

Fishing Community Vulnerability Profile: Port Clyde, Maine

Teresa R. Johnson, Anna Henry & Cameron Thompson

August 2013 | Orono, ME: Maine Sea Grant College Program

Introduction

Commercial fishing is an important economic and cultural element of Maine's coastal communities. Maine fishing communities are suffering from loss of access to fisheries and infrastructure, regulatory impacts and changing resource abundance. Although fisheries managers are required to assess impacts of fisheries regulations on fishing communities, this has proven difficult due to the lack of information regarding the current and historical importance of fishing in these communities and an understanding of how communities respond to change. Vulnerability profiles are a useful tool to gather the comprehensive information necessary to determine cumulative impacts of management decisions on specific communities.

We conducted six semi-structured (Bernard 2005) and seven oral history interviews (Ritchie 2003) with fishermen, other community members and government officials in Port Clyde, Maine from October 2010 to December 2011. In addition, we conducted 11 interviews with business and households in the area. These interviews focused on threats contributing to resilience and vulnerability in the fishing community of Port Clyde and the ways in which fishermen have responded to these threats. Initial interview informants were selected with the help of Maine Sea Grant Marine Extension Team members and community leaders. Subsequent informants were selected using a snowball sampling approach (Bernard 2005). All interviews were recorded and all oral histories and a majority of semi-structured interviews were transcribed. Detailed notes were taken from other semi-structured interviews. All data were analyzed with multiple iterations of coding following a modified grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Strauss and Corbin 1990) using QSR NVivo 9 data analysis software. This profile focuses on common themes from these interviews as well as information compiled from secondary research and analysis of quantitative socioeconomic indicators.

Geography and History

“The village at Port Clyde is comprised of the most diverse mix of land uses within St. George. Founded as a fishing village, Port Clyde has retained its character; however, it has witnessed a transition of waterfront land use.”¹

¹ St. George. 2007. The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of St. George, Knox County, State of Maine. Revised 2007.

Port Clyde is somewhat isolated compared to other fishing communities in Maine. A village within the town of St. George, it is located in the Midcoast region at the southernmost end of the long St. George peninsula. It is bordered on the west by the St. George River and Muscongus Bay and on the east by Penobscot Bay. State Highway 131 connects Port Clyde and Thomaston, and this is the main road on the peninsula. St. George also includes the small villages of Clark Island, Elmore, Glenmere, Long Cove, Martinsville, Spruce Head, Tenants Harbor, Wildac, Willardham, and Wallston, as well as numerous islands. Tenants Harbor is the largest and most central village, and it is the commercial center of St. George. Both Tenants Harbor and Spruce Head are also fishing communities. Port Clyde is 12 miles from Spruce Head, 15 miles from Thomaston, and 17 miles from Rockland. The village occupies a relatively small land area and its shoreline is densely utilized by residential, commercial and municipal properties, leaving no space for expansion.



Map of Port Clyde, Maine in Muscongus Bay

Samuel Waldo, one of the original holders of the land patent covering the region, agreed to leave this land for the native inhabitants, and as a result Port Clyde remained unsettled by Europeans until after the French and Indian War (1763). Settlement grew after the Revolutionary War when Waldo, a loyalist, had his land confiscated. In the 1800s, major industries included cutting cordwood for the Boston market, timber production, shipbuilding, and small-scale farming. Granite quarrying began in 1830. Many individuals found employment as sailors and captains as well. Population peaked around 1880 at about 3,000. Quarrying brought Irish and then Swedish immigrant stonecutters, adding a

different ethnic population, although many Irish and Swedes left the area after the quarries declined. The last quarry closed in the early 1960s.²

Throughout St. George's history, fishing has been an important economic activity. Several canneries and fish processors have operated out of Port Clyde, including factories canning sardines, lobsters, and mussels (NOAA 2009). None of these operations remain today, with the last clam canning business closing in 2008 (NOAA 2009). At the end of the 19th century a large cold storage facility was established on the south side of Fisherman Cove. The sardine industry was quite important to Port Clyde with several different owners operating out of the local factory until it finally burned down in 1970. From the quote below it is readily apparent that Port Clyde's economy has long focused on extraction of marine resources, and has continued to evolve as technology, resources and markets changed.

"In a nutshell, this is the story: clam factory—gone; sardine factory—gone; cold storage—gone; pogy factory—gone. Supporting business to the fishing industry which has gone include the salt factory, ice business, shipyard, sawmill, blacksmith shops, sailmaker and stores selling marine supplies. However, the community has adjusted to the changing fishing environment to become a vibrant and prosperous village built around the backbone of the lobster industry."

The town has been an important tourist destination since the late 1800s as well as a refuge for artists and writers. This pattern increased in the 1960s and the influx of new, wealthier individuals differs in that many are now taking up year-round residence. Notably residents include three generations of the Wyeth family who have summered on the peninsula, and have contributed to the development of an artist community.³ The Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, John Roberts, has a home on Hupper Island, across from Marshall Point Lighthouse. Heiress to famous retailer L.L. Bean, Linda Bean, is another important property owner in Port Clyde having bought many residential and commercial properties in the past few years.⁴ This pattern of people "from away" owning property is a significant driver of change in the community.

² Saint George town website, stgeorgemaine.com.

³ lighthouse.cc/marshall/history.html

⁴ Idlebrook, C. 2010. Citizen Bean. The Bollard, posted Nov. 11, 2010.



Marshall Point Lighthouse

There is no park or resort in the area; tourism here took the form of summer cottages and houses in choice locations, often with ocean views. The rural character of the community is supported by several zoning ordinances restricting development and growth in St. George. One of the few open spaces accessible to the public is the Marshall Point Light station, which was purchased by the town from the U.S. Coast guard in 1994. West of the point is the harbor area of Port Clyde, which is situated between the peninsula and Hupper Island. Within the harbor is the center of village activity, much of which is concerned with water access for fishing, recreation and transport. The Port Clyde town landing is located here, at the end of Route 131; the facility includes a pier extending into the harbor and a launch ramp. At the adjacent property, the Monhegan Boat line has a well-established ferry terminal that provides the island with passenger and freight service. The harbor area has limited public parking and frequently fills to capacity with people accessing the several services and businesses.

