

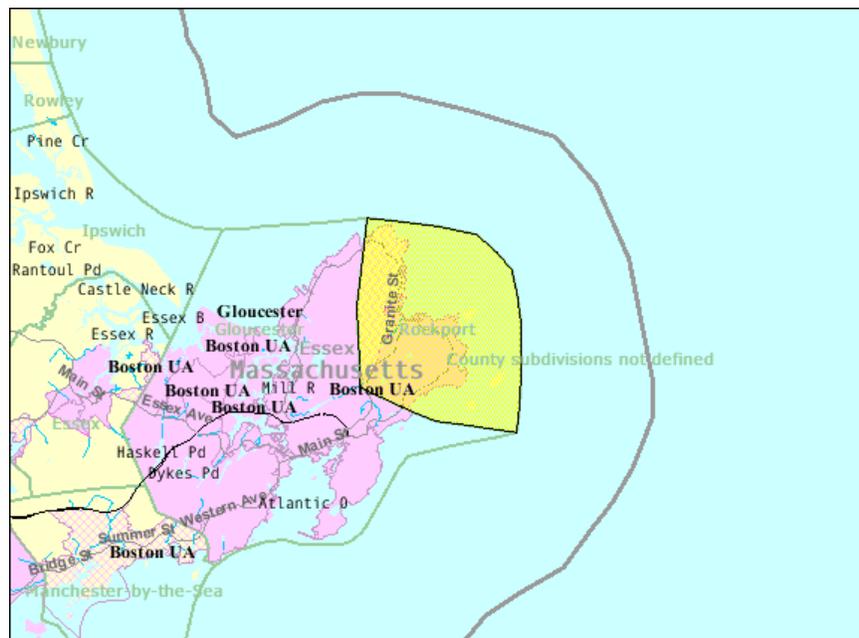
# ROCKPORT, MA<sup>1</sup>

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

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

The town of Rockport (42.66°N, 70.62°W) is a part of Essex County and is located on Cape Ann in the state of Massachusetts. It is part of the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy metro area (State of Massachusetts 2007). The town has a total area of 17.6 square miles, 7.1 miles of which is land and 10.5 miles of which is water (MapQuest 2007). Rockport is located about 40 miles from Boston (State of Massachusetts 2007).



Map 1. Location of Rockport, MA (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/ Background

The Agawam Tribe originally inhabited Rockport. They had many villages located throughout Cape Ann. In 1605 Samuel De Champlain named this area “Cap Aux Isles” when he landed there briefly. The first European settlement came about in 1623 at which time most of the Native Americans had been killed off by disease. Rockport itself was at the time an uninhabited part of Gloucester. For 100 years it remained uninhabited and was used mainly for harvesting trees for use in the shipbuilding industry. The area was also used for fishing and was known to be one of the best fishing grounds in all of New England. In 1743, a dock was built on Sandy Bay (Seecapeann.com nd). In the 1800s fishing was Rockport’s most prominent industry. It is said that children learned how to fish from a very young age because their parents would

<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).”

encourage play fishing activities and by age 10 the boys were in the boats with the men. By 1836, Rockport had 12 vessels that traveled to New York, Boston and even the West Indies (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

In 1840 Rockport became its own town and broke off from Gloucester, which was becoming increasingly urbanized. Rockport became a fishing town and also developed its famous granite industry as demand rose during the industrial revolution. The granite trade in Rockport was started by the Finnish in the early- to mid-1800s. Entire buildings in New York and Boston, cobblestone in Nantucket and even a street in a European town are made with Rockport granite. Rockport granite was famed for its characteristic orange hue.<sup>3</sup> After the invention of concrete during the Great Depression, the demand for granite decreased considerably. Rockport became known as a fishing and artists' community.

An interesting note about Rockport is that it was one of Massachusetts's 15 dry towns. In 1856 about 200 women went through the town destroying all the rum and after that point with the exception of a short period of time in the 1930's Rockport was dry. Finally on April 20, 2005 legislation was passed allowing alcohol to be sold in restaurants only (Collins 2005).

