

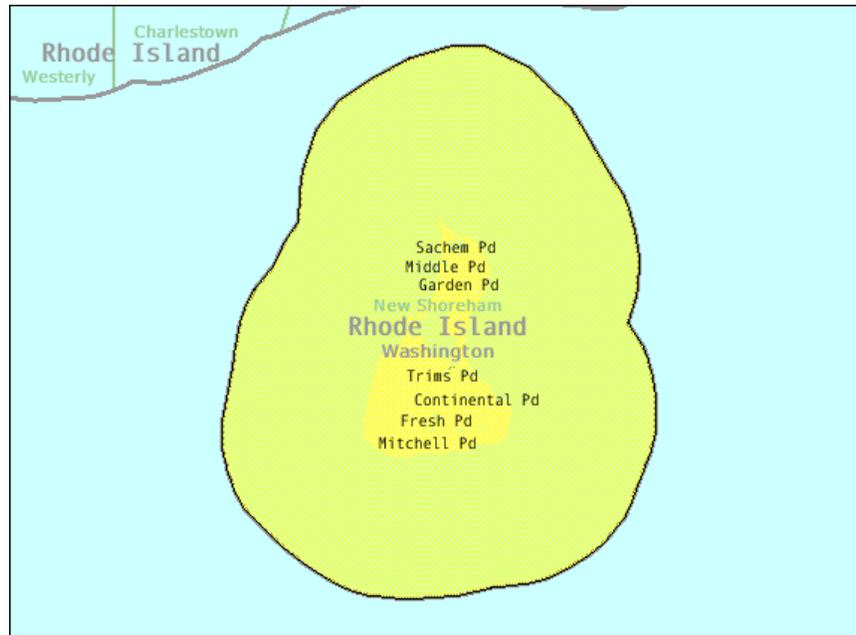
BLOCK ISLAND, RI¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

Block Island encompasses the town of New Shoreham, Rhode Island (41.19° N, 71.58° W) (USGS 2008), located in the Atlantic Ocean, twelve miles south of South Kingstown. New Shoreham is the only town on the island, and it is the smallest town in the smallest state in the United States, at seven miles long and three miles wide (BITC 2008).



Map 1. Location of New Shoreham, RI (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

Block Island is a glacial moraine left behind over 12,000 years ago when the glacier here retreated, giving Block Island a unique geography and environment. The first residents of the island were Manisseean Indians. The island is named for Dutch explorer Adrian Block, who landed here in 1614. The first white settlers arrived in 1661, and they spent the next two decades fishing and farming for subsistence (BIC 2008). New Shoreham was incorporated in 1672 as the only town on Block Island (BITC 2008). The island lacks a natural harbor; both the New Harbor and the Old Harbor were built in the nineteenth century (RIEDC 2008). Starting in the 1860s, Block Island became a Victorian retreat and many hotels were built here for summer

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."

residents and visitors. In the 1930s, the Depression brought an end to most of the island's tourism, while the hurricane of 1938 wiped out most of the fishing fleet. For the next 30 years the island continued to have a depressed economy and a devastated fishing fleet, until its natural beauty was rediscovered in the 1960s and 1970s. Since then, development has increased rapidly on the island. Today Block Island continues to be a tourist destination, with 17 miles of beaches (BITC 2007). It was called "one of the 12 last great places in the Western Hemisphere" by the Nature Conservancy (Lord 2005).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data, Block Island (New Shoreham) had a total population of 1,010, up 23.0% from the reported population of 821 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). The population rises to over 12,000 during the summer months (BICC 2007). Of this 2000 total, 48.7% were males and 51.3% were females. The median age was 43.0 years and 79.9% of the population was 21 years or older while 20.0% was 62 or older.

The population structure for New Shoreham (Figure 1) shows the most populous age group for both men and women is the 40-49 year old grouping, followed closely by both the 30-39 and 50-59 age group. There are few residents on Block Island under the age of 30.

