 952 adherents), and Catholic (3 with 2,730 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 55.0% from 1990. Lincoln County also has a very high population of individuals with unclaimed religious views (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

The Sheepscot River, on which Westport borders, has high levels of phosphorous and a number of dead zones (Martin 2006). In 2003, a company called Dragon Cement planned to open a plant in Wiscasset and would have brought the cement up the river by barge; this would have forced lobstermen to remove 4,000 – 5,000 traps from the river (Gibbs 2003). An organization called Stewards of the Sheepscot, formed around this issue, successfully fought the location of the cement facility here.

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

Westport is a small town and does not have many cultural venues in the town. [Lincoln County Community Theater](#) is located in near by Damariscotta. There are several artists living in Westport and many galleries throughout Westport and Lincoln County (MAC 2002).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

Fishing is the primary form of employment for residents along with Bath Iron Works, a large shipyard. Tourism is also a major source of income for the town (Westport Island, no date).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 62.0% (362 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 4.5% were unemployed, 0.5% were in the Armed Forces, and 57.0% were employed.

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

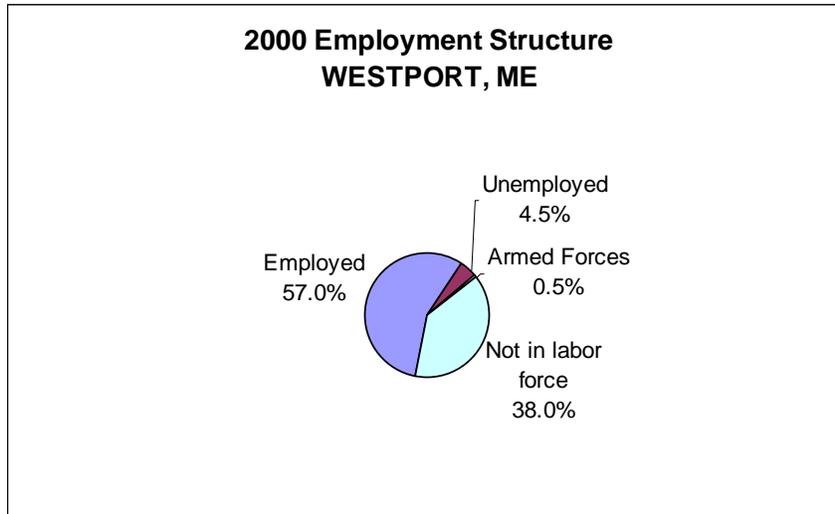


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 13 positions or 3.9% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 56 positions or 16.8% of jobs. Retail trade (16.5%), manufacturing (16.2%), educational, health and social services (12.6%), and professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (12.0%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Westport was \$39,010 (up 16.4% from \$33,500 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$21,623. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately \$4,779 more per year than females.

The average family in Westport consisted of 2.74 persons. With respect to poverty, 5.2% of families (up from 0% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 6.6% of individuals earn 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 2000a]). In 2000, 33.1% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Westport had a total of 510 housing units of which 62.2% were occupied and 86.3% were detached one unit homes. Just over one quarter (24.7%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes and boats accounted for 12% of 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 \$144,600. Of vacant housing units, 34.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 11.0% were renter occupied.

Government

Westport is run by a group of elected officials and committees which includes three selectmen (Westport Island, no date).

Fishery involvement in government

The town of Westport has both a Harbor Committee and a Shellfish committee who both meet monthly, as well as a harbormaster (Westport Island, no date).

Institutional

Fishing associations

The North End Lobster Co-op was started in 2002 by a group of 16 fishermen. With the help of Coastal Enterprises who financed the project, they were able to purchase a 3.75 acre property on the waterfront which included room for boat storage in the winter. The co-op has members from Woolwich, Wiscasset, Westport Island, Edgecomb, and Whitefield (Boynton 2002).

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.

Fishing assistance centers

Coastal Enterprises, Inc., located in neighboring Wiscasset, is a community development corporation focusing primarily on natural resources and small business ventures in rural Maine. The organization has both fisheries and working waterfront projects. Their work involves providing loans to fishermen and to marine infrastructure projects, promoting environmental stewardship in the fishing sector, preserving access for working boats, engaging fishermen and women in research projects, and other programs (CEI 2005).