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

According to Census 2000 data (US Census Bureau 2000), Rockport had a total population of 7,767, up 3.8% from the reported population of 7,482 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 46.0% were males and 54.0% were females. The median age was 44.9 years and 76.6% of the population was 21 years or older while 22.6% was 62 years or older.

Rockport's age structure (see Figure) shows the highest percentage of the population between the ages of 40 and 49 years. This is very close to the national average. There are also a large number of residents in the 50-59 age grouping, and large numbers of children aged 0-9 and 10-19. Like many fishing communities, Rockport experiences a decline in population for the 20-29 age bracket, as young people leave the community to attend college or in search of jobs.

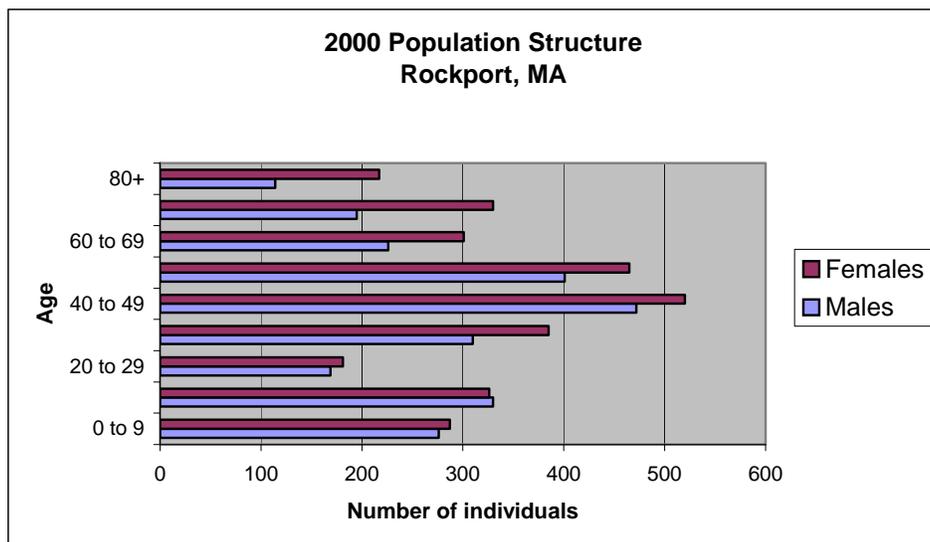


Figure 1. Rockport's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

<sup>3</sup> Profile review comment, Caleb Gilbert, Port Agent, February 8, 2008.

<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.

The majority of the population was white (98.5%), with 0.3% residents black or African American, 0.5% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and 0.03% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 1.0% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (25.1%), Irish (22.3%), and Italian (14.0%). With regard to region of birth, 68.3% were born in Massachusetts, 25.5% were born in a different state and 5.9% were born outside the U.S. (including 2.6% who were not United States citizens).

