

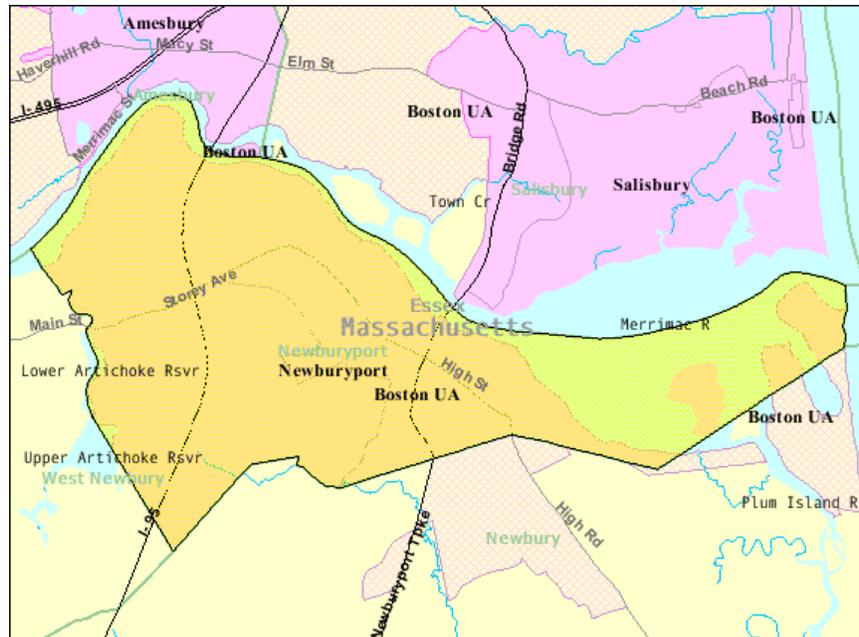
NEWBURYPORT, MA¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The city of Newburyport (42.81° N, 70.88° W) is a part of Essex County in Massachusetts. It sits on the southern shore of the Merrimack River, opposite the town of Salisbury and just south of the New Hampshire border. Newburyport has a total area of 10.58 square miles, of which 8.38 square miles is land (State of Massachusetts 2007; USGS 2008).



Map 1. Location of Newburyport (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/ Background

Newburyport was originally settled by the Pawtucket Indians, and later by Europeans in the 1630s as the town of Newbury. The port became involved in fishing and trading, while the rest of Newbury was involved in agriculture. Newburyport separated from Newbury in 1764, as it was densely populated enough to constitute its own city. It was incorporated as a city in 1851. The Merrimack River was an important source of food and transportation for Native Americans and later for Europeans, and would play an important part in the Industrial Revolution. During the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, Newburyport was home to the Newburyport Privateers, a fleet of privately operated vessels which attacked British ships (Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2007). The city is the birthplace of the U.S.

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."

Coast Guard (Tait 2006). Newburyport was an important trading port, bringing in goods from all over the world and making many of its residents very wealthy. There was also an important shipbuilding industry here through the 1800s. The beautiful Federalist-style mansions of successful ship owners and traders still stand in Newburyport today (Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2007). After an economic downturn in the 1950s, the city launched a massive redevelopment project in the 1960s involving the preservation of much of the downtown area’s architecture, and is today a popular tourist destination (State of Massachusetts 2007). The city is home to one of the largest National Register of Historic Places districts in the state, with over 2,700 properties listed. Its historic ambience, coupled with spectacular natural resources, makes Newburyport a highly desirable place to live and work.³

Demographics⁴

According to Census 2000 data, Newburyport had a total population of 17,189, up 5.1% from the reported population of 16,351 in 1990 (US Census 1990). Of this 2000 total, 46.4% were males and 53.6% were females. The median age was 40.9 years and 77.4% of the population was 21 years or older while 16.5% was 62 years or older.

Newburyport’s population structure (see Figure 1) shows the largest percentage of the population to be between the ages of 40-49, followed by 30-39 and 50-59. The percentage of women is greater than the percentage of men in all age categories beginning with 20-29.

