

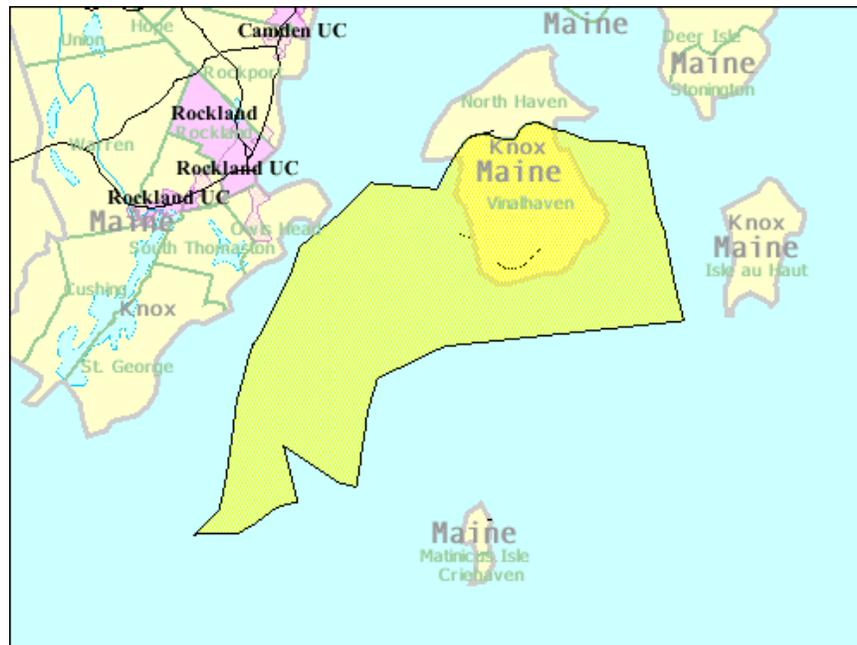
VINALHAVEN, ME¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The island town of Vinalhaven, Maine (44.06°N, 68.85°W) is located in Knox County in the south eastern portion of the state. The area encompasses 22.1 square miles of territory, and is situated about 16 miles from the nearest main land town, Rockland, ME.



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

Historical/Background

Traditionally, the economy of Vinalhaven relied upon fishing, farming, logging, boat building and, for women, the knitting of fish nets. In 1826, however, the high quality of Vinalhaven's granite was discovered and it became one of Maine's largest quarrying centers. This attracted workers from surrounding states and later from the British Isles and Scandinavia. By 1919 the largest granite company had closed with the advent of structural steel and concrete as building materials. However, the paving block industry functioned until the late 1930s (VCC 2001).

Fishing has also been a major part of Vinalhaven's economy. The island has always been a big supplier of seafood to markets in Portland, Boston and New York; first as salted and dried fish, then canned lobster, canned fish, fish glue, cut and packed fresh fin fish, canned herring,

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."

fresh lobsters, scallops, shrimp and sea urchins. During the 1800s and into the mid-1900s, the Island had a large fleet of fishing vessels, some bringing home catches of 10,000 pounds or more. Currently, lobsters landed in Vinalhaven are distributed to U.S. and world-wide markets. Not unlike most fishing ports, Vinalhaven's groundfishing fleet has declined with the declining stocks (VCC 2001). Nonetheless, Vinalhaven has had a healthy fishing economy based on the size of the catch of its large lobster fishing fleet.

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Vinalhaven had a total population of 1,235, up 15.2% from the reported population of 1,072 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 47.9% were male and 52.1% were female. The median age was 40.2 years and 73.7% of the population was 21 years or older while 20.9% of the population was 62 or older.

Vinalhaven's age structure (Figure 1) showed a dip in the population ages 20 to 29, common in many small fishing towns. By ages 40-49, the population almost doubled from this low point. This may indicate young people leaving for school and other work, but then returning to Vinalhaven to live.