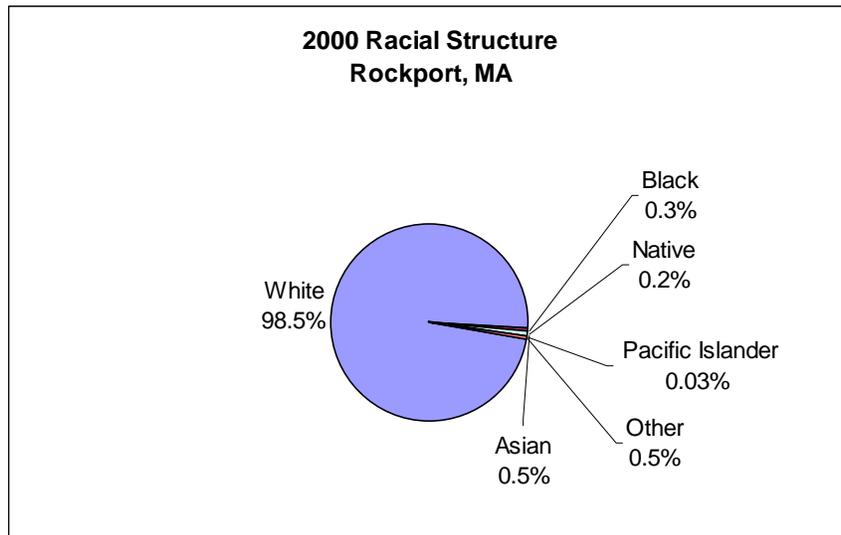


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

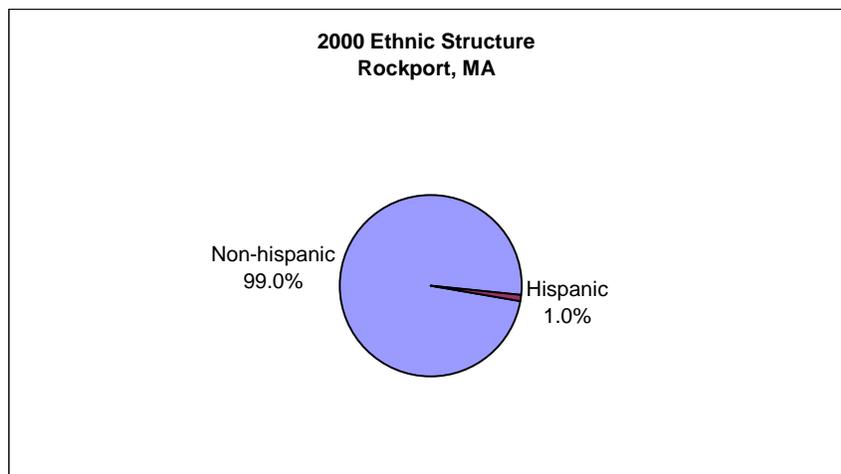


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 93.8% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 6.2% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 1.3% of the population who spoke English less than ‘very well’ according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and older, 95.1% were high school graduates or higher and 44.4% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again, of the population 25 years and over, 0.9% did not reach ninth grade, 4.0% attended some high school but did not graduate, 21.6% completed

high school, 20.5% had some college with no degree, 8.6% received an associate's degree, 26.6% earned a bachelor's degree, and 17.8% received a graduate or professional degree.

Although the 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 and adherents in Essex County was Catholic with 70 congregations and 362,900 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were United Church of Christ (49 with 15,358 adherents), United Methodist (31 with 8,713 adherents), Jewish (29 with 21,700 adherents), Episcopal (28 with 14,064 adherents) and American Baptist (24 with 5,291 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 4.1% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

### *Issues/ Processes*

The Massachusetts Senate recently passed a bill that will preserve funding for the [Fisherman's Partnership Health Insurance Plan](#). This plan has been in place since 1997 and reduces the amount of money that fishermen's families have to pay to be covered by health insurance. The insurance cost ranges from \$6,000 to \$13,700. The fishermen pay what they are able to and the government subsidizes the rest. The fishermen pay an average of 60% of the cost. Almost half of the area's fishermen were not covered by insurance before the program was established.

### **Cultural attributes**

Every year Rockport has a Lobster Festival. It takes place in August and people can enjoy lobster, chowder and live jazz on the waterfront. The festival is sponsored by the Rockport Rotary. In neighboring Gloucester, there is the New Fish Festival. This is a buffet of fish dishes from local restaurants. The festival is put on to raise awareness of the diversity of species available and to highlight new ways to cook fish. Also in Gloucester, there is St. Peter's Fiesta every year put on in St. Peter's park. St. Peter is the patron saint of fishermen and every year there is a festival that includes food, sporting events, religious activities and a Blessing of the Fishing Fleet from the Boulevard.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Current Economy**

The second largest employer in Gloucester is Whole Foods Market, which operates a large fish processing facility in Pigeon Cove, and has roughly 35-37 employees (Hall-Arber 2001). Also on the list of largest employers at number 7 is the Pigeon Cove Fisherman's Co-op, which includes retail and wholesale facilities as well as docking and unloading for the fishermen who are part of the co-op (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

According to the U.S. Census 2000<sup>5</sup>, 65.4% (4,107 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 2.3% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 63.0% were employed.

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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.