Economic and Demographic Profile⁵

"This is a community that is very diverse as far as income, we have one of the wealthiest people in the country, lives here in the summer, we have people who are on food stamps, and we have a growing retirement community... "

A comparison to Maine shows that St. George is poorer than the state average and also has a relatively high unemployment rate. In contrast to the below-average incomes are increasingly valuable residential properties. Meanwhile, there is a significant portion of the local population with retirement and social security income.

Median household income in Port Clyde was \$39,777 in 2010 and average per capita income was \$24,565, compared to the state median of \$46,933 and average of \$25,386, respectively. Port Clyde features more households with incomes from Social Security and retirement compared to Maine and the nation (Table 1). In 2010, 9.4% of families and 17.4% of individuals fell below the poverty threshold (U.S. Census Bureau 2010), compared to state levels of 8.4% of families and 12.6% of individuals living in poverty. Fewer households depend on food stamps compared to the state average (SNAPS, Table 1). Elderly poverty rates are also high in St. George, with 9.2% of all persons over 65 falling below the poverty line (Census 2010).

Household income (%)	Earnings	Social Security	Retirement	SNAP
United States	79.7	27.5	17.5	9.3
Maine	76.5	31.6	18.8	13.6
St. George	68.2	50	25.3	6.1

Table 1: Percent of households with income from earning, social security, retirement and SNAP. Source: ACS 2010.

According to the U.S. Census 2010, 56.3% of the total population 16 years of age and older was in the labor force. Of the civilian labor force, 8.6% were unemployed, compared to 6.5% in the state. Top occupations were management, business, science, and arts occupations (29%), natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (25.8%), and sales and office occupation (25.3%). Self-employed workers, another category where fishermen could be found, accounted for 23% of all workers. As an industry sector providing employment **agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining occupations**

⁵Economic and demographic data were obtained from the American Factfinder (factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml). Population and housing data are from the 2010 U.S. Census and economic data are from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year. Port Clyde is a village in the town of St. George; reported population and economic statistics are not available at the village level.

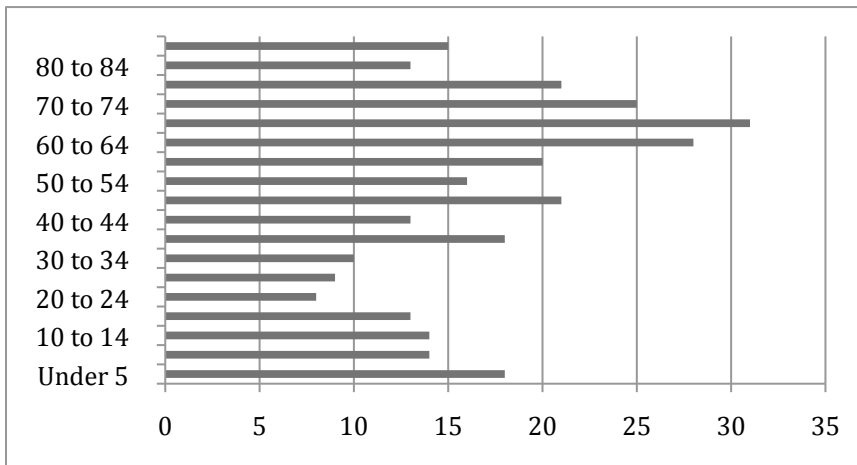
accounted for 20.3% of all jobs, which is significantly higher than the state average (Table 2). A large portion of the working population in St. George commutes to jobs outside of the town.

Employment (%)	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	Retail trade	Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	Education, health care and social assistance
United States	1.9	11.5	8.9	22.1
Maine	2.5	13.9	8.1	26.1
St. George	20.3	14.9	9.3	20.5

Table 2: Percentage of occupations in Port Clyde from agriculture, forestry, hunting, and mining; retail trade; arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services; and education, health care, and social assistance. Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Population declined with the decline in the granite industry. Since 1960, the population has been increasing with new migrants to the community. St. George population rose from 2,261 persons in 1990 to 2,591 in 2010. The population is relatively homogenous; in 2010, 98.8% identified themselves as white. The Port Clyde village within St. George had a population of 307 in 2010.

St. George’s population is aging and is older than the state as a whole. The median age in 2010 was 51.7, compared to 47.2 in Maine, and 37.2 in the U.S. About 24.9% of the population was over 65, compared to 15.9% in Maine. The trend is more pronounced for the village of Port Clyde with 34.1% of the population 65 years or older and a median age of 54.9. It has been recognized that the town has become an attractive destination for retirees, many of whom first buy a seasonal home before moving in full-time.



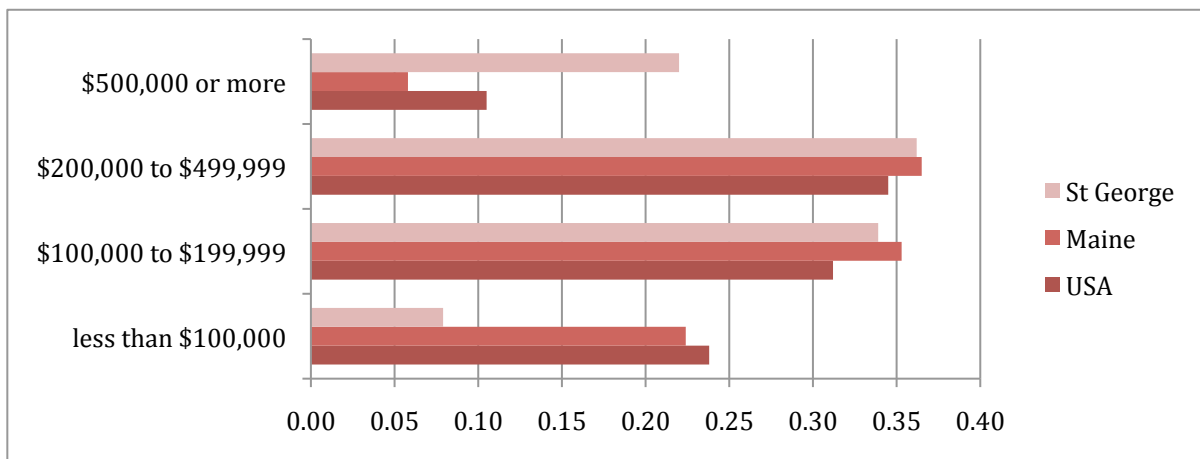
St. George population by age group in 2010. Data source: US Census.