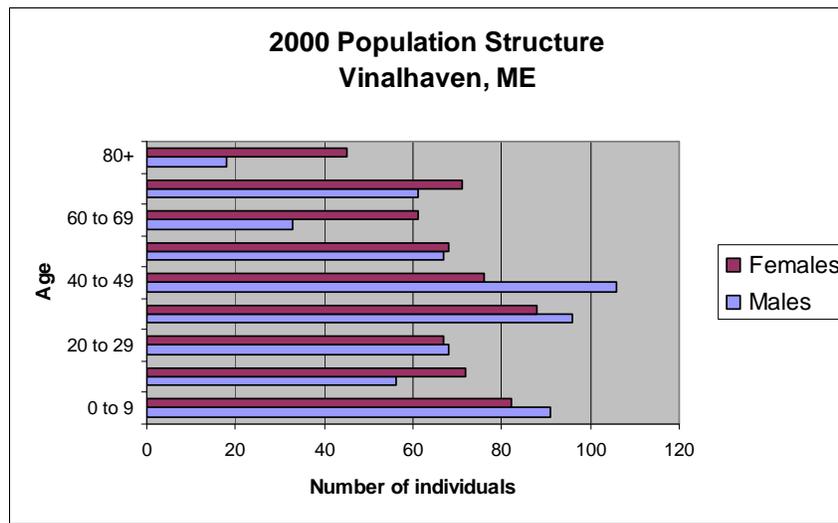


Figure 1. Vinalhaven's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (99.4%), with none black or African American, 0.3% Asian, 0.3% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). No residents identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (29.6%), Irish (11.7%), French (8.2%) and Swedish (6.4%). With regard to region of birth, 74.7% were born in Maine, 23.7% were born in a different state and no residents of Vinalhaven were born outside the U.S.

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 Vinalhaven town (accessed July 2, 2007)

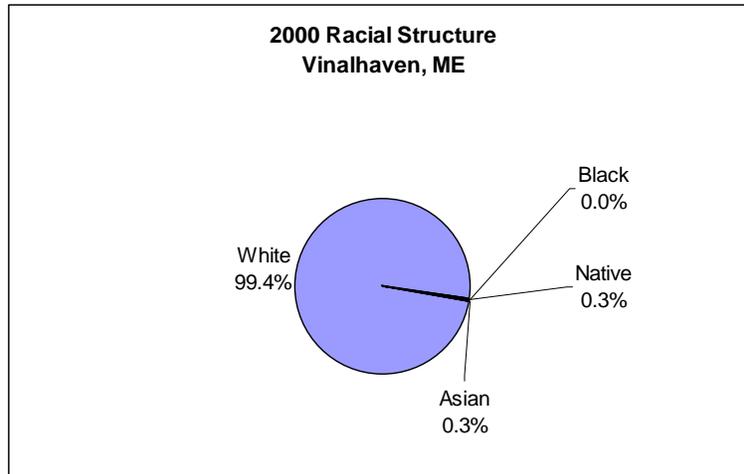


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

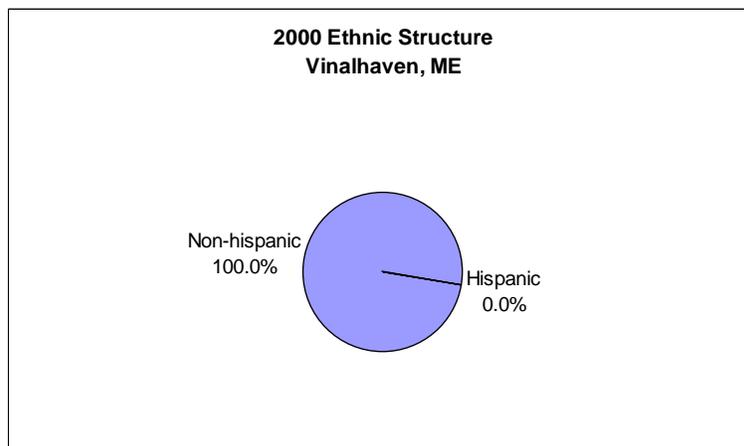


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 96.0% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 4.0% 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, 80.2% were high school graduates or higher and 20.4% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.8% did not reach ninth grade, 16% attended some high school but did not graduate, 44.3% completed high school, 12.9% had some college with no degree, 2.6% received an associate’s degree, 15% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 5.4% 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 in Knox County was American Baptist USA with 11 congregations and 1,490 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were United Methodist (7 with 1,138 adherents) and Catholic (5 with 4,274 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 1.0% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

In addition to depletion of groundfishing and the increase in stringent regulations, Vinalhaven, like so many other ports in the northeast, struggles for waterfront access. Primarily,

the fishing industry falls prey to development pressure, competition with tourism and recreation and rising property values (Snyder 2004).

