

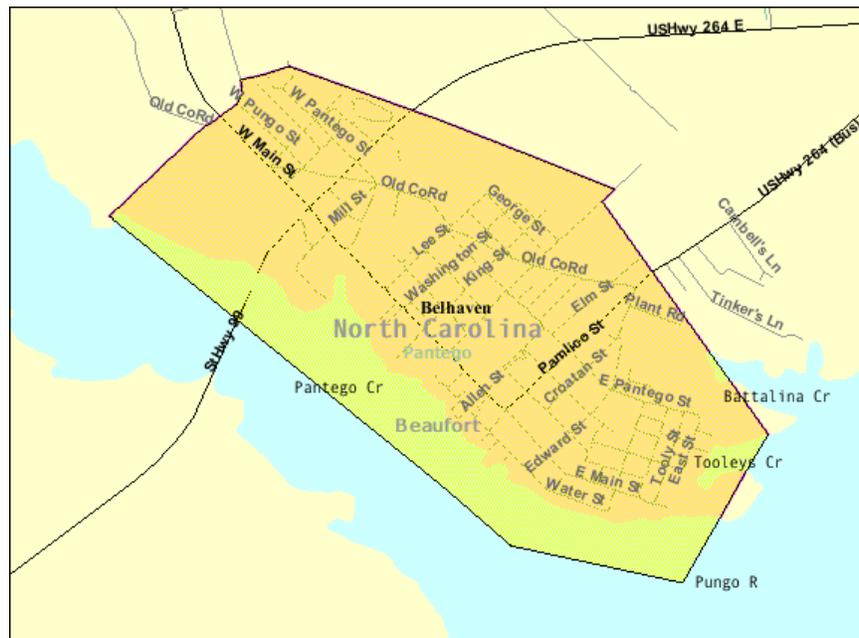
BELHAVEN, NC¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The town of Belhaven, North Carolina (34.7 N, 76.7 W) is located in Beaufort County. Its name means “Beautiful Harbor” and it is a “sleepy town” that lies along the banks of Pantego Creek and the Pungo River (Pamlico.com 2006) in the north eastern part of the state. (*Note: This community was included in the profiling process because of its role in the seafood processing industry, rather than the importance of harvesting activities to the community.*)



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

Historical/Background

Belhaven was selected by the English Colonists because of the areas great weather and large Pine and Oak forests, as well as miles of waterfront property. Beaufort County is known as the “Waterfront Capital of North Carolina” because of its extensive shoreline (Marsh-Wilson 2002). Belhaven was originally named Jack’s Neck and it used to be a busy industrial town with six lumber companies. The town also held a branch of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad. The Railroad, as well as Pamlico River and Pamlico Sound, provided the necessary means to

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.”

transport hundreds of tons of wood products from north eastern North Carolina (Pamlico.com 2006).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data (US Census Bureau 2000a), Belhaven had a total population of 1,986, up 0.1% from the reported population of 1,983 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 45% were male and 55% were female. The median age was 40.6 years and 71.8% of the population was 21 years or older while 22.4% was 62 or older.

The largest age structure for Belhaven (see Figure) is mostly individuals ages 40-49, but there is also a high population in the 60-69 age class, probably due to individuals moving to Belhaven to retire. In all age classes females, greatly out-number the males.