Compared to the rest of the country, Maine has a high rate of seasonally vacant houses. St. George's rate is higher than the state and this has been increasing, meanwhile Port Clyde's number is even greater with nearly half of the properties seasonally vacant (Table 3). In the last 10 years the rate for St. George went up 1 percentage point, an upward trend that has been ongoing since at least the 1980s. The seasonality of Port Clyde is well recognized, with parking congestion evaporating and ferry services to Monhegan dwindling during the winter months. Both demographic trends and interviews indicate that there has been an influx of retirees and amenity migrants many of whom are seasonal residents.

Seasonal Housing (%)	2000	2010
United States	3.1	3.5
Maine	15.6	16.4
St George	34.0	35.2
Port Clyde	N/A	48.1

Table 3. Percentage of seasonal households. Source: U.S. Census.

Housing in St. George is becoming less affordable as shorefront property prices continue to inflate along with similarly desirable properties with water views. At \$176,200, the state's median house value is comparable to the nation's \$179,900, but St. George's \$258,200 far surpasses those. Furthermore, the housing stock of St. George is top heavy with only 7.9% under \$100,000.



Percent housing stock in 2010 by price bracket. Data source: U.S. Census.

Tourism

"I think it has been discovered, so the little secret is out, so this quite little town of Port Clyde, I think more and more people are hearing about it and coming, which again for the local people it's good because it provides money."

The town of St. George has experienced an increase in tourism revenue in the past few decades, but the economic volume remains subdued compared to nearby destinations. Port Clyde is an exception, since it is the waypoint for visitors who are traveling to Monhegan Island. New Harbor, Boothbay and Port Clyde host ferry terminals that provide passenger service to the Island, but only Port Clyde continues its service through the winter months.⁶ Along with transportation to Monhegan, the boat line provides several sightseeing trips and charters, including a Puffin Cruise, which only became possible after the Audubon Society restored one of the seabird's nesting sites.⁷ The activity at the ferry terminal greatly increases tourist traffic through the Port Clyde village, which helps the few local businesses. Restaurants and retailers cater to this clientele, as well as an operation offering kayaking trips, but apart from two bed and breakfast inns there are no accommodations. Instead, many of the summer visitors to Port Clyde stay in weekly rentals. As in all Maine coastal communities, the tourist economy and activity is restricted primarily to the summer season, but here it is further limited by the available space and restrictive municipal ordinances.

Gentrification

As in many communities throughout Maine, Port Clyde has witnessed a decline in its productive economy, and the rise of the service sector. The footprint of industry, manufacturing and resource extraction has diminished with fisheries remaining as the last of its kind. However, it, too, is decreasing in scale and diversity, with regulations and stock declines squeezing many fishermen out. What is left seems viable for the moment, but the community like many others depends heavily on the lobster fishery. The lack of economic opportunity and increasing cost of living has forced many residents to leave the area. Concurrent with this loss of productive activity and those who relied on it has been a pattern of "amenity migrants" purchasing property in the village to take advantage of the relative affordability, natural amenities, and rural lifestyle.

The influx of "people from away" and tourists has led to the revitalization of many properties in Port Clyde. Many of these migrants visited the area as tourists and later decided to purchase a seasonal home with the intent to retire there in the future. It is often reported that those who are moving to the area for its amenities are relatively

⁶ monheganwelcome.com/getthere.html

⁷ projectpuffin.org/History.html

wealthy, bringing money from a previous home sale and purchasing relatively affordable properties with assets left over. Thus, they are not dependent on the local economy, but increase demand for local services. This aspect of the economy is well recognized by respondents as indicated in this statement by one fisherman: "They'll rent a mooring. They'll go to the store and they go to the restaurants. It's part of tourism. I have an expression, "Help keep Maine green. Bring your money and spend it."

Box 1: "A Quaint Fishing Village"



"People love to see the coast of Maine, this is your archetypical little Maine coast fishing village, and the scenery and New England fishing aura is Port Clyde spelled out."

Captured in the quote above is a narrative of Port Clyde as a "quaint fishing village," which in this context is an amenity to be consumed (Change 2000). Many visitors sightseeing in the area seek out the fishing industry and enjoy watching the activity on the water. Perhaps due to its proximity to the coast and the coinciding of its season with summer tourism, lobstering has received much of the attention. Respondents express how tourists see fishermen as linked to a historic and authentic way of life that no longer exists elsewhere. Thus, tourists want to be able to consume lobster, and watch the boats as they skirt around the many inlets and coves to haul their traps. The working waterfront as a theme to be consumed by tourists may have real economic value. One study by Ellingson and Seidl (2009) found that without ranching as a background for tourism in the western U.S., visitors would reduce trip length and with it revenue could drop \$230 per person. In a similar manner, fishing activity and the narrative surrounding it may be attracting tourists and generating greater revenue. Linda Bean's Perfect Maine uses the characterization to market various lobster-focused restaurants and rental properties in Port Clyde, as exemplified by their website's introduction: "As the fog lifts off the morning waters of our working harbors, the horizon is expanded to reveal lobster boats...rocky shores...spruce ledges and islands. And the waterfront awakens as it has for generations of working families."

A few of the fishermen are taking advantage of the situation and provide "lobster tours," in which they take tourists on boat rides and demonstrate how to catch lobsters in traps. Inadvertently the fishermen are fitting the "mariner cowboy" narrative that has already been created for them. The consumable value of the idyllic fishing village will certainly provide an alternative source of income. However, the identity struggle between the consumable and productive fishing village also exposes the community to a source of conflict (Gosnell and Abrams 2009). Furthermore, Chang (2000) asserts that the process of theming reduces the adaptive capacity of communities since their activities must follow a certain narrative.

