

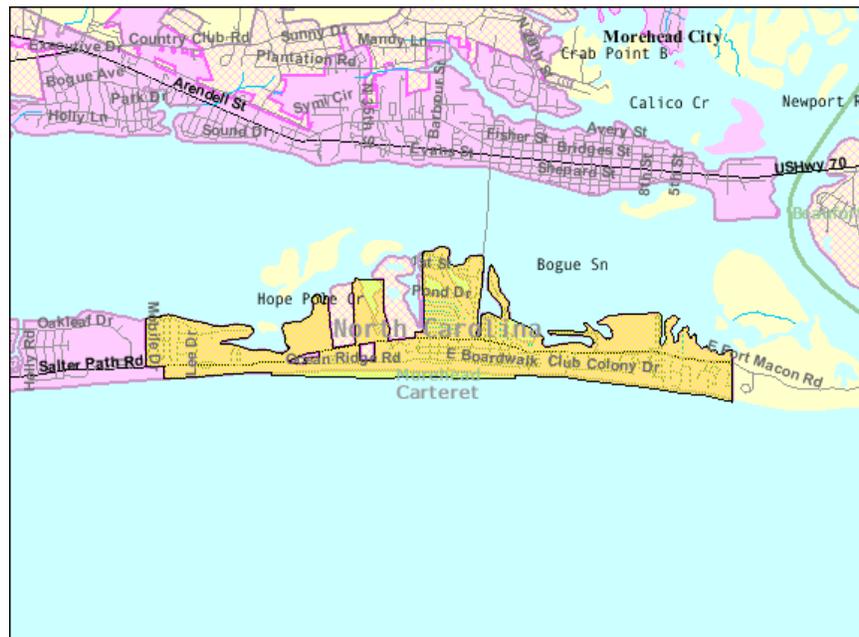
ATLANTIC BEACH, NC¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina (34.70°N, 76.74°W) is located at the eastern end of Bogue Banks which is a Barrier Island. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and Bogue Sound. Atlantic Beach is very close to Fort Macon State Park (USGS 2008). The town is located in Carteret County and is part of the famous “Crystal Coast” of North Carolina (Crystal Coast Tourism Authority). The elevation of Atlantic Beach is eight feet above sea level and the land area is 2.1 square miles (USGS 2008).



Map 1. Location of Atlantic Beach, NC (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

Atlantic Beach, North Carolina is the oldest of the five towns on Bogue Banks (Insider’s Guide nd). Atlantic Beach was first visualized by a man of the name Appleton Oaksmith in 1870 who foresaw a resort by the sea. Yet, in 1879 he lost his will to create the resort after he lost all four of his daughters in a tragic accident. Two prominent North Carolinian men by the names of John J. Royal, from Morehead City, and Winfield S. Chadwick of Beaufort decided to carry on Appleton’s dream. In 1887 they began construction and built the first bathing pavilion of Atlantic City. A few big hotels were built as well, which attracted tourists. In November of 1931 Newman Willis, the newly appointed town mayor, and his bride “Miss Etta” became the

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.”

first permanent residents of Atlantic Beach. In 1934 James N “Cap’n Jim” Willis III was born to Newman and Etta; he became the first person to call Atlantic Beach home from birth (Town of Atlantic Beach nd).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Atlantic Beach had a total population of 1,781, down 20.2% from the reported population of 1,983 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 52.8% were male and 47.2% were female. The median age was 48.7 years and 87.2% of the population was 21 years or older while 22.7% was 62 or older.

The age structure for Atlantic Beach (Figure 1) is similar to other North Carolina fishing villages. The highest age bracket is between 50-59 years. There is also a considerable amount of people in the age bracket of 60-69 years, meaning that it is a slightly older community. Many individuals probably grew up their entire lives in this town or have retired here. There are also a strikingly greater number of males than females in the 20-29 year age bracket.