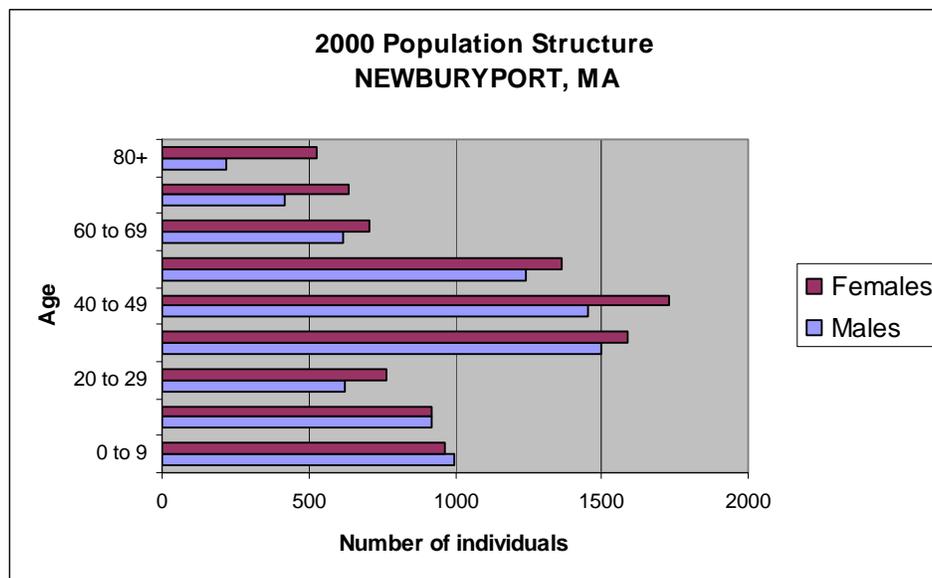


Figure 1. Newburyport’s population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (98.0%), with 0.6% of residents black or African American, 0.8% Asian, 0.3% Native American, and 0.05% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 0.9% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (30.5%),

³ Profile Review comment, Nancy Colbert, City planning office, City of Newburyport City Hall, 60 Pleasant St., Newburyport, MA 01950, October 26, 2007

⁴ 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.

English (19.1%), Italian (12.9%), and French (8.9%). With regard to region of birth, 68.6% were born in Massachusetts, 25.9% were born in a different state and 4.1% were born outside the U.S. (including 1.9% who were not United States citizens).