As described above there are several businesses that cater to tourists and “amenity migrants.” Fishermen may also take advantage of this clientele, by directly retailing quality product and increasing sale revenue. Port Clyde Fresh Catch exemplifies this strategy by marketing a local product steeped in the heritage and traditions of the fishing community. Going a step further, some fishermen have begun providing guided lobster tours, during which they demonstrate to locals how the animals are caught with traps (Box 1). There are also many properties in town which are owned by or accommodate amenity migrants who occupy them for the summer season. Fishermen who need to supplement their income can find work by servicing these properties, according to some, this is an increasingly popular strategy:

"I made a joke the other day. I said, "Pretty soon all of us are going to own a one ton dump truck and excavator. [Laughter] We're gonna be running around planting trees for people. You know, I think a lot of them are doing that and trying to find other things to get into besides just lobstering."

Although fishing remains the most important livelihood within the community, it is evident that Port Clyde has transitioned toward the service sector. The arts community and creative economy have been important aspects of this transition, which is reminiscent of many gentrified urban communities (Lees 2008). However, the limited space and relative isolation that may prevent sprawling development also hinders the progression of economic development toward higher-paying service sector jobs (Rasker and Hansen 2000).

"...there's the negative thing because they bought the land and the properties that the fisherman once owned it and you know he's never gonna get it back because we all know what the properties cost..."

The demand for shorefront property by amenity migrants has led to an appreciation of property values throughout the coast and with these rising housing prices have come escalating taxes. The increasing cost of living has its effect on the local inhabitants as reported by respondents; the high cost of housing has resulted in “locals” being unable to purchase property in their community. Furthermore, if they happen to already own, or inherited property, they may still be displaced due to the high property taxes. Coping with these increasing costs, many people have started moving outside the community and to back roads away from the water where housing and taxes are significantly cheaper. Many fishermen no longer live in Port Clyde, but instead choose to reside in the surrounding towns where cost of living is lower. This pattern of displacement is a clear indication of gentrification in these communities and a possible source of conflict for fishermen (Hamnett 1991). During interviews it was frequently reported that fishermen's access to the water was becoming more consolidated as they've lost waterfront property with private docks. This has made them reliant on the few remaining facilities, and while access is assured for the time being, any property without legal protections could easily be lost to fishermen. If the productive value of fishing

activity falls while its consumptive value increases, a gentrification of the working waterfront could occur and fishermen may be displaced in favor of private uses.

Non-fishing maritime industries

The Monhegan Boat Line is the largest single employer in Port Clyde (St. George 2007). In addition to transporting an average of 150 people per day from Port Clyde to Monhegan Island in the summer months (St. George 2007), the Boat Line also handles approximately 85% of the freight carried to the Island. “We bring everything you can think of out there... passenger, freight, we also carry the mail” (Barstows personal communication). The Boat Line also runs sightseeing cruises and charter trips in the area.



The wharf at Port Clyde with the Monhegan Boat Line at left.

Known for shipbuilding in the early to mid-1800s, the greater Port Clyde area is still home to numerous boatbuilding and repair companies (St. George 2007). While these are much smaller than the industrial shipyards of the past their existence demonstrates the continued importance of maritime life in the area.

Fishing profile

The harbor in Port Clyde was originally named Herring Gut for the abundant fish that ran through the bay.⁸ While the fisheries have changed and herring are no longer commonly fished in Port Clyde, the importance of fishing in the community continues to be strong. In 2011, Port Clyde ranked the tenth largest fishing port in Maine with a total landed value of \$8.24 million.⁹ Today, key fisheries in Port Clyde are lobsters, groundfish, and shrimp.¹⁰

Lobsters are by far the largest catch in Port Clyde. In 2007 there were 312 lobster boats in St. George. There are also numerous dealers in the area and the town estimates the fishery employs 200 people (St. George 2007). Spruce Head's Atwood Lobster Company is the largest lobster distributor in the state, selling around four million pounds a year in the late 2000s (NOAA 2009). It was the largest buyer in St. George and one of the state's largest in the 1970s (Acheson et al. 1980). Lobster landings have increased in recent history throughout the state, with record landings in pounds and value reported in 2011 (DMR). However, low prices received in the early summer of 2012 had many lobster fishermen finding it difficult to cover their expenses and worried for the future viability of the fishery.

Port Clyde is the second largest groundfish port in Maine, and the only groundfish port north of Portland. Many groundfishermen in Port Clyde are members of the Port Clyde Community Groundfish Sector under the federal Northeast Multispecies Fisheries Management Plan and fish primarily for flounder, cod, haddock, pollock and hake. In 2012 the Port Clyde Sector had 22 vessels actively fishing groundfish,¹¹ although the number of vessels that actually fish out of Port Clyde is closer to 12 (Libby 2012). While the groundfishing fleet has experienced a marked decline over the past 30 years, fishermen in Port Clyde are hopeful that the implementation of sector management will turn the fishery around. One fisherman described the sectors as a "cooperative group of fishermen that I belong to that pool our catch together so that we can trade and lease among one another, to keep each other out on the water longer each year. It's got to the point, going with catch histories, that we're low in some stocks. We never get near catching our limit in others, so it's a balancing act to try and stay out on the water and put enough money together to cover our bills each year." While the transition to sector management has been controversial through much of the Northeast, most groundfishermen in Port Clyde share this view that while times are tough, sector management is a step in the right direction.¹²

⁸ lighthouse.cc/marshall/history.html

⁹ maine.gov/dmr/commercialfishing/documents/Top10ports_000.pdf

¹⁰ Acheson reported that the main fisheries in the late 1970s were lobsters (72 full-time, 45 part-time fishermen), groundfish (16 boats in Tenants Harbor and Port Clyde), herring (at least two boats who did some seining out of Port Clyde), and clams (15-18 fishermen earned substantial income digging clams).