In 2005 Maine voters approved a bond measure which provided \$2 million to the newly-established Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program. “The new fund provides matching funds through a competitive application process to help secure coastal waterfront land that supports commercial fisheries businesses and activities.” The bond is administered by the Working Waterfront Team, made up of Coastal Enterprises Inc. and the Island Institute, working with applicants to secure this funding (Maine DMR 2005). Six projects were funded in the first year. Voters approved an additional \$3 million to continue the program in 2007 (Vote 4 Maine 2007).

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

Information on cultural attributes in Vinalhaven is unavailable through secondary data collection.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 53.9% (523 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 2.0% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 51.9% were employed.



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

According to the U.S. Census 2000, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 128 positions or 25.4% of all

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.

jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 195 positions or 38.7% of jobs. Construction (16.3%), educational, health and social services (14.5%) and entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (9.7%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Vinalhaven was \$34,087 (up 73.0% from \$19,706 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990); Patrice McCarron of the Maine Lobstermen's Association noted that this increase likely corresponds to the doubling of lobster landings in Maine in the 1990s⁶) and median per capita income was \$21,287. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 50.8% more per year than females.

The average family in Vinalhaven consisted of 2.82 persons. With respect to poverty, 5.7% of families (down considerably from 14.7% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 9.0% of individuals earned 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, 16.4% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Vinalhaven had a total of 1,225 housing units of which 44.8% were occupied and 89.6% were detached one unit homes. Slightly over half (58.8%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes and boats accounted for 2.8% of the total housing units; 91.5% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$115,800. Of vacant housing units, 51.9% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 24.4% were renter occupied.

Government

Vinalhaven has a 5 member Board of Selectmen, meeting biweekly Full time and a Town Manager (State of Maine 2004).

Fishery Involvement in Government

Vinalhaven protected its working waterfront property through the use of zoning in 1993. The town has a Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities district, where lodging and residential uses are prohibited.⁷ Vinalhaven also has a harbormaster.

Institutional

Fishing associations

The [Vinalhaven Fishermen's Coop](#) is owned and operated by Vinalhaven's lobstermen; it supplies lobstermen with bait and supplies, and distributes lobsters around the world. The coop is a member of the [Maine Lobstermen's Association](#) (MLA), which represents the interests of lobstermen up and down Maine's coast. The MLA was founded in 1954 by Leslie Dyer, who is from Vinalhaven.⁸ Both wholesale lobster companies in Vinalhaven, Inland Seafood and Alfred Osgood, are also members of the MLA.

The 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

⁶ Profile review comment, Patrice McCarron, Executive Director, Maine Lobstermen's Association, 21 Western Ave., Suite 1, Kennebunk, ME 04043, October 2, 2007

⁷ Profile review comment, Marjorie Stratton, Town Manager, PO Box 815, Vinalhaven, ME 04863, October 1, 2007

⁸ Profile review comment, Patrice McCarron, Executive Director, Maine Lobstermen's Association, 21 Western Ave., Suite 1, Kennebunk, ME 04043, October 2, 2007

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

A notable development in 2004 was the creation of the Working Waterfront Investment Initiative, an action group that provides financing, pre-development costs, business planning, publicity and legal advice to commercial fishermen. According to Elizabeth Sheehan and Hugh Cowperthwaite at CEI, technical assistance and funding have been provided to 18 projects seeking to improve access to the ocean (Snyder 2004).

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.

The Island Fishermen's Wives Association supports the fishing community in many ways: school programs and scholarships, emergency financial assistance to fishing people and their families; ongoing commitment to preserve the fishing heritage and educating the public about the industry; survival and safety education with help from the U.S. Coast Guard (Changing Maine Directory 2008).