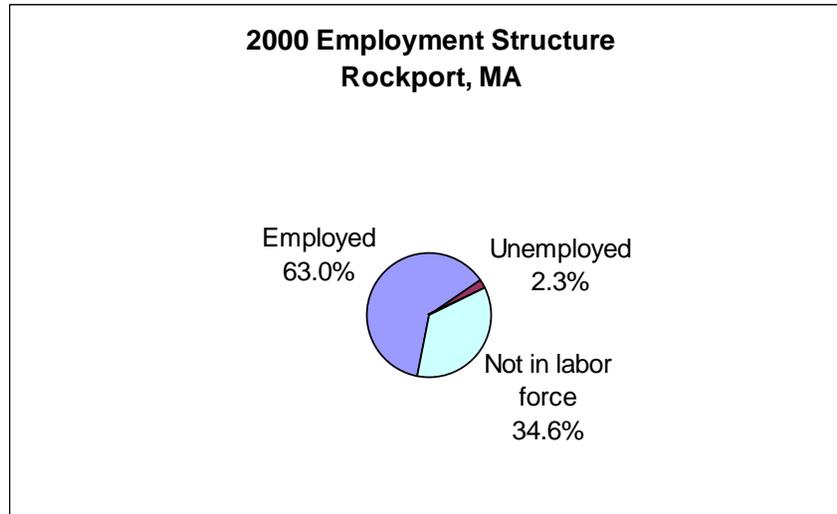


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 50 positions or 1.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 425 positions or 10.7% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (21.9%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (12.3%), manufacturing (12.3%) and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (10.5%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Rockport was \$69,263 (up 117% from \$31,917 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and median per capita income was \$29,294. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 26.5% more per year than females.

The average family in Rockport consisted of 2.93 persons. With respect to poverty, 1.9% of families (down from 2.3% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 13.7% of individuals earn 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, 13.1% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Rockport had a total of 4,202 housing units of which 83.1% were occupied and 65.8% were detached one unit homes. More than half (52.7%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes and boats accounted for 0.2% of housing units; 89.9% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area is \$272,900. Of vacant housing units, 13.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 35.8% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

Rockport is run by a Board of Selectmen. They are elected to three year terms that are staggered among the members. Selectmen are responsible for overseeing the budget, setting policies, and making executive decisions about the town. They also run the Town Meeting and are supported by Assessors, the Town Clerk, the Planning Board, the Library Trustees, the School Committee, the Housing Authority, and the Moderator (Town of Rockport 2007).

### *Fishery Involvement in Government*

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has a facility in neighboring Gloucester but there is no involvement directly from Rockport (State of Massachusetts 2007). Rockport has a harbormaster.

### **Institutional**

#### *Fishing associations*

The Pigeon Cove Fisherman's Co-op is a wholesale and retail co-op located in Rockport (Cooperative Fund of New England 2007). The Co-op owns the fishing dock, breakwater, and structures of Pigeon Cove (Hall-Arber 2001). [The Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership](#), established in Gloucester in 1995, is an organization for fishermen within the Massachusetts fishing industry. There are also fishing associations for fishermen and their wives in Gloucester, including the Gloucester Fishermen's Association, the [Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association](#) and Gloucester Lobstermen's Association. There do not seem to be any specifically in Rockport but many fishermen from Rockport probably participate in associations in neighboring Gloucester.

The Massachusetts Fisherman's Partnership focuses on issues for fishermen in different ports in Massachusetts. The Partnership responded to the need of health care for fishermen and their families by developing the Fishing Partnership Health Insurance Plan with federal and state aid. This plan has been in place since 1997 and reduces the amount of money that fishermen's families have to pay to be covered by health insurance (Hall-Arber 2001).

#### *Fishing assistance centers*

[The Gloucester Fishermen and Family Assistance Center](#) was established in 1994. Currently it is run and funded by grants from the Department of Labor. To help fishermen and their families look for new jobs outside of the fishing industry, Massachusetts received grants from the U.S. Department of Labor to establish centers for career help. National Emergency Grants funds a center in Gloucester as well as in other fishing communities in Massachusetts. These centers help fishermen and their families find new lines of work when they can not make an income from fishing and other related businesses

#### *Other fishing related organizations*

Northeast Seafood Coalition is located in neighboring Gloucester.