¹¹ nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sectordocs/2012OpsPlans

¹² wch6.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=169547

Many people who harvest groundfish also harvest shrimp in the winter providing an important, yet inconsistent, supplement to their groundfishing income. One fisherman describes the shrimp fishery as “up and down, it’s been pretty much unstable from day one.” One reason for this is that shrimp is one of the few open-access fisheries with no moratoriums on licenses. This has led to overharvesting, reductions in catch limits, and the season closing early in recent years. Many shrimp fishermen are now working with managers to devise effort controls because, as one fisherman stated, “without control of effort we have no fishery.” There are also discussions on limiting entry in this fishery.

Clams are also an important fishery in Port Clyde (although less so than the aforementioned species) and St. George is part of the Georges River Regional Clam Management Plan. Clamming license holders must complete ten hours of “conservation time,” participating in activities such as shoreline cleanup, reseeding, water quality monitoring or fundraising.

Until recently, mussel aquaculture was an important fishery in the area. Great Eastern Mussel Farms in Tenants Harbor employed around 50 people (NOAA 2009). However, in June of 2008, they announced their closure after almost 30 years of business.

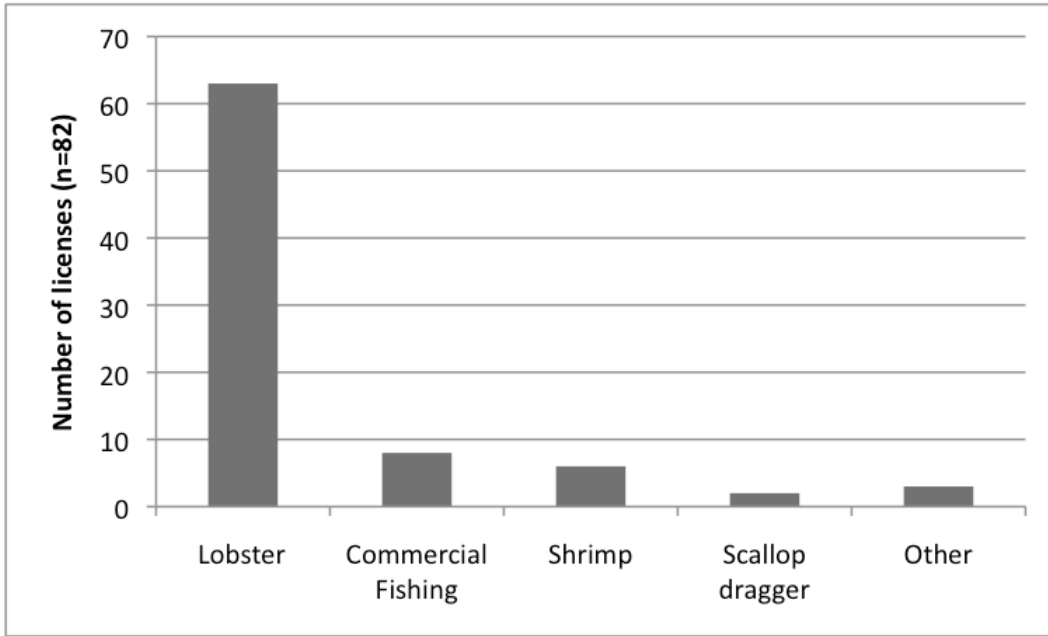
Sea Venture Charters, a recreational fishing company operating out of St. George, specializes in bluefin tuna and shark tag-and-release fishing. While recreational boating is popular in the area, recreational fishing is not common in Port Clyde.

Participation in the fisheries sector

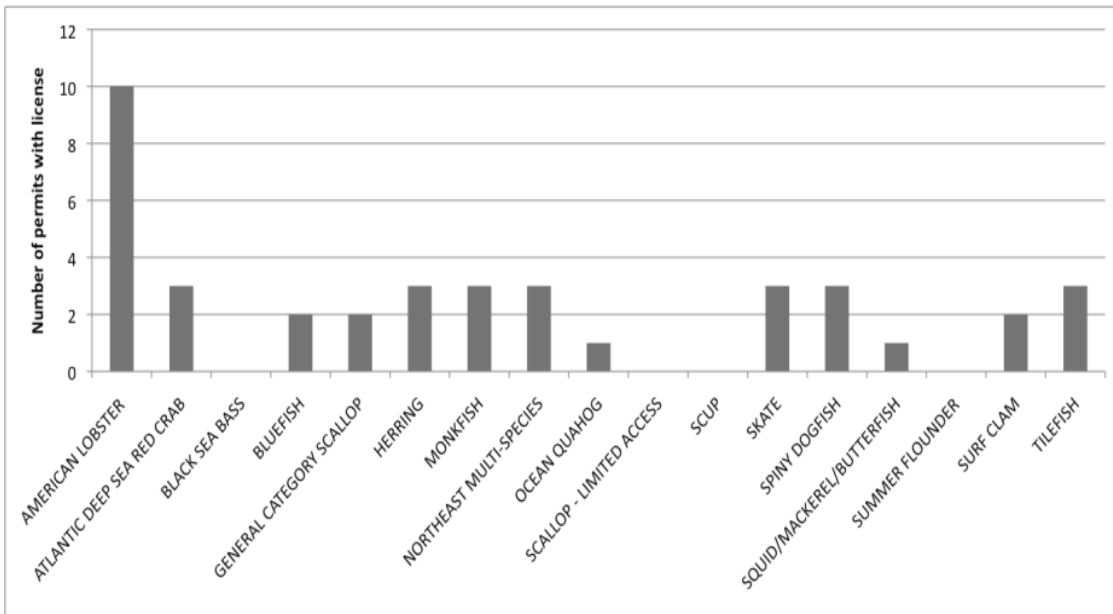
One way of illustrating the importance of commercial fisheries in Port Clyde is to look at the number of marine resource harvesting licenses issued by the state (Maine DMR 2011). In 2011, 66 individuals held a total of 82 state licenses in Port Clyde. Most licenses were for lobster, followed by commercial fishing, shrimp and scallop. However, some fishermen who fish out of Port Clyde may live in neighboring towns, so these data may underestimate the importance of fishing in Port Clyde. This does not include municipal clam licenses.