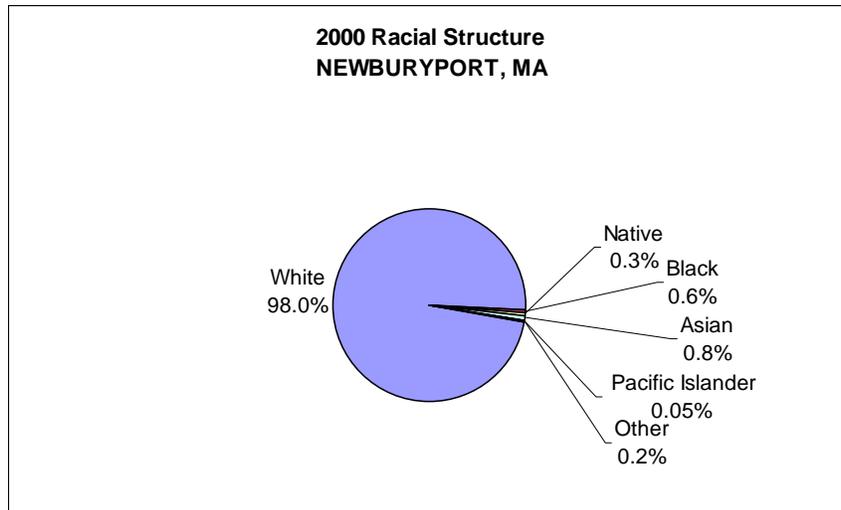


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

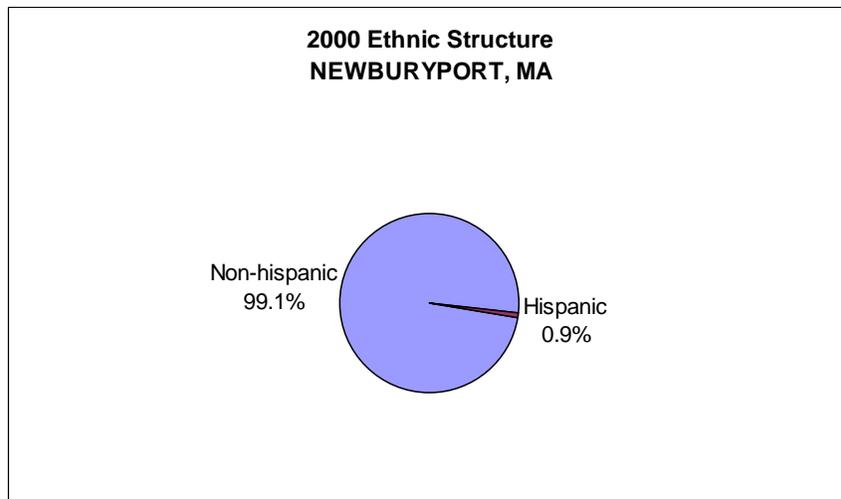


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 92.9% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 7.1% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 1.5% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and older, 90.3% were high school graduates or higher and 42.3% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again, of the population 25 years and over, 3.6% did not reach ninth grade, 6.1% attended some high school but did not graduate, 21.0% completed high school, 18.5% had some college with no degree, 8.6% received an associate’s degree, 25.1% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 17.1% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through US 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 (70 congregations, 362,900

adherents). Other prominent congregations in the county were United Church of Christ (49 with 15,358 adherents), 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).

There are thirteen houses of worship listed in Newburyport, of which one is Jewish, one is Greek Orthodox, one is Catholic, and the rest are Protestant denominations (Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2007).

Issues/ Processes

Newburyport is in the process of developing extensive water and sewer infrastructure on Plum Island, providing residents with reliable drinking water (City of Newburyport 2008). The plan has been somewhat controversial for its potential environmental impact, with opponents claiming it will increase pollution in the Merrimac River and the estuary.

The portions of the central waterfront held by the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority have been dirt parking lots since the redevelopment process of the 1960s. In 2006 a process was begun to examine the future of these parcels and there is controversy regarding the importance of additional park land and green space versus continued parking. The funding of city services and education versus property tax relief is also a hot topic. Voters rejected a school funding override in the spring of 2007. Education programs have been cut and one school has been closed under consolidation to preserve class-size goals.

Newburyport used to be an important commercial fishing port. However, much of that activity has been displaced by a combination of onerous fishing rules and harbor policies that tend to focus on summer yachting rather than the maintenance of year-round commercial activity. Additionally, the recent loss of the F/V Lady Luck and the earlier loss of the F/V Heather Lynne II have taken a toll on the level of fishing activity in Newburyport. There is a study in process led by the Newburyport Waterfront Trust and funded by the City to examine these issues and to develop a plan to revitalize the commercial fishing infrastructure. Included in these plans is an examination of an on-site retail fish market and the incorporation of ecotourism attractions and ocean science education for the Newburyport Public Schools.

Over the last few years, a significant portion of the properties and all the Newburyport marinas along the Merrimack River to the east of the Route 1 bridge have been bought up by one person. There is concern over what is being planned by this developer.⁵

Cultural attributes

The Newburyport Maritime Society operates the [Custom House Maritime Museum](#), which was once the hub of the city's thriving commercial port. The museum showcases the area's maritime history with exhibits on shipbuilding, trade, the Coast Guard, and more. They also sponsor classes, talks, and workshops. The Cushing House Museum, run by the [Historical Society of Old Newbury](#), has displays on the area's historic past, including the importance of trade. Newburyport frequently hosts concerts along its waterfront, including the annual [Newburyport Riverfront Music Festival](#) and a regular concert series [Newburyport Yankee Homecoming](#) is a week-long festival which includes such events as a boat parade, waterfront concerts, fireworks, and old-fashioned crafts and games.

