

# KILL DEVIL HILLS, NC<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

Kill Devil Hills (36.03°N, 75.67°W) is located on the Outer Banks, in Dare County in the state of North Carolina. It is situated with Roanoke Sound/Buzzard Bay on its south end border with Kitty Hawk Bay to the north, and the Atlantic Ocean to the East. It is just south of Kitty Hawk, 50 miles from Elizabeth City, and 215 miles from Raleigh (MapQuest 2006). Kill Devil Hills has 9.82 square miles of land and 0.11 square miles of water surface (USGS 2008).



Map 1. Location of Kill Devil Hills, NC (US Census Bureau 2000a)

#### Historical/Background

Kill Devil Hills is the Outer Banks' oldest beach area township, incorporated in 1953 (Kill Devil Hills 2006). It is named after Kill Devil Hill, one of the largest dunes in the area, but there are many stories telling where Kill Devil Hill got its name. One story is that it is named after a brand of rum, Kill Devil, which washed ashore from shipwrecks. Another, more formal story, is that the area is home to a species of bird known by the early natives as killdeer (ICW-NET 2008). Although Kitty Hawk is credited with having the Wright Brothers' first flight, it actually took place 4 miles south of the town, off of Kill Devil Hill (ICW-NET 2006). Like

<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)."

other communities on the Outer Banks, one of its primary industries is tourism (ICW-NET 2006).

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

According to Census 2000 data (US Census 2000), Kill Devil Hills had a total population of 5,897, up 39.1% from the reported population of 4,238 in 1990 (US Census 1990). Of this 2000 total, 51.2% were males and 48.8% were females. The median age was 36.7 years and 76.5% of the population was 21 years or older while 12.9% was 62 or older.

The age structure for Kill Devil Hills (Figure 1) shows that the community has a somewhat young population, with the greatest numbers of both males and females in the 30-39 age category. The number of males noticeably exceeds the number of females in the 20-29 age range, suggesting a greater portion of the female population leaves during their 20s, with some returning or new females moving to Kill Devil Hills in their 30s and older.

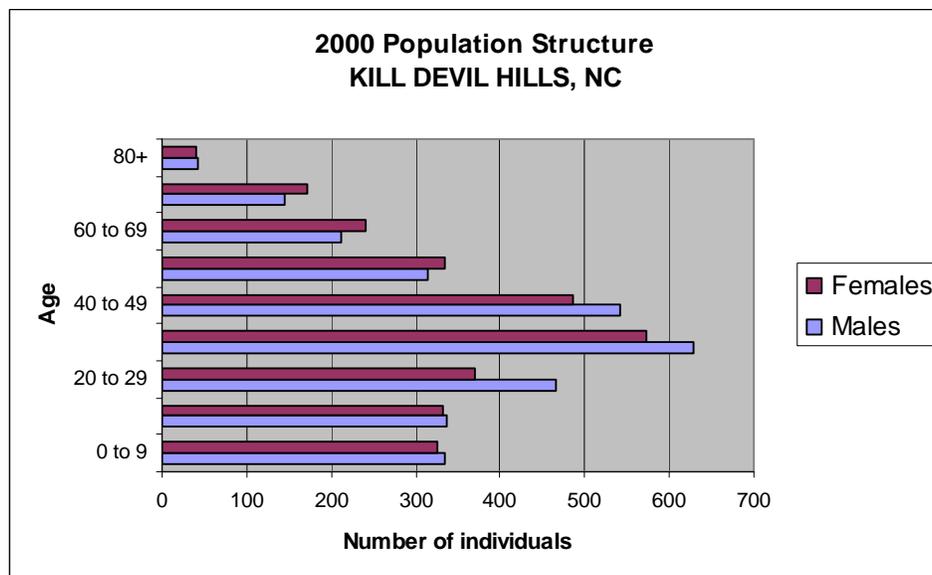


Figure 1. Kill Devil Hills' population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (97.4%), with 0.6% of residents black or African American, 0.6% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 3.0% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (19.3%), German (16.1%), and Irish (12.0%). With regard to region of birth, 24.6% were born in North Carolina, 71.2% were born in a different state and 3.3% were born outside of the U.S. (including 1.9% who were not United States citizens).

<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.