Similarly, availability of federal licenses is another indicator of the fishing capacity in communities.¹³ In 2011, 12 federal permits listing Port Clyde as the vessel owner’s address held a total of 39 permits. Of those 12 permits, 10 held a federal lobster license. These vessel permits included three permits for multispecies groundfish, herring, deep-sea crab, and monkfish. Two permits allowed fishing for surfclams, while one allowed harvesting ocean quahogs. In 2011, 15 permit holders listed Port Clyde as their homeport, while 17 listed it as their principal port. The average length of the 12 vessels with federal permits is 39.5 feet (32-51 feet range).

¹³ Northeast Region Permit Database, nero.noaa.gov/permits/data/



Numbers of state licenses held in Port Clyde in 2011. Other includes commercial shellfish, quahog, and commercial pelagic/anadromous. Source: Maine DMR 2011.



Number of federal licenses held in Port Clyde in 2011. Source: NMFS Permit Data.

Fisheries infrastructure and support

Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association, located in Port Clyde, owns and operates the Fishermen’s Co-op, which includes a pier, landing facilities, and a cooperative marketing business (see box). The Fishermen’s Association markets under and promotes the “Port Clyde Fresh Catch” brand, which is a “community-supported fishery.” The concept is modeled on “community-supported agriculture” and stresses quality, freshness, sustainability, and local jobs. Individuals or businesses buy shares and get deliveries based on seasonal availability. The Fishermen’s Association delivers in nearby areas but also has customers in Rhode Island and New York and will ship anywhere in the U.S. via UPS (Mid-Coast Fishermen’s Association 2011). The co-op also makes sales online and at local farmers markets in an effort to receive larger profits by selling directly to consumers.

Box 2: Port Clyde Fishermen’s Cooperative Wharf

Loss of Waterfront Access: Of Maine’s 5,300 miles of Coastline, only 20 miles of true working waterfront remain	Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program: invests state funds in waterfront properties to be preserved for commercial fishing operations in perpetuity	Port Clyde Co-op Wharf: Supports 28 lobster boats, 12 draggers
<p>“The waterfront’s getting’ eaten up with other more economically-sound things than fishing.”</p> <p>“our shorefront which used to be oh, probably 80 percent owned by the fishermen, now it’s maybe 10, 15 percent of the town is now owned by the fishermen...”</p> <p>“The draggers lost access...They lost that dock over there and then if we didn’t build this they’d have no place to go.”</p>	<p>Total project cost: \$500,000 including \$340,000 Working Waterfront grant and additional private and NGO funding</p> <p>“...the fishermen can’t afford to keep (waterfront property), so they lose their docks or have to sell them...”</p> <p>“Unless you’re a millionaire, nobody can afford to buy any property on the coast.”</p>	<p>“That was the intent of us as co-op members, that we want that to stay as a commercial fishing dock in Port Clyde because we’re losing all the docks around us.”</p> <p>“You have to have fishermen owning the property. If not, you’re very vulnerable and you don’t know what the future holds.”</p> <p>“It will always be open to the future fishermen and the fishery and so it keeps access to the working waterfront”</p>



In addition to the co-op there are numerous lobster buyers in the area and in August, 2012, a new lobster processing plant was scheduled to open its doors in Tenants Harbor. The Sea Hag Seafood Plant is located in the old home of Great Eastern Mussel and has the capacity to process 40,000 pounds per day (Hendrix 2008).

Although there is no fueling station in Port Clyde, a local fuel truck will come on call to meet boats in need of fuel. Generally, lobster fishermen feel that infrastructure in Port Clyde is sufficient: "Not only has things that the lobstermen work with improved over the years, but so are the people who fishermen sell their products to. You go to a dock today, they got fork lifts, hydraulic hoist, freezers, coolers...I don't see how they could improve a heck of a lot more right now."

Groundfishermen tell a different story. One fisherman estimated that they have "lost probably...at least 70 percent of it here locally." Another reported that "it would be nice if there was an ice machine down there (at the dock) or a buyer that would come right down and take our fish." There is no ice facility in Port Clyde so fishermen have to drive approximately 18 miles to O'Hara's in Rockland, load their trucks with ice, return to Port Clyde and shovel it aboard their boats. When they return from fishing trips, they have to make another trip to bring their product to market. While Port Clyde Fresh Catch has improved the situation by providing a local buyer for groundfish and shrimp, they generally do not have the demand or the facilities to handle the complete amount of fish landed in town so fishermen truck their excess catch to the Portland Fish Exchange.

The closest marine supply stores are located in Rockland and while they carry sufficient supplies for lobstering, they carry limited inventory in groundfish and shrimping gear. These fishermen often have to drive to Portland to purchase replacement gear or order it through the mail or online. Often there is a considerable waiting period for orders to come in and fishermen have missed sizeable portions of the fishing season while waiting for replacement gear. This has changed in the past 30 years as there used to be two gear stores between Port Clyde and Rockland where, according to one fishermen who owns a dragger, "you could go out and buy anything you need...all your dragging gear...your nets and everything involved with it."

Although there are numerous shipyards in the area, mostly in Rockland, they mainly cater to recreational boaters and as a result their prices have risen in recent years. Many fishermen have responded by doing their own maintenance. For the past few years, the owners of the Monhegan Boat Line have generously allowed fishermen who couldn't otherwise afford it to haul their boats out on their blocks and use their equipment for maintenance free of charge. The owner described this informal agreement to help out the draggers as follows:

“They’re all the same size vessels we have and they’re all our friends. I mean, they give us a fish once in a while or a hake or a haddock if we ask for it. And he goes down there and works on a net reel for eight hours, ten hours, welding, pulling, banging it, straightening, taking them apart and heating them and straightening them out and bending them back in shape and re-welding them back up, putting them back and then running all the hydraulics on them. If you went to Rockland for that, there’d be \$75 an hour.”