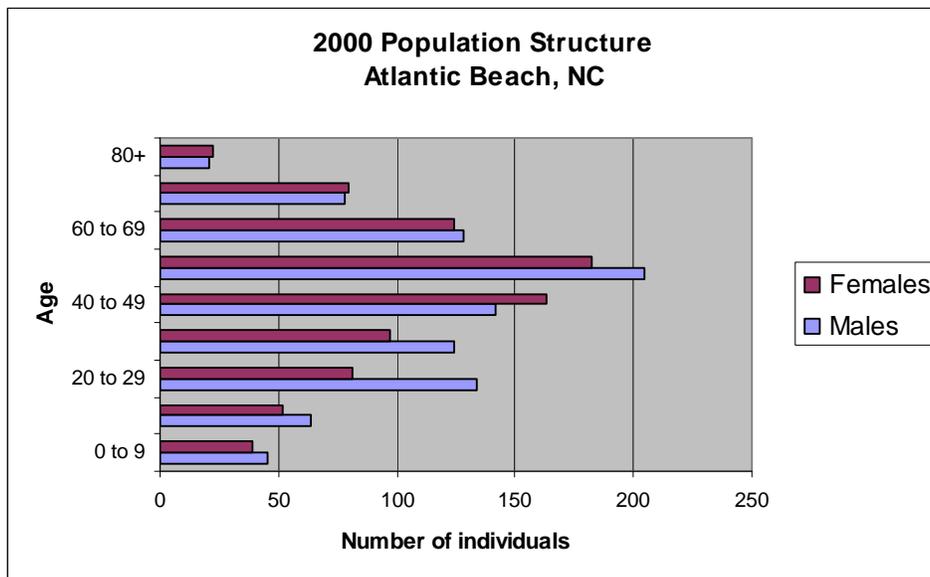


Figure 1. Atlantic Beach’s population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population White (98.5%), with 0.6% of residents Black or African American, 0.7% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 0.7% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents link their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (18.3%), German (13.2%), Irish (12.1%), and United States or American (12.5%). With regard to region of birth, 59.6% were born in North Carolina, 38.3% were born in a different state and 1.4% were born outside of the U.S. (including 0.7% who are not United States citizens).

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 Atlantic Beach town (cited July 2007)