### **Physical**

Rockport is served by the [Cape Ann Transportation Authority](#). This provides bus service to all of the communities located in Cape Ann. It also provides service to the Rockport Train station. [The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's commuter rail](#) has a stop in Rockport and provides transportation throughout much of eastern Massachusetts and as far south as Providence Rhode Island. Logan International Airport is located in Boston less than an hour away from Rockport. Logan is easily accessible from the MBTA lines. Rockport is accessible by Rt.128 about 20 miles off of I-95.

Rockport has a few fishing supply and repair shops but the majority of businesses of this type are located in neighboring Gloucester. Many people from Rockport probably do business and buy supplies in Gloucester. Cape Ann Canvas is a marine supply shop located in Rockport but far more are in the larger Gloucester.

## INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>6</sup>

### Commercial

The most valuable species landed in Rockport in 2006 was lobster; lobster was also the most valuable species averaged for the years 1997-2006 (see Table). Lobster landings in 2006 were worth over \$2 million, which was higher than the ten-year average value. Landings of largemouth groundfish, the second most valuable species grouping, were much lower in 2006 than the ten-year average, however. Landings in Rockport overall were at their peak in 2000, at just below \$3.8 million; they declined in subsequent years (see Table). The level of home port fishing, on the other hand, has increased; home port fishing was less than \$1 million until 2005, when the value was just under \$2.7 million. Until 2005, the level of landings in Rockport exceeded the level of home port fishing, indicating that vessels from elsewhere were landing their catch in Rockport, but this trend was reversed in 2005 and 2006. The number of vessels home ported in Rockport showed an increasing trend from 36 in 1998 to 50 in 2002, and then declined again to 34 in 2006. The number of owner's city vessels mimicked this trend. The commercial fishing fleet in Rockport is based at the Pigeon Cove Co-op.

### Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value of Federally Managed Groups of landing in Rockport

	<b>Average from 1997-2006</b>	<b>2006 only</b>
<b>Lobster</b>	1,586,049	2,111,831
<b>Largemouth Groundfish<sup>7</sup></b>	391,105	85,015
<b>Other<sup>8</sup></b>	48,581	14,338
<b>Monkfish</b>	33,496	14,406
<b>Scallop</b>	32,217	8,260
<b>Dogfish</b>	3,475	2,190
<b>Smallmouth Groundfish<sup>9</sup></b>	2,962	1
<b>Bluefish</b>	774	20
<b>Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish</b>	607	0
<b>Skate</b>	227	0
<b>Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass</b>	80	0

<sup>6</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>7</sup> Largemouth groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

<sup>8</sup> "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

<sup>9</sup> Smallmouth multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

## Vessels by Year<sup>10</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	39	44	939,320	669,363
1998	36	44	954,863	676,892
1999	37	46	575,392	282,941
2000	37	42	752,045	3,783,136
2001	47	50	960,572	2,654,328
2002	50	52	956,143	3,382,901
2003	47	51	843,435	3,096,282
2004	43	46	712,712	2,308,893
2005	37	37	2,699,798	1,904,912
2006	34	35	2,651,624	2,236,061

(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>11</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 is quite a bit of recreational fishing taking place in Rockport. There are some [Charter fishing companies](#) that take people out to fish as well as people who go out fishing on their own and with families. [The town of Rockport's](#) website has information for recreational fishermen

## Subsistence

While not much subsistence fishing occurs in Rockport, many residents do eat fish taken from Rockport's adjacent waters, consuming a variety of species depending on the season.<sup>12</sup>

## FUTURE

The town of Rockport has put together a Harbor Planning Committee that is currently working on a draft of plans and goals for the future of the harbor. The selectman drew together a group of citizens who are either interested in waterfront usage problems, or are members of Town committees and other local organizations whose jurisdiction or interests are concerned with harbor use and facilities. They are focusing on current problems with the harbor and with plans for expansion and solving the current issues. The plan for this committee is to submit their final draft of the plan in the near future which will be posted on the town website so that citizens and people concerned with the harbor can post comments and ideas. The plan is not currently available for the public (Town of Rockport 2007).

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<sup>10</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>11</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.

<sup>12</sup> Profile review comment, Caleb Gilbert, Port Agent, February 8, 2008.

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