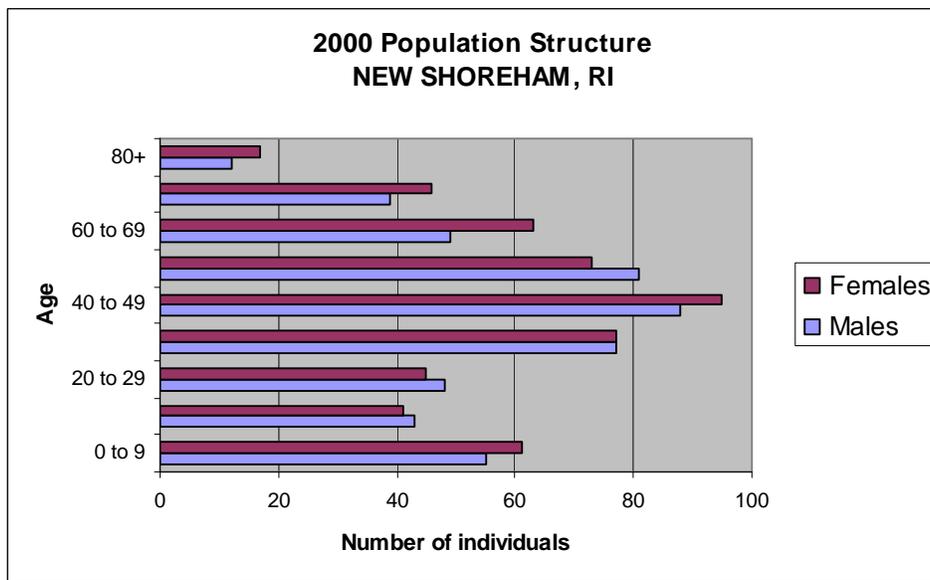


Figure 1. Block Island's (New Shoreham's) population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was white (98.3%), with 0.6% of residents black or African American, 0.8% Asian, none Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 1.2% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (33.3%), Irish (33.2%), German (14.9%), and Italian (8.6%).

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.

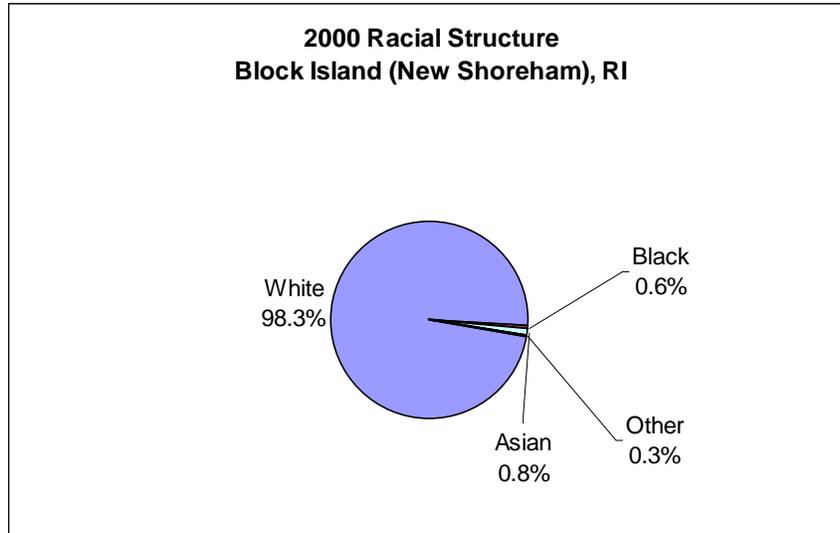


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

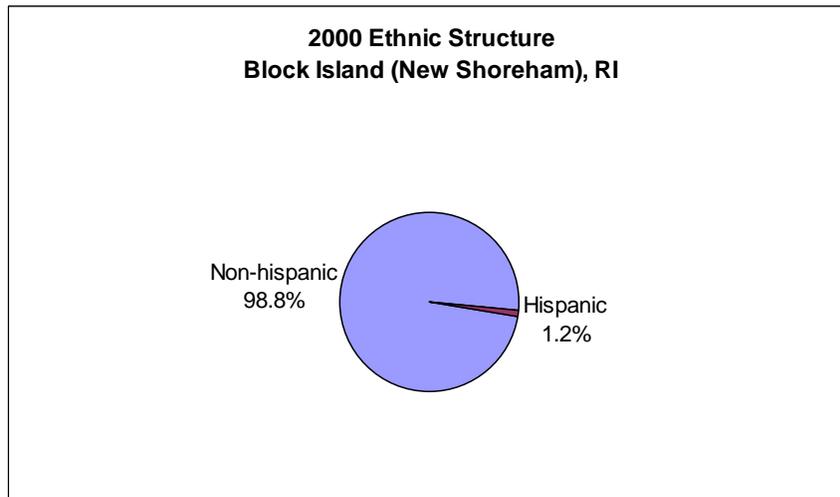


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

With regard to region of birth, 42.0% were born in Rhode Island, 54.7% were born in a different state, and 3.4% were born outside of the U.S. (including 1.3% who were not United States citizens).