⁵ Profile review comment, Cliff Goudey, MIT Sea Grant, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139, September 28, 2007

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

The major industries listed for Newburyport are diversified small industries and electronics (Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2007).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁶, 68.4% (9,619 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 2.0% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 66.4% were employed.

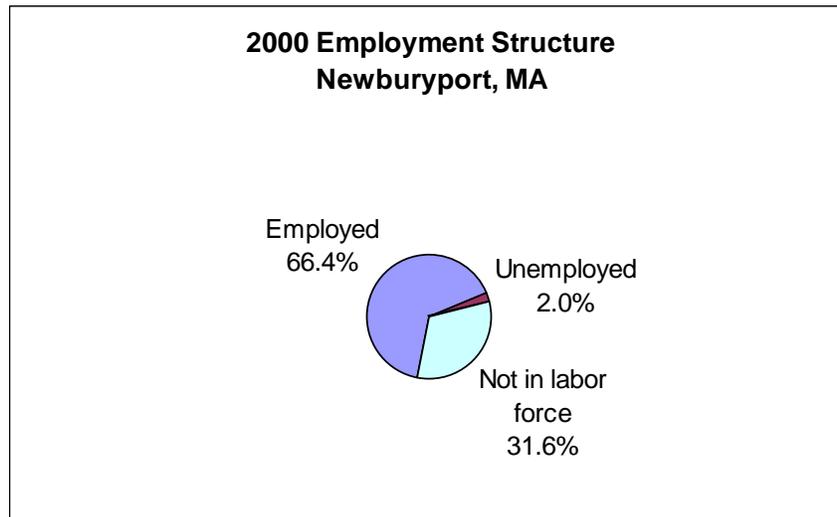


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 25 positions or 0.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 912 positions or 9.8% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (21.2%), manufacturing (15.5%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (12.7%), retail trade (8.8%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (8.3%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Newburyport was \$58,557 (up 51.6% from \$38,618 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990a)) and median per capita income was \$34,187. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 36.9% more per year than females.

The average family in Newburyport comprised 2.90 persons. With respect to poverty, 2.8% of families (down from 3.9% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 5.2% of individuals were below the US Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239-35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 2000b). In 2000 16.7% of all families of any size earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Newburyport had a total of 7,897 housing units of which 95.2% were occupied and 51.8% were detached one unit homes. More than half (51.6%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 0.1% 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 \$253,600. Of

⁶ 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.

vacant housing units, 47.6% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 33.4% were renter occupied.

Government

Newburyport is governed by a mayor, a 6-member city council of representatives from the city's 6 wards, and 5 city councilors-at-large (City of Newburyport 2007).

Fishery Involvement in Government

The city has a Waterfront Trust commission, which owns key portions of the central waterfront and whose job it is to oversee these properties for the benefit of the general public. In 2007, the Waterfront Trust received an economic development incentive grant to investigate the establishment of a fish market adjacent to the city's commercial pier.⁷ The city has a Harbormaster and a harbor commission which are responsible for addressing marine and boating-related issues in the community.⁸ Newburyport is also a member of [Eight Towns and a Bay](#), a collaboration among communities along Ipswich Bay which addresses issues of growth planning, wetland restoration, and clam flats, among others. Newburyport was also the first community in the state to complete a harbor plan. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has a shellfish depuration plant on Plum Island in Newburyport (DMF 2007). The headquarters of the [New England Fishery Management Council](#) is also located in Newburyport.

Institutional

Fishing associations

There are twenty-one charter boats in Newburyport listed as are members of the [Northeast Charterboat Captain's Association](#). They exchange information among operators and address issues pertinent to small passenger vessels.

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 et al. 2001).