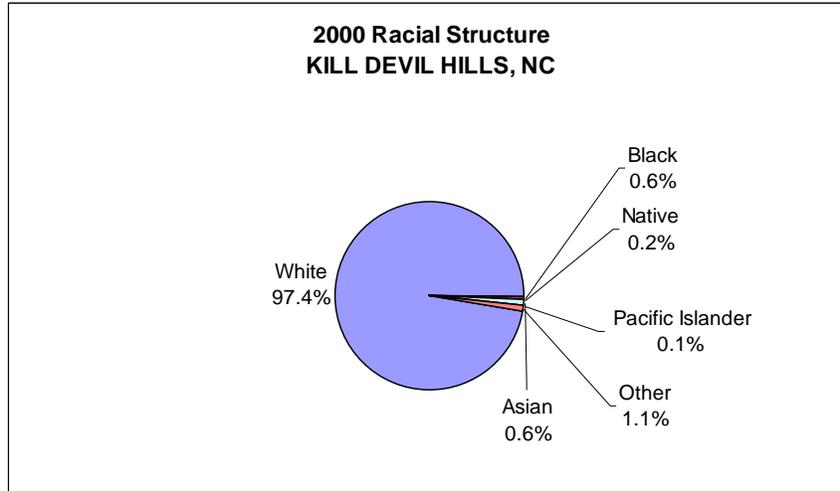


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

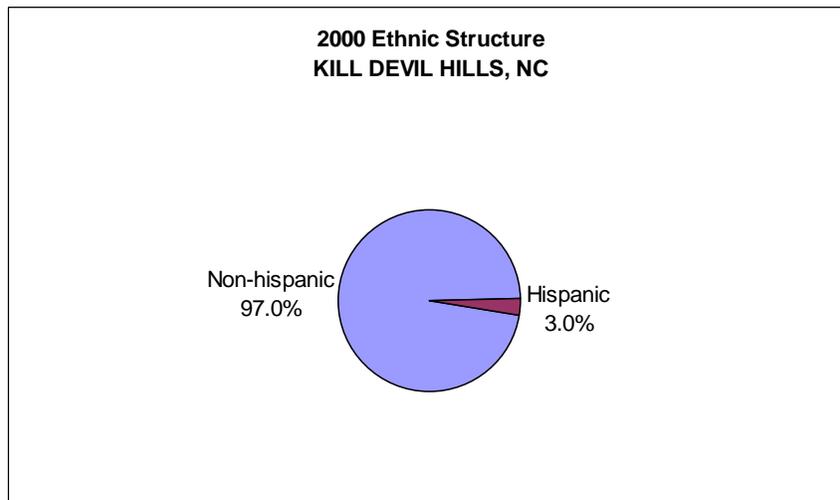


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 94.9% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 5.1% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and 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, 91.3% were high school graduates or higher and 27.0% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 1.7% did not reach ninth grade, 7.0% attended some high school but did not graduate, 26.7% completed high school, 28.8% had some college with no degree, 8.8% received an associate's degree, 19.6% earned a bachelor's degree, and 7.4% received a 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 Dare County was the United Methodist Church with 14 congregations and 4,686 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were the Catholic Church (4 with 2,097 adherents), Southern Baptist Convention (6 with 1,783 adherents), and the Assemblies of God (8 with 1,184 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 36.4% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

## **Issues/Processes**

Like many other areas on the Outer Banks, a major concern in Dare County is beach erosion. There has been a great debate in Dare County between people representing business interests which favor beach nourishment and self described “Beach Huggers” who say that “beach nourishment would destroy the Outer Banks beaches and unfairly burden people who don't own beachfront homes” (Kozak 2005). The county Board of Commissioners endorsed a plan to pump sand on the shoreline from Kitty Hawk to Nags Head, costing \$72 million. Proponents of the plan said in a newspaper ad that eroded beaches in Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hills, and Nags Head have “already cost about \$38 million a year, or about 6.5 percent of Dare County's money from tourism” and said “the county will lose \$140 million in tourist revenue, 250 businesses and 3,000 jobs” if nothing is done (Allegood 2004). Ray Midgett, spokesperson for Outer Banks BeachHuggers, said that the sand, which “will come from the ocean floor, is not good for people, birds or sea life because it is not like the natural sand” (Allegood 2004). However, it was noted that great care was taken to match the new sand to the existing sand.<sup>4</sup>

In April 2005, county commissioners voted 5-2 to institute a 1 percent increase on sales tax to finance the nourishment program bringing it to 8 percent, the highest sales tax in North Carolina. It would provide \$12 million a year for 8 years. However, on February 7, 2006, Dare County voters overwhelmingly voted (5,363 to 1,531) to remove the 1 percent tax (Dare County 2006).