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](#), 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 institutions

The [Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association](#) is a non-profit land trust and advocacy organization working to protect the Sheepscot River watershed, which includes Westport. The Stewards of the Sheepscot is a community-based organization dedicated to promoting the sustainable growth of the Sheepscot River basin while protecting the health and welfare of the ecosystem and the communities located here (Reinhardt 2005).

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.

Physical

The town of Westport encompasses the island of Westport (once call Jeremy Squam Island). The island is 11 miles long and is located on the Sheepscot and Back Rivers (Westport

Island, no date). The main road that runs through Westport is route 144 (Westport Island, no date). It is located 50 miles northeast of Portland and 22 miles from Boothbay Harbor by car, 25 miles from Brunswick, and 30 miles from Harpswell. There is one bridge that connects Westport to the mainland which was built in 1972 (MapQuest 2006).

Westport Island Boatyard is located in Westport and offers a range of services, repairs (Maine Harbors 2007).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁶

Commercial

Lobster is the main species harvested but others include, crabs, ground fish, scallops, shrimp, clams, mussels, quahogs, and bloodworm. All of these are sold at local fish markets. The North End Lobster Co-Op is a recently formed cooperative which purchased a 3.75 acre piece of land on Westport Island with financial assistance from Coastal Enterprises. Nineteen lobster boats now use the area for access (CEI 2005). The co-op has a truck arrives daily from a seafood wholesaler in Portland that purchases their catch (Boynton 2002).

Landings were not reported at the port level for Westport until 2001. The highest landings were in 2004 when they were just under \$1 million; 2001 and 2002 had a relatively low level of landings. Lobster landings made up the largest catch percentage, and the value of lobster landings in 2006 was close to double the average landings value for 2001-2006 (see Table 1). The 2003 and 2004 landings seem to reflect the new co-op which opened in 2002. The level of home port fishing was over \$1 million from 2000-2004, and slightly under \$1 million in 2005 and 2006, but very low from 1997-1999 (see Table 2). In spite of the report of 19 vessels home ported in Westport, just 5 were reported in most years here.

Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value by Federally Managed Groups of Landings in Westport

| | Average from 2001-2006 | 2006 only |
|---|------------------------|-----------|
| Lobster | 546,053 | 759,943 |
| Other⁷ | 28,340 | 30,842 |
| Largemesh Groundfish⁸ | 179 | 0 |
| Monkfish | 17 | 0 |
| Skate | 2 | 0 |

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

⁷ "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

Vessels by Year⁹

Table 2. All columns represent Federal Vessels Permits or Landings Value combined between 199-2006

| Year | # Vessels (home ported) | # Vessels (owner's city) | Level of fishing home port (\$) | Level of fishing landed port (\$) |
|------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1997 | 7 | 8 | 23,195 | NOT RECORDED |
| 1998 | 4 | 5 | 3,759 | NOT RECORDED |
| 1999 | 4 | 5 | 4,673 | NOT RECORDED |
| 2000 | 6 | 5 | 1,249,226 | NOT RECORDED |
| 2001 | 5 | 5 | 1,142,505 | 60,485 |
| 2002 | 5 | 6 | 1,643,634 | 22,403 |
| 2003 | 5 | 5 | 1,221,350 | 752,457 |
| 2004 | 5 | 5 | 1,331,678 | 933,378 |
| 2005 | 5 | 5 | 845,578 | 888,040 |
| 2006 | 8 | 7 | 881,658 | 790,785 |

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁰

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 several charter fishing and guide boat services available in Westport. The two listed on the official town website are Maine Saltwater Guide Service and True North Guide Service (Westport Island, no date). [Maine Saltwater Guide Service](#) has both sail and engine powered boats and offers a variety of trip lengths. True North Guide Service specializes in striped bass and bluefish (Westport Island, no date).

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

Information about plans for the future in Westport is unavailable through secondary data collection.

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⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

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