Fishing assistance centers

Information on fishing assistance centers in Newburyport is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related organizations

[Coastal Discoveries](#) is a summer camp for children in Newburyport run by a former commercial fisherman who take children fishing, lobstering, exploring tidal flats, and other activities to teach them about the marine environment. They also run an after-school program.

The Newburyport Maritime Society is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the area's maritime heritage. They operate the [Custom House Maritime Museum](#) and Lowell's Boat Shop Museum in nearby Amesbury. [The Merrimack River Watershed Council](#) is a non-profit conservation organization founded in 1973, dedicated to preserving, protecting, and promoting

⁷ Profile Review comment, Nancy Colbert, City planning office, City of Newburyport City Hall, 60 Pleasant St., Newburyport, MA 01950, October 26, 2007

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the wise use of the land and water of the Merrimack River through education and scientific education

Physical

Newburyport sits at the mouth of the Merrimack River and is bordered by Amesbury and Salisbury to the north, Newbury to the south, and West Newbury to the west. It is 14 miles east of Haverhill, 30 miles north of Boston, 70 miles south of Portland, and 255 miles from New York City (State of Massachusetts 2007). Route 1 and Interstate 95 run through Newburyport; Interstate 495 is also close by, giving Newburyport easy access to other New England cities. The city is home to a small, privately-owned airport; the next closest public airport is Pease International Airport in Newington, NH, which is 19 miles away. Logan International Airport is 32 miles away, and Manchester Airport is 30 miles from Newburyport. [The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's](#) commuter rail runs between Newburyport and Boston, and also connects Newburyport with Gloucester and Salem. Newburyport is a member of the [Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority](#) and offers interstate bus service at the Trailways bus terminal.

There is a commercial fishing pier located at the eastern end of the central waterfront; however, inadequate draft along its perimeter and inadequate landing facilities have discouraged its use. Most of the Newburyport fleet land their catch directly in Gloucester or truck it there.⁹ There are [several marinas](#) in Newburyport, including Yankee Landing Marina, Ferry Landing Marina, The Boatworks at Newburyport, Carr Island Marina, Merri-Mac Yacht Basin, and Hilton & Strout Fishing & Boating Center and two full service boat yards, Overland Marine and Windward Yacht Yard. There is one bait and tackle shop in neighboring Newbury, [Surfland Bait and Tackle](#). The Fishing Center at Hilton's Dock provides retail and wholesale bait as well as gear, including gear for both recreational and commercial tuna fishermen. The Yellow Bird party boat is docked at Hilton's. There are [two public boat ramps](#) located along Water Street and one at Cashman Park on Merrimack Street.¹⁰

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES¹¹

Commercial

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries shellfish depuration plant is located on Plum Island in Newburyport. It is the oldest and largest continuously operating shellfish depuration plant in the country, and also the only one that is publicly owned and operated. Here

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¹¹ 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.

shellfish harvested from Boston Harbor are purified in a process that takes at least three days, and are then returned to the harvesters who pay a fee for this service. The plant processes an average of 540 bushels of soft-shell clams each week (DMF 2007). Clams harvested from the Merrimack River are also cleaned here (Wacker 2005). The Tri-Coastal Seafood Cooperative operated in Newburyport until 1998, but has since closed. One informant noted there are five trawlers which fish out of Newburyport. Many of the boats located in Newburyport land their catch directly in Gloucester because of inadequate local infrastructure. This trend has increased even further as Days At Sea rules have favored boats positioned closer to productive grounds.¹²

The largemesh groundfish species grouping is the most valuable fishery in Newburyport for 1997-2006, with an average landings value of over \$300,000 (see Table 1). The value of groundfish in 2006 was much less, under \$100,000. Lobster is also highly valuable, and was the most valuable single species in 2006, worth \$342,347. The value of lobster in 2003 was also higher than the average landed value for 1997-2006. The number of vessels home ported in Newburyport varied between 1997-2006, from a low of 40 in 2006 to a high of 59 in 2002, with no discernible pattern (see Table 2). The number of vessels with owners living in Newburyport was similarly variable. Generally, the value of both home port fishing and landed fishing increased over this time period; both reached a peak in 2003 and then declined in 2004 through 2006. The peak value of home port fishing was just over \$1 million, while the peak value of landings was just under \$1 million. In some years the level of home port fishing was higher, while in other years the level of landings was higher.