For 91.8% of the population, only English is spoken in the home, leaving 8.2% in homes where a language other than English is spoken, and 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, 94.7% were high school graduates or higher and 48.1% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 0.8% did not reach ninth grade, 4.5% attended some high school but did not graduate, 19.4% completed high school, 18.5% had some college with no degree, 8.8% received their associate's degree, 32.6% earned their bachelor's degree, and 15.5% received either their graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through U.S. Census data, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest

number of congregations in Washington County was Catholic with 20 congregations and 58,668 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were American Baptist Churches in the USA (15 with 3,022 adherents), and Episcopal Church (10 with 4,720 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 57.3% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

There are seven houses of worship listed for Block Island of which one is Catholic, one is Jewish, one is Quaker, two are Baptist, one is Episcopalian, and one is Congregational (Block Island 2005).

Issues/Processes

Development is a concern on Block Island; a number of organizations are addressing this issue on the island by trying to buy and protect land (BIC 2008). Champlin's Marina on the island battled for years with the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (Daley 2004), ultimately denying the marina's requests for expansion based on concerns about increased pollution, a loss of part of the town's public mooring field, and the privatization of an area held in the public trust. The marina also lost requests for an appeal (CLF 2006).

Because Block Island is a highly desirable summer resort destination, housing prices have been skyrocketing over the years. Most home sales are for second homes, leaving few affordable options for year-round residents (Dunn 2006).

Cultural attributes

Block Island holds a number of recreational fishing tournaments: the Block Island Volunteer Fire Department fishing tournament (King 2008, BICC 2007), held in July, the Block Island Inshore Fishing Tournament (Meade 2008, BICC 2007), held in September (sponsored by [Block Island Fish Works](#)), and the Tri-State Canyon Shootout (a tuna tournament) and the Block Island Billfish Tournament, both hosted at the Block Island Boat Basin in August.⁴

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 65.4% (572 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 2.3% were unemployed, 0.7% were in the Armed Forces, and 65.4% were employed.

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 5 positions or 0.9% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 86 positions or 15.7% of jobs. Construction (20.3%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (13.5%), retail trade (10.8%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (10.2%), and education, health, and social services (10.1%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in New Shoreham was \$44,779, up 42.3% from \$31,471 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990) and per capita income was \$29,188. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 40.2% more per year than females.

⁴ Profile review comment, Christopher Willi, Harbormaster, Town of New Shoreham, PO Box Drawer 220, Block Island, RI 02807, October 15, 2007

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

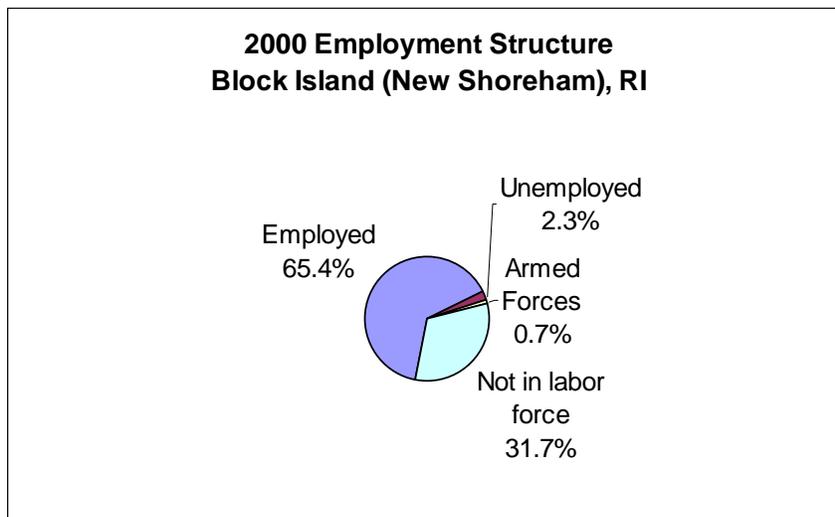


Figure 1. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The average family in New Shoreham consists of 2.82 persons. With respect to poverty, 8.0% of families, up from 6.7% in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990) and 7.9% 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, 28.8% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, New Shoreham had a total of 1,606 housing units of which 29.4% were occupied and 88.2% were detached one unit homes. Close to one quarter (22.5%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, vans, RVs, etc. accounted for no housing units; 92.7% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$479,300. Of vacant housing units, 69.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 32.2% were renter occupied.

Government

New Shoreham has a five member Town Council and a Town Manager (Town of New Shoreham 2007).

Fishery involvement in government

The town of New Shoreham has a Shellfish Commission and a Harbor Committee, as well as a harbor master (Town of New Shoreham 2007).