Other fishing related institutions

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

Vinalhaven is served daily by a ferry, operated by the Maine State Ferry Service, departing from Rockland. Two boats, making several trips each day between Vinalhaven and Rockland, carry passengers, cars, bicycles and cargo trucks. Each ferry carries about 16 cars, or the equivalent. Foot passengers and bicyclists will almost always find space available on any ferry run, but the procedure by which one gets a car on the ferry can be confusing. There is no public transportation on the island (VCC 2001).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁹

Commercial

There are no processing plants in Vinalhaven in 2004, however the town previously had a processing plant that they leased out to a private company known as "Claw Island"; it had 70 employees, and ran three 8-hour shifts which processed crabs or shrimp in winter, and lobster in summer. In 2000, Claw Island was bought out and after encountering too many problems operating the processing plant on the island, it moved to South Portland (Hendrix 2004).

Vinalhaven has several packaging companies that ship lobster to Portland and other inland locations for processing and distribution.¹⁰ They include Vinalhaven Lobster Co. which packages lobster and ships inland to Portland for processing and Vinalhaven Fishermen's Co-op which operates as a wholesale lobster distributor (VCC 2001). Vinalhaven has two wholesale companies: Inland Seafood and Alfred Osgood (MLA 2007).

Maine's Department of Marine Resources reported in 2003 that 19,758,705 pounds of lobster were landed in Knox County. Two purse seiners landed herring for bait in Vinalhaven (Hall-Arber et al. 2001). There is also some shrimp and scallop fishing but no groundfishing.¹¹ By far the most valuable species landed in Vinalhaven was lobster for 1997-2006, with 2006 landings far exceeding the ten-year average values. Herring and "other" species were also significant (Table 1). The number of vessels home-ported has increased from 1997 to 2006, with a low of 54 in 1998 to 69 in 2006. The number of owner's city vessels was usually consistent with the number of home ported vessels, meaning that most vessels home ported in Vinalhaven are owned by residents (Table 2). Overall, landings in Vinalhaven far exceeded the level of home port fishing, meaning vessels from elsewhere are likely landing their catch here.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Vinalhaven Chamber of Commerce, phone conversation w/ member Vinalhaven Lobster Co. (207) 863-9982

¹¹ Personal communication, Fishermen's Co-op, PO Box 366, Vinalhaven, ME 04863, (207) 863-2263 (July 2006)

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Herring	2
Other ¹²	3
Scallop	4
Largemesh Groundfish ¹³	5
Monkfish	6

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

Vessels by Year¹⁴

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	55	58
1998	54	56
1999	59	60
2000	59	58
2001	58	60
2002	62	65
2003	60	60
2004	66	67
2005	58	60
2006	69	71

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁵)

Recreational

Information on recreational fishing in Vinalhaven is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Subsistence

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

¹² "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

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

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

FUTURE

A 2004 study, "Tracking Commercial Fishing Access," produced by Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI) for the State Planning Office's Coastal Program, suggests that the gap between the market value of working waterfronts and what can be financed by cooperatives and municipalities is likely to grow. The study indicates that mid-coast Maine has the highest degree of vulnerability to waterfront access loss. Development pressure, competition with tourism and recreation, and rising property values (an average of 58% coast-wide between 2000 and 2004) are listed as the top causes of working waterfront loss (Sheehan and Cowperthwaite 2004).

Following a boom in lobster catches in 2001, "virtually everyone, from biologists to old-time fishermen, expects the catches to drop again. But for now, Maine lobstermen are enjoying that rarest of modern maritime tales: a fisheries success story" (Goldberg 2001). The perspective is that the lobster fishery in Vinalhaven will survive; however, fishermen see signs that the number of young people interested in becoming fishermen is dropping (Goldberg 2001). However, lobstermen are concerned with rising gas prices and property taxes.

Additionally, the boom in second homes sends gentrification creeping along the coast. "People move into Maine from out of state who don't understand the value of a working waterfront," says Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association, a commercial-fishing industry group. Many newcomers "want more moorings for sailing, but not [the smell of] bait and engines running at 4 a.m. But this is part of our identity" (Miller 2004).

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