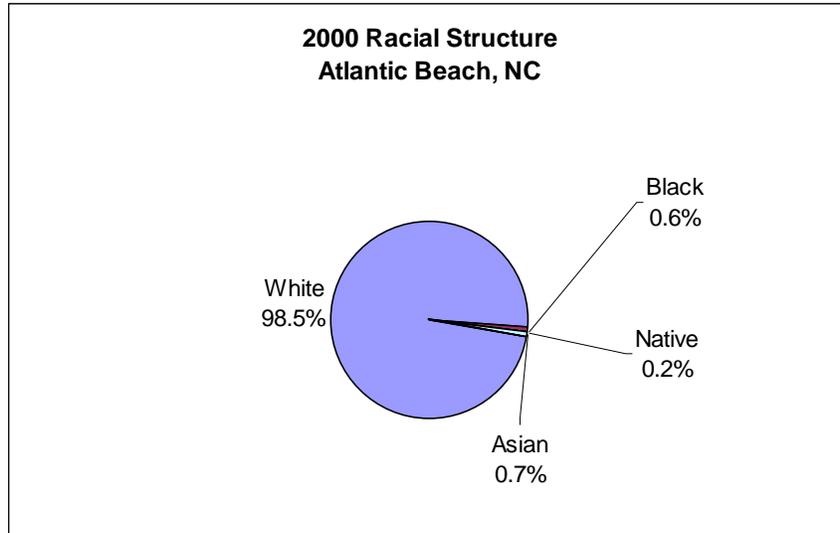


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

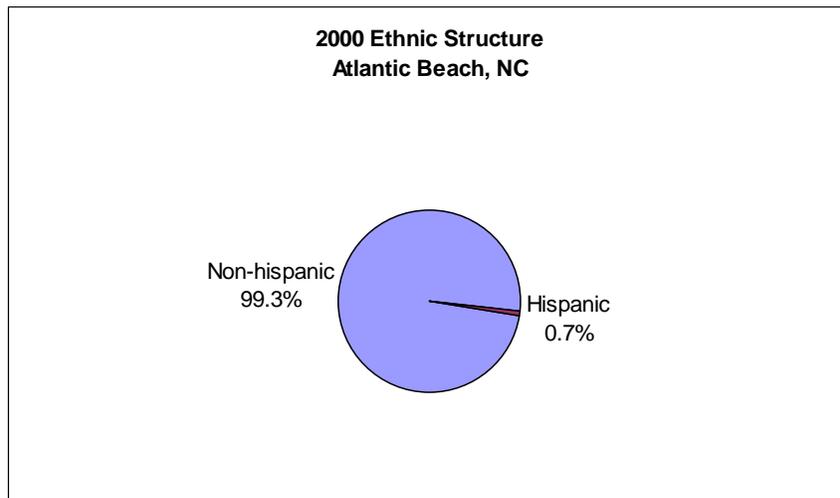


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 96.1% of the population, only English is spoken in the home, leaving 3.9% in homes where a language other than English is spoken, and including 1.0% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 90.0% were high school graduates or higher and 30.7% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 2.8% did not reach ninth grade, 7.2% attended some high school but did not graduate, 23.3% completed high school, 28.2% had some college with no degree, 7.8% received an associate’s degree, 21.6% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 9.1% 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 Carteret County was Southern Baptist Convention with 20 congregations/7,079 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Methodist (22 with 6,057 adherents), and the Catholic Church (1 with 1,798 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up less than 1% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

Shrimp fishermen, as well as fishermen involved in other fisheries, 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 anyway (Smith 2005). Rising fuel costs have also limited fishing activity, especially without the option to supplement shrimp catches with other species such as skates and sharks, which are closed fisheries.⁵

In the past, commercial trawlers operating near shore would effectively ‘dredge’ the harbors and inlets simply through the act of fishing. Today, catch limits, fuel prices and other factors force trawlers further from shore, eliminating the ‘dredge maintenance’, which then limits small boat access to fishing grounds. U.S. Army Corps budget cuts have stalled further dredging off the coast near Atlantic Beach, and the NC Fisheries Association is fighting to resume dredging operations in an effort to preserve the fishing fleet.⁶

Beach erosion is also an issue of Atlantic Beach; it is caused by booming development and hurricanes. Several communities want to join a federal program that offers fresh sand more frequently than the current ten year cycles, yet there are many people that say it is harmful to the environment and the debate continues (Sherrill 2003).

Cultural attributes

In the summer season Atlantic Beach holds large fishing tournaments. A billfish tournament is held in July from the 27th-29th; it is officially called the “[NC Ducks Unlimited Band the Billfish Tournament](#).” Yet, the larger tournament is the Atlantic Beach King Mackerel Tournament, which is held September 7th through 10th. It is the largest all cash tournament in the U.S; 400 anglers compete for cash prizes of more than \$650,000. Each summer for nearly 50 years, the [Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament](#) has attracted many anglers out of six Atlantic Beach marinas.

Another well known attraction in the area is [Fort Macon State Park](#) which is open to the public from June through September. At the Park, trail hikes are offered, as well as educational and interpretive programs, there is also a “Concert in the Fort” which is a concert series which runs from July to August (Crystal Coast Tourism Authority nd). In 2006, Morehead hosted the first “Tall Ships” celebration which brought significant crowds and revenue to the area.⁷

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

Much of Atlantic Beach’s economy is driven by the tourism industry such as hotels and restaurants. [Fort Macon State Park](#) also helps to bring revenue into the economy. The head boat and charter fishing industries, along with the scenic beaches, draw tourism in the area. According to the [Capt. Stacy Fishing Center](#), there are ten charter boats and one head boat,

⁵ Personal Communication, Janice Smith, NC Fisheries Association, Area Six Director, P.O. Box 12303, New Bern, NC 28561, 06/27/2006

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employing over 25 people directly involved in fishing activities (this is excluding those individuals working on the docks).⁸

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁹, 63.3% (1,058 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 3.2% were unemployed, 3.9% were in the Armed Forces, and 56.1% 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 7 positions or 0.7% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 150 positions or 16% of jobs. Education, health, and social services (16.0%), construction (14.4%), finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing (11.1%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (9.6%), and professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (7.9%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Atlantic Beach was \$38,313 (up 43.5% from \$26,339 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$31,339. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 22.9% more per year than females.