Institutional

Fishing associations

The [Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers' Association](#) is dedicated to conservation of the marine environment and of fisheries, and to protecting the rights of saltwater recreational fishermen in Rhode Island. Rhode Island has several other fishery associations to which fishermen in Block Island might belong, including: the Ocean State Fishermen's Association, the Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association, the Rhode Island Inshore Fishermen's Association, and the Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association (URI 2005).

Fishing assistance centers

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

Other fishing-related organizations

The [Block Island Maritime Institute](#) is a maritime education program located on Block Island, which runs in-school and after school education programs for the youths of the island, including sailing lessons, trips on a lobster boat, snorkeling, and other activities. The organization also operates an aquaculture farm and a touch tank.

The [Ocean View Foundation](#) on Block Island is another environmental education center which has recently purchased two properties to prevent them from being developed, and has produced three films about the island's unique environment.

The Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island was founded in 2004 and is home to nonprofit commercial fishing organizations, and serves "as a headquarters for bringing fishermen, scientists, managers, and elected officials together to discuss issues." The goals of the center are "to improve fisheries and understanding of the marine environment through education, collaborative research, and cooperation" (CFC nd).

Physical

Block Island has a small airport, Block Island State Airport, serviced by New England Airlines. There are several ferries which service Block Island. Ferries travel between the island and Galilee, Point Judith and Newport, RI, Montauk, NY, and New London, CT (BICC 2007, RIPTA n.d., RI n.d). There is one school on the island serving grades K-12 with around 120 students (BITC 2008). Block Island is about 18 miles from Point Judith, 39 miles from Newport, and 52 miles from Providence (MapQuest nd).

Block Island has two harbors; New Harbor, or Great Salt Pond, and Old Harbor. Block Island has several marinas located in New Harbor: [Champlin's Resort and Marina](#), Block Island Marine, Payne's Dock, Smuggler's Cove, and Block Island Boat Basin (BICC 2007). Champlin's Marina offers repairs, a pump out station, water, fuel, and ice, and has space for 225 boats. Old Harbor Dock, Ballard's Marina, and the charter boat fleet are located in Old Harbor (BICC 2007).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁶

Commercial

Landings were provided for New Shoreham, with no landings listed for Block Island. Overall, the species with the highest valued landings in New Shoreham was monkfish, followed by the summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass species grouping and by lobster (Table 1).

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

Most vessels were listed for Block Island as opposed to New Shoreham. The number of vessels home ported in Block Island was relatively steady from 1997 through 2006, as were the number of vessels with owners living on Block Island (Table 2).

Overall, landings were highest in the port of New Shoreham in 2002, followed closely by 2003. The landings overall mostly increased up to 2003, and then declined greatly in 2004.

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

NEW SHOREHAM Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Monkfish	1
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	2
Lobster	3
Largemesh Groundfish⁷	4
Scallop	5
Other⁸	6
Bluefish	7
Tilefish	8
Skate	9
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	10

Vessels by Year⁹

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

BLOCK ISLAND Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	12	11
1998	10	9
1999	10	9
2000	12	11
2001	11	10
2002	11	11
2003	11	12
2004	11	10
2005	11	10
2006	11	11

⁷ Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

⁸ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

⁹ Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

Table 1. All columns represent vessel permits between 1997-2006 for New Shoreham

NEW SHOREHAM Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	0	1
1998	0	1
1999	0	1
2000	0	1
2001	0	1
2002	0	0
2003	1	0
2004	0	0
2005	0	0
2006	0	0

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport
 # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁰)

Recreational

Block Island is well known and a popular location for sportfishing. There are at least seven charter boats listed for Block Island (BICC 2007). New Harbor and Old Harbor both offer berths for private vessels, and Old Harbor includes a 30 boat marina operated by the town (BITC 2008). [Hula Charters](#) offers inshore fishing trips for striped bass, bluefish, fluke, tautog, and other species. [G. Willie Makit Charters](#) also targets striped bass and fluke. Other charter boats include Amanda Mel Charters and Pale Horse Charters. [Block Island Fishworks](#) is the headquarters for several charter boats, and also offers guided surfcasting trips from the island's beaches. The boats fish inshore and offshore for strippers, bluefish, bonito, false albacore, fluke, sea bass, porgy, sharks, and tuna. Block Island Fishworks also operates a bait, tackle, and fly shop on the island. Twin Maples is another bait and tackle shop on the island. Many other marine-related businesses can also be found on the island (Block Island 2005).

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

The number of ferries traveling to Block Island has doubled in the past five years, taxing municipal resources and leaving residents concerned about the impact on the community and the natural environment (Anon. 2006).

Open space preservation is another important issue to the residents of Block Island; more than 30 percent of the island is preserved as open space in perpetuity (BIC 2008).

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¹⁰ The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

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