Shrimp fishermen along the North Carolina coast have suffered because of decreasing prices of shrimp, resulting from an increase of foreign farmed shrimp on the market. North Carolina shrimp fishermen are working to promote their wild-caught shrimp to create a niche market and higher prices for their product (NCSG 2005). The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries was discussing minimum size limits for the shrimp that could be taken by trawlers, noting that foreign imports have cornered the market on small shrimp (Smith 2005). Crab fishermen along North Carolinas eastern coast have also seen an increase in competition from the global market, with an influx of imported crab meat from around the world. Many local Crab processors are unable to compete and are losing profit (NCSG 2002).

## **Cultural attributes**

[The Wright Brothers National Memorial](#) is located in Kill Devil Hills. The memorial contains a replica of the original [Wright Flyer](#) as well as other historic items from the First Flight.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

A study from American City Business Journals ranks Kill Devil Hills as second on the list of the best small-business markets in the United States among cities with fewer than 100,000 people (Nicholes 2005). A small business is defined as any company that has fewer than 100 employees (Baysden 2005). Like other areas on the Outer Banks, tourism continues to be a driving force in the economy. From July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005, \$253,990,644 was collected in Dare County Occupancy Tax Receipts (Kleckley 2006).

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<sup>4</sup> Community Review Comments, Damon Tatum, commercial fishermen in KDH, 505 Copley Drive Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948, October 26, 2007

According to the U.S. Census 2000<sup>5</sup>, 76.6% (3,622 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 3.1% were unemployed, 0.3% were in the Armed Forces, and 73.2% were employed.

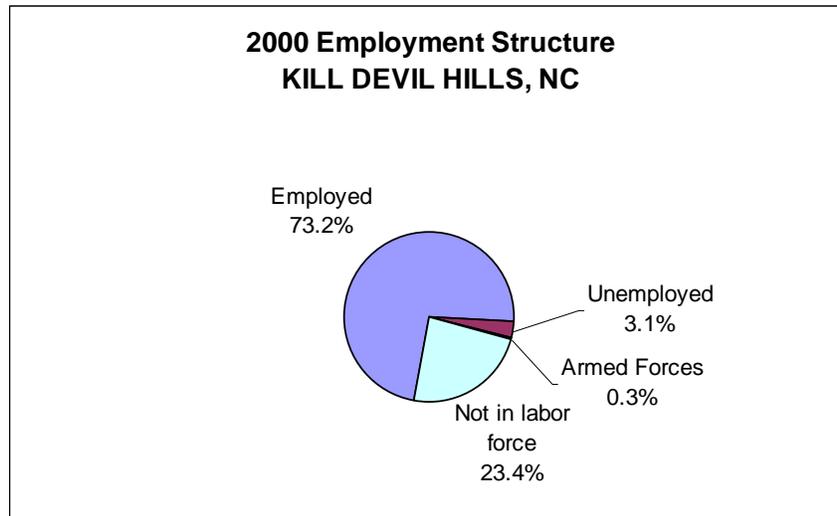


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 59 positions or 1.7% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 563 positions or 16.3% of jobs. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (19.2), retail trade (17.0%), and construction (16.0%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Kill Devil Hills was \$39,713 (up 50.5% from \$26,379 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$20,679. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 35.4% more per year than females.

The average family in Kill Devil Hills consisted of 2.77 persons. With respect to poverty, 5.2% of families (up slightly from 4.5% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 8.3% 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 2000b]. In 2000, 35.8% of all families of any size earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Kill Devil Hills had a total of 5,302 housing units, of which 48.8% were occupied and 82.9% were detached one unit homes. Only a very small number (0.3%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 2.2% of the total housing units; 97.1% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$104,500. Of vacant housing units, 49.2% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 32.6% were renter occupied.

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

## **Government**

The governing board of Kill Devil Hills is the board of commissioners which consists of a mayor and four commissioners. The mayor is elected to a two year term while the commissioners are elected to a four year term (Town of Kill Devil Hills 2006).

### *Fishery involvement in the government*

Information on fishery involvement in the government in Kill Devil Hills is unavailable through secondary data collection. However, there is a North Carolina Sea Grant office in nearby Manteo and the Division of Marine Fisheries has an office in Wanchese, NC.<sup>6</sup>

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

The NC Beach Buggy Association is an organization concerned with surf fishing and has members in Kill Devil Hills.<sup>7</sup>

[The North Carolina Fisheries Association](#) (NCFA) has been supporting fishing families since 1952, with the goal “to celebrate and preserve commercial fishing families, heritage, and seafood” in North Carolina. This is achieved through lobbying federal, state, and local legislators and through public awareness projects.