Landings by Species

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

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Largemesh Groundfish ¹³	329,133	93,777
Lobster	221,768	342,347
Other ¹⁴	42,840	32,004
Scallop	40,511	32,101
Monkfish	23,968	9,059
Smallmesh Groundfish ¹⁵	4,265	14
Dogfish	2,332	4,612
Skate	1,356	0
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	304	0
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	138	0
Bluefish	36	86
Herring	4	0

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¹³ Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

¹⁴ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

¹⁵ Smallmesh multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

Vessels by Year¹⁶

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	53	26	454,041	364,737
1998	48	25	560,563	521,260
1999	41	27	263,454	322,161
2000	45	27	587,709	880,425
2001	52	30	621,682	533,975
2002	59	28	730,359	927,838
2003	48	24	1,019,782	971,945
2004	47	25	520,982	753,817
2005	45	22	503,463	876,387
2006	40	20	540,115	514,000

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

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁷

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

Newburyport has a number of open party boats. The [Captain's Fleet Parties](#) has four party boats, the largest of which is 100 feet. They run full-day deep sea fishing trips and half-day bluefish and mackerel trips. They also have a bait and tackle shop on the premises. The [Yellow Bird](#) is another party boat in Newburyport which offers full-day trips and 12-hour "marathon" trips, targeting cod, cusk, redfish, pollock, catfish, and haddock. There are twenty-one fishing charter companies listed as members of the [Northeast Charterboat Captain's Association](#). [Atlantis Charters](#) offers offshore fishing on Jeffrey's Ledge for cod, pollock, haddock, and wolfish, and inshore trips for bluefish, striped bass, mackerel, and bluefin tuna. [Summer Job Fishing Charters](#) fish for striped bass, bluefish, and mackerel in the Merrimack River and around Newburyport. [Tunacious Charters](#) runs half- and full-day inshore trips as well as night trips for stripers and bluefish, and full-day offshore trips for groundfish, sharks, and bluefin tuna. [The Erica Lee and the Erica Lee II](#) also offer fishing charters. [Kelly Ann Charters](#) target tuna and sharks offshore, in addition to other inshore and offshore trips. [Newburyport Charters](#) offers fishing for mackerel, bluefish, and striped bass, and the captain will take passengers lobster fishing when the sportfishing is slow. [Compass charters](#) also offers educational lobster fishing trips in addition to sport fishing. Other fishing charters include [Leading Star Charters](#). The Fishing Center at Hilton's Marina sells bait both retail and wholesale as well as a wide variety of gear. They specialize in gear for bluefin tuna. Shore-based fishermen cast their lines from Plum Island. Between 2001-2005 there were a total of 24 charter and party boats which logged trips in Newburyport, carrying a total of 42,514 anglers on 2,052 different trips (NMFS VTR data).

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

A major developer from Nantucket has just purchased a stake in more than 20 downtown properties in Newburyport to become the largest commercial property owner in the city. His vision for the city includes more waterfront housing, new retail shops and upscale restaurants, more boat traffic, and possibly a hotel (McCabe 2005). However, the details of these development plans have been tightly held from the public.¹⁸

Over recent years, the City has focused its planning efforts on its waterfront, in an effort to redevelop underutilized sites and enhance public access in the process. In 2003, it developed a Waterfront Strategic Plan that envisions an expanded public park at the central waterfront, with continuous pedestrian and bicycle access along the water's edge. Numerous projects identified in this plan are underway, including a rail trail link from the waterfront to the MBTA train station and a harborwalk which connects the North End underneath Route 1 and to the Central Waterfront. Part of this plan addresses a nine-acre area extending from Route 1 to Green Street. Entitled "Waterfront West", the City adopted an overlay zoning district to encourage mixed use development in this area, possibly including a hotel.¹⁹

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