The average family in Atlantic Beach consists of 2.33 persons. With respect to poverty, 5.3% of families (down from 14.1% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 7.3% of individuals earn below the official U.S. 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, 30.9% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Atlantic Beach had a total of 4,728 housing units, of which 20.5% were occupied and 30.8% were detached one unit homes. Less than 10 percent (0.7%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 27.9% of the total housing units; 99.7% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$207,800. Of vacant housing units, 73.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, while of occupied units 35.3% were renter occupied.

⁸ Community Review Comments, Loretta Davis Acree, Capt. Stacy Fishing Center, Atlantic Beach Causeway, P.O. Box 3013, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 5, 2007

⁹ 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 government of Atlantic Beach is made up of five council members and a mayor. The council members and the mayor are elected by the majority of the voters for a two year term. The mayor plays the part of the “chairman” of the council and presides at all the meetings. When the mayor is absent, the mayor Pro Term presides (Town of Atlantic Beach nd).

Fishery involvement in the government

Information on fishery involvement in the government in Atlantic Beach is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Institutional

Fishing associations

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

[North Carolina Watermen United](#) is also a trade association working to help fishermen. The association has over 300 members throughout the state, with a large number involved in charter operations. Cape Lookout Sportfishing Association is located in the [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#) area of Atlantic Beach. The area offers 30 marinas and six fishing piers for year round local and Gulf Stream fishing opportunities.

Fishing assistance centers

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

Other fishing related organizations

There is an oyster habitat enhancement project at Hoop Pole Creek in Atlantic Beach, overseen by the North Carolina Coastal Federation. Shellfish restoration began at the site in 1998. Currently school groups have been monitoring mini “Oyster Gardens” and Oyster Reefs. The goal of the project is to increase Oyster habitat and population in the creek as well as enhance the water quality (RAE 2006).

Physical

Atlantic Beach is on the eastern tip of Bouge Banks and is close to Beaufort Inlet. Atlantic Beach is a three hour drive from Raleigh, the state capital and a two hour drive from Greenville, which is where the state university is located. Atlantic Beach is off of US highway 70, which runs through the entire Crystal Coast. North Carolina route 58 begins at Fort Macon State Park in Atlantic Beach and runs parallel to Atlantic Beach the rest of the way (Insider’s Guide nd). There are two airports in the area; New Bern Airport (EWN) which is located on Hwy 70 west of Atlantic Beach about 45 minutes away; Wilmington Airport (ILM), about 1.5 hours south of Atlantic Beach.¹⁰ Raleigh Durham airport is about 3 hours away (MapQuest nd).

The proximity of Atlantic Beach to the Beaufort Inlet makes it a great location for marinas. The Anchorage, Tripl-S, Fort Macon, and Crow’s Nest, Sea Water Marina, along with Capt. Stacy, all service the large number of recreational fishermen that visit the area. According

¹⁰ Community Review Comments, Loretta Davis Acree, Capt. Stacy Fishing Center, Atlantic Beach Causeway, P.O. Box 3013, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 5, 2007

to a charter boat captain, there are at least 22 charter boats operating out of these marinas.¹¹ Capt. Stacy Fishing Center is known for its experience and deep-sea fishing trips. Capt. Stacy's also offers permanent boat slips, fuel and general fishing supplies (Insider's Guide nd). They also service the commercial fishing sector by selling bait and ice.

The Atlantic Beach Causeway is a strip of land about 1 mile in length with a highway running down the middle. The East side is bordered by a deep water canal about 80 feet wide and leads into a protected cove. Three marinas are located on the east side (Freeman's, Sea Water Marina, and Capt. Stacy Fishing Center), all offering charter boat fishing, permanent boat slips, live and frozen bait, fuel, and general fishing supplies. On the west side of the causeway there is another canal leading to a protected cove and Crow's Nest Marina.¹²

The center of town, known locally as The Circle, is found at the southernmost end of the Atlantic Beach Causeway. The area continues to offer parking for a day at the beach and several souvenir shops, however major changes to this area are in the making (Insider's Guide nd).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES¹³