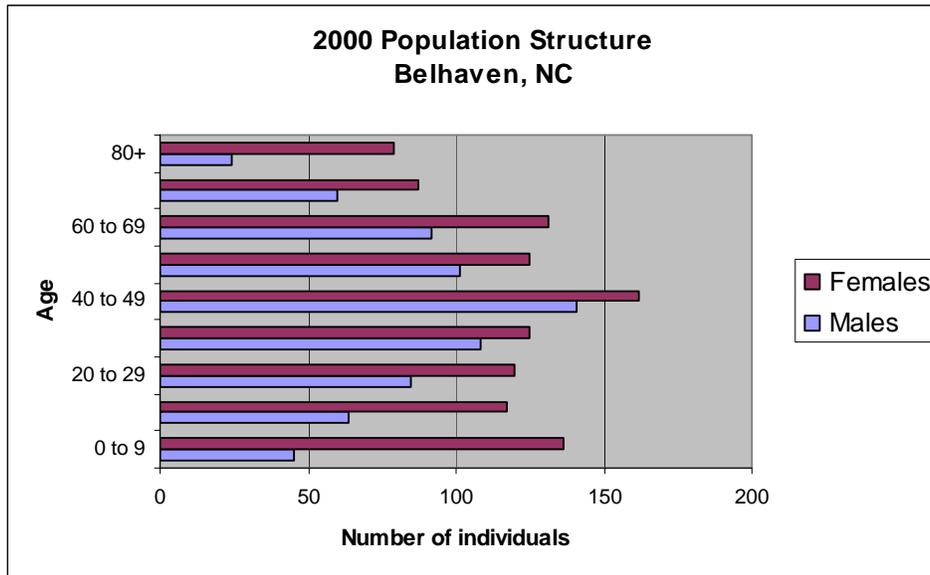


Figure 1. Belhaven's population structure by sex in 2000

The majority of the population was black or African American (61.1%), with 37.5% of residents white, 0.5% Asian, 0.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 2.7% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: United States or American (15.0%), English (4.4%), and other ancestries (54.1%). With regard to region of birth, 86.9% were born in North Carolina, 11.2% were born in a different state and 1.0% were born outside of the U.S. (all of which were 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.