Fishing industry support institutions

Port Clyde has numerous institutions that support the fishing industry with membership and organization of both fishermen and those outside of the fishing community. The Island Institute, a nonprofit organization located in nearby Rockland, has been instrumental providing organizational support and securing financial backing for many initiatives in the Port Clyde fishing community (see Box 2).

The Midcoast (now Maine Coast) Fishermen’s Association was founded by fishermen in Port Clyde in 2006 in response to a feeling of marginalization of small fishing communities in management decisions. They were instrumental in developing the Port Clyde Sector as well as developing Port Clyde Fresh Catch (mentioned above) and have worked on numerous initiatives to support the fishing community including partnering with research institutions to develop fishing innovations such as more efficient gear and by-catch reductions and developing the Maine State Permit Bank to ensure access to groundfish permits for future generations of community fishermen. In 2011, they changed the name to the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association to reflect their growing membership and geographic coverage.

The Midcoast Maine Fishing Heritage Alliance was founded in 2009 by concerned community members who are generally not directly involved in the fishing industry. The organization works “to educate others about fishing, its history in the region and the preventable safety risks experienced by the fishing community (in order) to ensure that the fishing culture survives.”¹⁴ The group has been successful in raising money to create a voucher system that funds fishermen’s safety projects. One fisherman describes his involvement in the program and the benefits he received:

“What you have to do is you have to go out and do public education. I was at the fair this last weekend and I was telling people about sustainability of fishing gear and things we’re doing in Port Clyde...When I do that, they give me a voucher for \$100 for every hour that I sit and talk

¹⁴ midcoastfishingheritage.org/wordpress/?page_id=12

to folks. Last year I was able to re-pack my life raft and buy a new flag kit and rig my moorings for the vouchers that I got. That saved me money.”

The University of Maine Sea Grant and Cooperative Extension has an office in Waldoboro. The local Marine Extension Team member, Sherm Hoyt, who retired in 2012, provided local support to fishermen and other community members.

Cultural attributes related to fisheries and the sea

“The fabric of Port Clyde is so permeated with the history, the ties to the ocean...”

In 2008 a fishermen’s memorial was dedicated near Marshall Point lighthouse, honoring 11 fishermen who have died at sea since 1941. The impetus for the memorial occurred in 2006 when a local groundfisherman’s boat sank and he was lost at sea. For the next two years the community held raffles, suppers and auctions to raise the funds necessary to erect the monument.



Port Clyde Fishermen’s Memorial

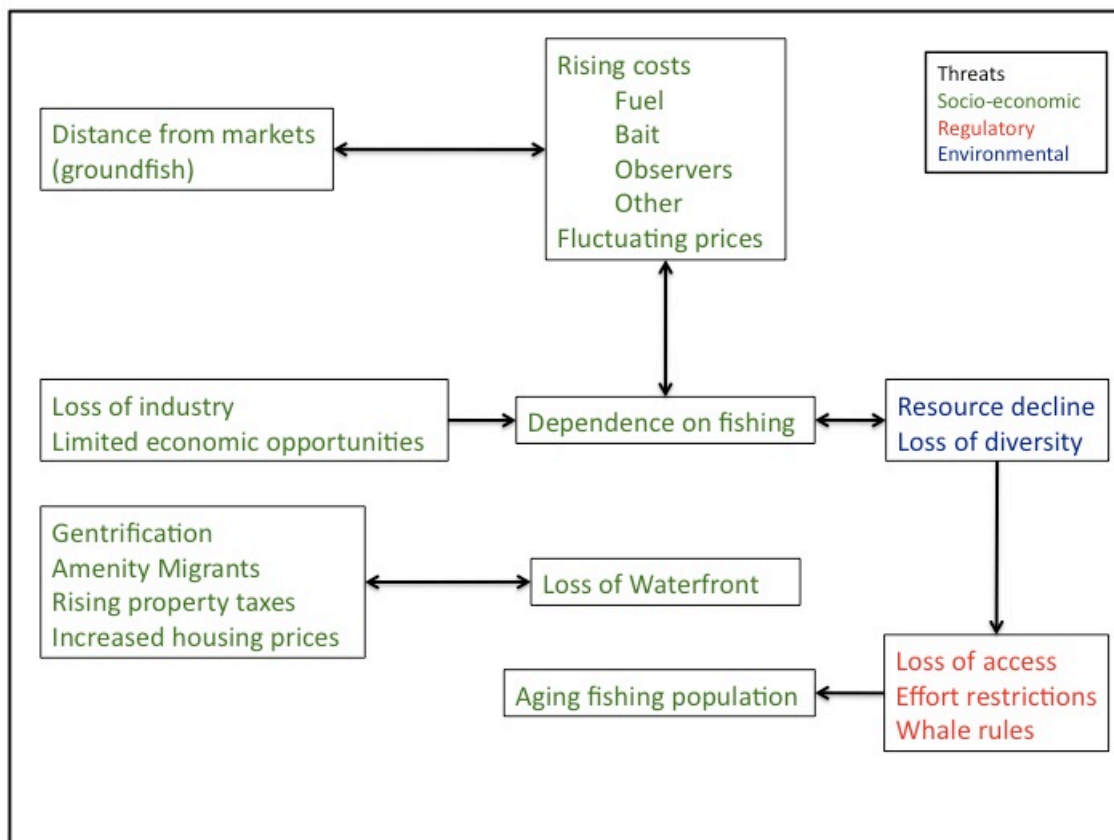
A semi-annual “Rock the Dock” community party is held at the dock for the Monhegan Boat Line. The purpose of the gathering has varied through the years but generally follows a fishing theme. One year it served as a blessing of the fishing fleet, another year it raised funds for the fishermen’s memorial and fuel assistance, and it usually involves placing a wreath into the water in memory of those lost at sea.

Vulnerability analysis

The level of vulnerability, defined as “susceptibility to harm from exposure to stresses associated with environmental and social change” (Adger 2006), of the fishing community in Port Clyde is **moderate** due to many contributing factors and their cumulative effects. Fishermen in Port Clyde have shown high levels of resilience and have adapted to change through organizing and community support, however an increasing dependence on lobster has created potential future vulnerabilities. Here we report on two interrelated components of vulnerability: threats “to humans and the things they value” and responses “incidental or purposeful that occur after experience(ing) a threat” (Tuler et al. 2008).