Commercial

Atlantic Beach does not seem to have any commercial landings. According to the Capt. Stacy Fishing Center, boats that moor in Atlantic Beach do not unload their catch there due to a lack of facilities and fish houses. These vessels apparently go to Morehead City, across the Sound, or to Beaufort to offload their catch. Also, due to the high cost of waterfront property, many vessel owners rent moorings or lease slips at the marinas and live outside of Atlantic Beach.¹⁴ The level of fishing landed port has been at 0 since 1997. The level of fishing home port jumped considerably in 2005, while the numbers of vessels in Atlantic Beach both home ported and those with owners living in the city has remained relatively steady (Table 1). It should be noted, according to the Capt. Stacy Fishing Center, that they owned at least three federally permitted fishing vessels since 1986 that home ported in Atlantic Beach.¹⁵ It is not known why this information is not reflected in the Federal permit tables. Additionally, according to a charter captain in Atlantic Beach, significant species landed in the area include gag, red and snowy grouper, black sea bass, triggerfish, vermillion snapper, tilefish, and dolphin fish.¹⁶

¹¹ Community Review Comments, Capt. Robert Freeman, sunrise@coastalnet.com, Sunrise Charters, 221 Smith Street, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 19, 2007

¹² Community Review Comments, Loretta Davis Acree, Capt. Stacy Fishing Center, Atlantic Beach Causeway, P.O. Box 3013, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 5, 2007

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Community Review Comments, Loretta Davis Acree, Capt. Stacy Fishing Center, Atlantic Beach Causeway, P.O. Box 3013, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 5, 2007

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Vessels by Year¹⁷

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	4	0	0
1998	0	0	0	0
1999	0	0	0	0
2000	2	1	0	0
2001	2	2	0	0
2002	2	1	0	0
2003	2	1	confidential	0
2004	1	1	0	0
2005	2	3	confidential	0
2006	2	2	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 residence¹⁸

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

Recreational

There are several charter boats and marinas offering charter sportfishing trips in Atlantic Beach. One such charter boat is advertised as “Head Boat and Deep Sea Saltwater Fishing” by the [Capt. Stacy Fishing Center](#). The center has been in operation since 1960 and is home to one charter boat, and one head boat. The center is also homeport for ten other charter boats for hire. The boat travels to fishing grounds as far out as the Gulf Stream; moonlight tours and harbor tours are also offered. In the winter months, some charter and head boats do commercial fishing to supplement their incomes in the off season.¹⁹

There is also the King Mackerel Tournament and the Billfish Tournament as mentioned above. A Surf Fishing Tournament is also offered; it is a two day family oriented fishing event that is available for Individual Anglers in adult and junior categories. The contest is based on a point system. As many as 80 Anglers tend to participate in this event (Town of Atlantic Beach nd).

According to a charter captain, there are as many as 17 six-passenger charter boats operating out of Atlantic Beach. Trolling is the most popular fishing method however six boats concentrate on bottom fishing for commercial species. Some of the more seasoned vessels land can land as much as 25,000 pounds per season. Several hundred boats are located at Crow’s Nest Marina, Fort Macon, and private docks throughout the area, while many others are brought in by trailer and lunched at several ramps along the Causeway.²⁰

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Community Review Comments, Loretta Davis Acree, Capt. Stacy Fishing Center, Atlantic Beach Causeway, P.O. Box 3013, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 5, 2007

²⁰ Community Review Comments, Capt. Robert Freeman, sunrise@coastalnet.com, Sunrise Charters, 221 Smith Street, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 19, 2007

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

Plans are in the works for the construction of high rise condos, retail shops, restaurants, lodging and many other upscale improvements in the town center, a major change to the small souvenir shop infrastructure that has been in place (Insider's Guide nd).

Today Atlantic Beach is home to about 3,500 year-round residents, although the population grows to 35,000 during the summer (Insider's Guide nd). Many residents are frustrated with the growing number of developments and the population increase.²¹ This frustration was evident during the election of the Atlantic Beach Mayor and Town Council in 2007. Each incumbent was unseated, with residents frustrated that the issue of maintaining a small town atmosphere had not been adequately addressed.²²

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²¹ Personal Communication, Janice Smith, NC Fisheries Association, Area Six Director, P.O. Box 12303, New Bern, NC 28561, 06/27/2006

²² Community Review Comments, Capt. Robert Freeman, sunrise@coastalnet.com, Sunrise Charters, 221 Smith Street, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512, October 19, 2007