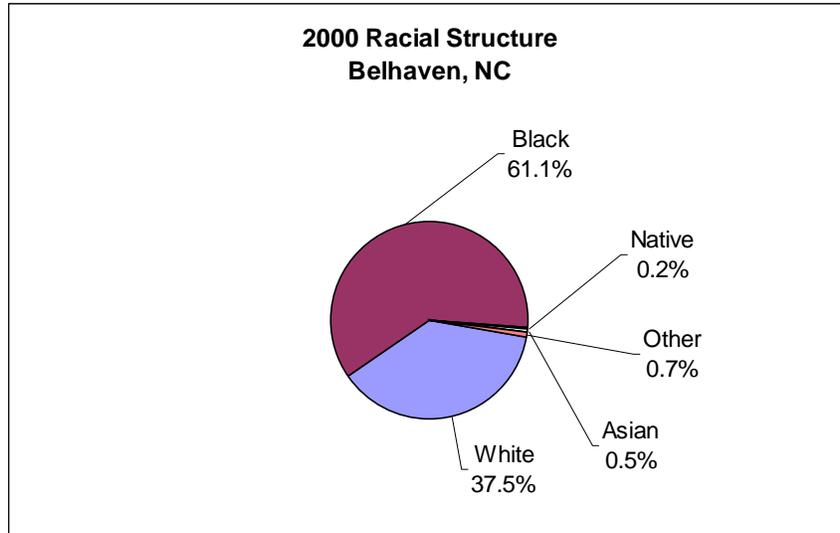


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

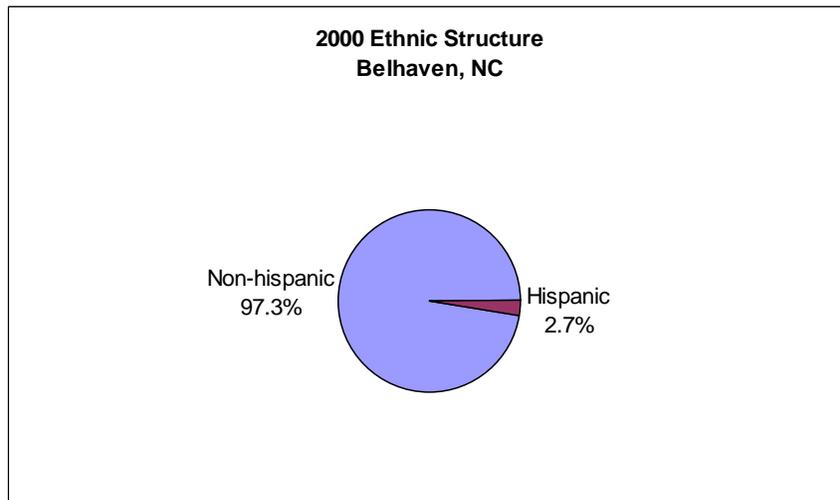


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 97.4% of the population, only English is spoken in the home, leaving 2.6% in homes where a language other than English is spoken, and including 1.3% of the population who spoke English less than 'very well' according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 66.3% were high school graduates or higher and 7.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 12.1% did not reach ninth grade, 21.6% attended some high school but did not graduate, 40.9% completed high school, 14.1% had some college with no degree, 3.7% received an associate's degree, 3.4% earned a bachelor's degree, and 4.2% 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 Beaufort County was the Christian Church and the Church of Christ with 19 congregations and 5,465 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were The United Methodist Church (13 with 3,216 adherents), the Southern Baptist Convention (13 with 3,000 adherents), and the Original Free Will Baptists (12 with 1,674 adherents). The

total number of adherents to any religion was down 1.5% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

The economy of Belhaven was historically highly dependent on fishing and farming, but in the last decade the economic contribution of both of these activities has declined.

Another issue in Beaufort is the continuous problem of flooding. According to a town development plan, the flooding problem along the waterfront in the downtown area may make renovations to some buildings cost prohibitive (Beaufort County Economic Development Commission 2006).

Shrimp fishermen 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 (Sea Grant North Carolina 2006). 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).

Crab fishermen along North Carolina's eastern coast have also seen an increase in competition from the global market, with an influx of imported crab meat from around the world. Many local Crab processors are unable to compete and are losing profit (NCSG 2002).

Cultural attributes

Every September, Belhaven has a crab and art festival (Beaufort County 2006). The crab and art festival was begun by a man named Hank Foremen. The festival is now in its 5th year. Another important event is the annual 4th of July Parade, which has been occurring since the early 1900's, and includes fireworks over the Pungo River (Belhaven Community Chamber of Commerce 2006). Belhaven also hosts the annual [Blue Grass and Hot Air Balloon Festival](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

One of the main industries in Belhaven is fishing. Belhaven also has the largest crab meat processing plant in the state, Sea Safari Ltd., which was founded in 1973 on the Pungo River. Sea Safari is the largest purchaser of the Atlantic Blue Crab in the United States. Atlantic Blue Crabs are known for their sweet meat. In 1985 Sea Safari expanded and purchased The Blue Channel Corporation "Harris Brand Crabmeat" plant, which pioneered the pasteurization of Crab meat. In 2000 Sea Safari purchased the Bakers Crab Company in Belhaven. [Sea Safari](#) offers gourmet hand picked Crab meat, machine picked claw, de-boned minced Crab meat, liquid flavorings and organic plant and animal feeds. Sea Safari has recently begun developing "value-added" seafood products, a project funded by the [North Carolina Fishery Resource Grant Program](#) to better allow North Carolina seafood producers to compete in the global market (Sea Grant North Carolina 2002). [Sea Safari](#) at one time operated five crab-picking plants around North Carolina and employed over 350 people; today they have just one small plant in Belhaven with about 50 employees.⁴ Like in many crab picking facilities around North Carolina, many of those working in the Sea Safari plant are Mexican immigrants (Sea Grant North Carolina 2002). Belhaven is also home to a couple of [fish hatcheries](#) called North State Fisheries, located on Shirley Town Road, and Wiggly Worms and Hatchery on Burbage Road. The Great Belhaven

⁴ Sea Safari, personal communication, June 19, 2006

Bait and Seafood Company, Inc. in Belhaven has been providing wholesale frozen commercial and sport fish bait throughout North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia since 1991.