### *Fishing assistance centers*

The College of the Albemarle in Manteo offers degrees in various marine trades.<sup>8</sup> The Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAA) program has provided business education to shrimpers in the state to assist them in recent changes in the market of shrimp, and also provided some training to shrimpers to exit the business if they chose (NCSG 2005).

### *Other fishing related organizations*

Information on other fishing related organizations in Kill Devil Hills is unavailable through secondary data collection.

## **Physical**

The community of Kill Devil Hills is part of the Outer Banks on both Roanoke Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. Nags Head is located along US 158 about 10 miles north of where US 64 becomes 158. From the town, it is about 100 miles west to Williamston and about 50 miles west to Elizabeth City. The nearest airport is located about 15 miles away in Manteo (MapQuest nd). There is one small, shallow boat launch in Kill Devil Hills off Dock Street.<sup>9</sup> The area has a two ramp boat launch and parking for trailers. The Hayman Street estuarine access is a southside pier used by many residents for crabbing and fishing.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Community Review Comments, Damon Tatum, commercial fishermen in KDH, 505 Copley Drive Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948, October 26, 2007

<sup>7</sup> Community Review Comments, Damon Tatum, commercial fishermen in KDH, 505 Copley Drive Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948, October 26, 2007

<sup>8</sup> Community Review Comments, Damon Tatum, commercial fishermen in KDH, 505 Copley Drive Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948, October 26, 2007

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication, Alma Clarke, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, One Visitors Center Circle, Manteo, NC 27954, June 16, 2006

<sup>10</sup> Community Review Comments, Mary Quidley, Kill Devil Hills Town Clerk, 102 Town Hall Drive, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27954, September 12, 2007

## INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>11</sup>

### Commercial

Kill Devil Hills is primarily a vacation destination, with the primary industry being tourism. Commercial fishing is present, but it does not seem to play a significant role in the economy. From 1997-2006 the vessels home ported fluctuated from 0-3 boats. The vessels (owner's city) also fluctuated from 2-6. The level of fishing home port revenue also fluctuated over the ten year time period and the values were generally low for a community of this size (Table 1). There was also no recorded level of fishing landed port revenue in the years 1997-2006, thus there is no reported landings by species in these years. Fishermen sell their catch to Billy's Seafood in Kill Devil Hills or Austin Fish Company in Nags Head. Bridges Seafood in Nags Head also buys soft clams.<sup>12</sup>

### Vessels by Year<sup>13</sup>

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

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)	Level of fishing home port (\$)	Level of fishing landed port (\$)
1997	2	6	0	0
1998	0	2	0	0
1999	1	3	confidential	0
2000	3	6	104,005	0
2001	2	5	confidential	0
2002	2	2	confidential	0
2003	2	5	confidential	0
2004	2	4	confidential	0
2005	2	4	confidential	0
2006	2	4	confidential	0

# 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>14</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

Confidential = Value information is confidential in ports with fewer than three vessels

<sup>11</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>12</sup> Community Review Comments, Damon Tatum, commercial fishermen in KDH, 505 Copley Drive Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948, October 26, 2007

<sup>13</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>14</sup> The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

## Recreational

Kill Devil Hills is home of the [Avalon Fishing Pier](#), a 705 foot pier open 24 hours a day. It has lights for night fishing, a bait and tackle shop, and rental fishing gear. There are also several other places that cater to [bait and tackle](#) needs in Kill Devil Hills such as T.I.'s Bait and Tackle and Stop 'N' Shop Convenience and Deli.

There are several fishing tournaments held annually in Kill Devil Hills. [The Jolly Roger Restaurant](#) hosts a spring and fall [surf fishing tournament](#). The Nags Head Surf Fishing Club Invitational Tournament is held every October and has occurred annually for over 50 years (Insiders.com 2006). Mot charter boats fish out of Manteo or Oregon Inlet in Nags Head.<sup>15</sup>

## Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Kill Devil Hills is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist. However, according to the Town Clerk, the beaches are used by some to set nets to catch fish, particularly in the Colington area.<sup>16</sup> Also, according to a local fisherman, subsistence fishing is visible in Kill Devil Hills, as people from outside the community, particularly minority populations, come to fish for subsistence purposes.<sup>17</sup>

## FUTURE

Information on the future of Kill Devil Hills is unavailable through secondary data collection.

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<sup>15</sup> Community Review Comments, Damon Tatum, commercial fishermen in KDH, 505 Copley Drive Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948, October 26, 2007

<sup>16</sup> Community Review Comments, Mary Quidley, Kill Devil Hills Town Clerk, 102 Town Hall Drive, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27954, September 12, 2007

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