Over 25% of the workforce in Beaufort County is engaged in manufacturing, particularly at PCS Phosphate in Aurora, across the Pamlico River from Belhaven. Tourism is also a strong economic force in the county. Many residents of Beaufort County's waterfront communities commute to jobs in other counties (Beaufort County 2006a). Beaufort County is also the state's largest producer of soybeans and wood pulp. Along with the communities of Pantego and Bath, Belhaven is called the "Five F Trade Center of Northeastern Beaufort County (Farming, Fishing, Forestry, Phosphate, Fun)" (Beaufort County 2006b).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 45.1% (666 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (Figure 4), of which 4.5% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 40.6% were employed.

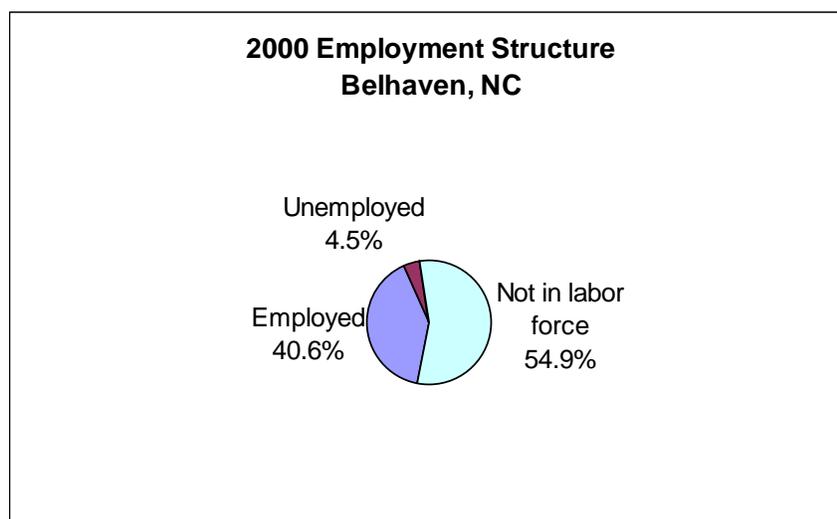


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 44 positions or 7.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found accounted for 9.5% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (24.2%), construction (13.4%), retail trade (12.7%), and manufacturing (12.4%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Belhaven was \$16,674 (up 23.3% from \$13,513 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$11,086. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 6.0% more per year than females.

The average family in Belhaven consists of 2.99 persons. With respect to poverty, 32% of families (up from 14.1% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 35.6% 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, 66.8% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Belhaven had a total of 1,015 housing units, of which 81.5% were occupied and

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.

54.6% were detached one unit homes. Less than twenty percent (16.7%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 30.3% of the total housing units; 96% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$57,600. Of vacant housing units, 2.7% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 34.7% were renter occupied.

Government

The government of Belhaven is made up of a mayor and three town council members (Town of Belhaven 2006).

Fishery involvement in the government

The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) has a Division of Marine Fisheries located in Morehead City, about 80 miles from Belhaven. The Division also operates a Marine Patrol with 59 officers monitoring over 4,000 miles of coastline. The Marine Patrol's goals are to "ensure sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries for the benefit of the people of North Carolina" by checking to see that commercial and recreational fishermen are in compliance with the various harvesting rules. Marine Patrol officers also monitor and inspect "seafood houses, vehicles transporting seafood, and restaurants all over the state" (NCDENR 2006).

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. This is achieved through lobbying federal, state, and local legislators and through public awareness projects.

Fishing assistance centers

[The Small Business Center of Pamlico Community College](#) is located in Bayboro (about 40 miles from Belhaven). They offer free counseling for new and existing businesses on starting and maintaining a small business.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAA) program has provided business education to shrimpers in the state to assist them in recent changes in the market of shrimp, and also provided some training to shrimpers to exit the business if they chose (NCSG 2005).

Other fishing related organizations

Information on other fishing related organizations in Belhaven is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Physical

Belhaven is situated on the north shore of the Pungo River. Following the river, it travels eight miles south east from Belhaven to Pamlico Sound (Town of Belhaven 2006). Belhaven is located on the inter-coastal water way which travels from New England to south Florida. The closest airports are Kinston or Newbern which are 60 minutes away or Warrenfield which is 30 minutes away. The major highways running through the town are US 264 and NC 99 (Beaufort County 2006). Belhaven is 30 miles from Washington, NC, 52 miles from Greenville, and 138

miles from Raleigh by car (MapQuest 2006). A [ferry](#) travels from nearby Bayview to Aurora, across the Pamlico River, and along NC Route 306.

Belhaven has a number of marinas: the [Belhaven Waterway Marina](#) and the [River Forest Marina](#), both of which also offer repair services, and the [Bayside Marina](#). The Wildlife Commission maintains a boat ramp providing access to Pantego Creek (Simpson and Zlotnicki 2006).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁶

Commercial

Belhaven's commercial fishermen allow individuals to go to the docks and purchase "fresh out of the water" crabs, shrimp, or fish (Town of Belhaven 2006).

There is one crab processing plant in Belhaven that employs eight individuals named Sea Safari LTD. In 1985 they purchased "Harris's Brand Crab Meat" and in 2000 they purchased Bakers Crab Company to expand their operations. They were at one time one of the largest purchasers of Crab meat along the North Carolina Sea Coast. [Sea Safari](#)'s website claims the company "purchases live Atlantic Blue Crabs daily from over one hundred crab docks and thousands of independent crabbers along the Atlantic Coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the Chesapeake Bay." However, the Sea Safari facilities have been drastically reduced and the website is out of date;⁷ the crab purchasing is likely not as extensive today as the website claims.

The Great Belhaven Bait and Seafood Co. is a wholesale distributor of frozen commercial and sport fish bait, including ballyhoo, mullet, squid, eels, mackerel, and many other species.

There have been no fish landed in Belhaven except in the "Other" category during the ten year average (Table 1). There appears to be a lot of fish being caught but sold elsewhere. Lowland, NC is nearby, and has landings listed for most years and may be one community where fishermen from Belhaven are landing their catch. Data on which species the Belhaven vessels are targeting is unavailable, but the top three landed species in Beaufort County in 2003 were: *penaeid* shrimp, summer flounder, and blue crab. The total number of vessels home ported in Belhaven has increased from 1997-2006, while the value of landings to these home ported vessels has also increased considerably during the same time period. The number of vessels whose owner's city was Belhaven fluctuated over the ten year time period from 13 to 21 vessels (Table 2).

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.

⁷ Sea Safari, personal communication, June 19, 2006

Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value by Federally Managed Groups of landings in Belhaven

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Other ⁸	6,321	0

Vessels by Year⁹

Table 2. All columns represent vessel permits or landings value combined between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# vessels (owner's city)	Level of fishing home port (\$)	Level of fishing landed port (\$)
1997	5	14	470,514	0
1998	5	15	554,976	0
1999	4	12	827,226	0
2000	6	15	901,498	43,142
2001	7	13	971,824	0
2002	7	13	1,301,906	0
2003	7	13	1,411,133	0
2004	12	16	1,355,888	19,540
2005	17	21	2,919,607	523
2006	13	16	2,104,387	0

Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁰

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

In Belhaven, the Pungo River and its tributaries along with Pamlico Sound and its tributaries are very popular with Sport Fishermen (Belhavennc.us 2006). Crabbing here is also a popular recreational activity.

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

The town of Belhaven is working on an extensive [re-development project](#) to revitalize the downtown area and to build up some un-used waterfront property with a residential and marina development. The new plans include allowing continued public access at key sites along the waterfront. This includes developing a site formerly occupied by one of Sea Safari's vacant crab picking houses and had other former water-dependent uses.

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.

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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