Threats

The fishing community of Port Clyde faces a variety of interrelated socioeconomic, environmental, and regulatory changes. Below we describe those sources of change (threats) most relevant to Port Clyde as expressed in our interviews (in no particular order).



Socio-economic, regulatory and environmental threats facing Port Clyde.

Socio-Economic

Loss of shorefront property ownership

As mentioned above in the section on gentrification, Port Clyde has experienced an influx of amenity migrants. While these people from out of state have created some opportunities for resilience for the fishing community in Port Clyde, they have also affected the affordability and availability of waterfront property. As one community member stated, “anywhere you see the water, it’s not affordable.” The percentage of shorefront owned by fishermen went from 80% historically to about 10 or 15% currently. This change in ownership of coastal property is seen as a significant threat to the fishing community. When asked to name the biggest threat facing the fishing community, one fisherman responded: “Out-of-staters coming in, buying up all the coastal access. High property taxes that the fishermen can’t afford to keep, so they lose their docks or they have to sell them or what not. That’s about it, I guess.”

The rising cost of coastal properties not only makes it more difficult for fishermen to access the water, but because Maine fishing rights are traditionally tied to the area in which a fisherman lives, it makes it difficult for people to be able to fish in the Port Clyde area. As one lobsterman describes this dilemma between fishing rights and the rising cost of property:

“Although the state says...anyone with a Maine license can fish anywhere in Maine... What your license really buys you is the ability to fish in the town you live in. And so Port Clyde has its bottom out here that is claimed by Port Clyde fishermen. But to qualify as a Port Clyde fisherman you have to live within a certain geographical area here in town. We’re at the end of a peninsula—surrounded by water practically—so there’s not a lot of inland areas where there’s affordable land that’s buildable.”

Rising expenses

Housing prices aren’t the only expense rising in Port Clyde. Like other fishing communities in Maine, Port Clyde faces the threat of rising costs of fuel, bait and vessel maintenance. Unlike many fishing communities in Maine, Port Clyde still has a groundfish fleet. Because these draggers fish farther offshore and for longer duration than other fisheries these expenses (particularly fuel and maintenance costs) have greater impacts on the groundfishing fleet. The rising cost of maintenance can create a safety hazard, as fishermen put off boat repairs that they cannot afford. As one groundfishermen explained:

“...there’s no boat in ideal condition, yeah. Not in my business. Lobsterin’ there is... the reality is all of us a certain amount of money and maintenance lagged behind, you know, I am with that boat and I was brought up in a boat-buildin’ family and I’ve done all I can now but the reality is that boat needs to be the shipyard right now for 2 months...If I

just walk away and let 'em work on it, probably, \$80,000 put it back to 100 percent where you really feel comfortable. Saying, I ain't gotta worry about all that. I'm off 300 miles in 50 knot winds. I feel safe...I'm not there."

Additionally groundfish boats are required to carry federal observers on their trips, an expense that makes some fishermen worry about the future of the small community groundfish fleets such as Port Clyde: "It's hard in this economy. When they require us to pay for all of the observers that we're required to take now and all that stuff. If we have to pay for that out of pocket, we're not going to make it on our size boats. I don't think anyone's going to make it."

Environmental

Changes in resource abundance

While shrimp and groundfish are also important fisheries in Port Clyde, lobster is the largest fishery in the area by far. One fisherman stated that lobster accounts for 90% of the economic value of fishing in Port Clyde. The lobster fishery in Maine has seen unmatched success in recent years, with record breaking landings in pounds the last three years and general increases in both landed pounds and value since the mid-1990s. While this abundance has been a source of resilience for lobster fishermen in Port Clyde in recent years, the uncertainty of how long the increased abundance will last has many fishermen worried about the future viability of the fishery: "In my opinion, lobster fishing has never been better than it has been in the last 15-20 years, how long is it gonna last, that's the big question. Nobody knows the answer." This uncertainty, combined with the increased dependence on a single species is frequently cited as a source of vulnerability for the future.

"So your lobster stocks collapse...this town's screwed because we're not diverse enough to handle something like that and probably in the '90s when it was diverse, it was scallopers, draggers, lobstermen, all of the above, and everybody made a living doing a little bit of everything but now it's basically all their eggs are in lobstering except for a scattering few."

Multiple interviewees alluded to the uncertainty of environmental conditions, such as water temperature and pollution levels, as possible causes for future declines in resource abundance. Rising water temperature has been linked to the glut of soft-shell lobsters in the early summer of 2012. Soft-shell lobsters are lobsters that have recently molted and grown a new shell that is larger and softer. Because of this, soft-shells fetch lower prices as there is less meat than in a comparable hard shell. Also, because they do not package or ship well, there is a smaller market for soft-shells. These factors

combined in early summer 2012 for the lowest lobster prices in 30 years prompting some fishermen to tie up their boats until the price increased.

Lobster isn't the only species whose abundance affects lobster fishermen; they are also worried about the abundance of common bait species such as herring. One fishermen stated bait shortages as the only vulnerability facing the lobster fishery. "We're looking at declines in forage fish all the way around—herring and menhaden. I think down the road that's going to become an issue. They're not going to be able to put traps out with no bait in them."

While the concern for the lobster fishery is focused on potential stock declines in the future, the groundfish and shrimp fleet have faced this threat in the past and continue to battle with low quotas due to reduced resource abundance. One fisherman, when describing historical levels of groundfish said, "There was fish everywhere. You could pretty much set your net anywhere. If you knew the areas, you could do better." Then in the late 1980s the fishery began to decline and "it got harder and harder to put trips together." Many fishermen described this decline as occurring simultaneously with a migration of the fish that were still around moving farther offshore. A majority of the fishermen interviewed stated the decline in abundance as a major concern for the future viability of the groundfish fleet in Port Clyde.

"The difference is we used to be able to catch fish seven, eight, nine miles [from shore, the] seasonal migration of fish into the waters here in the approaches to Penobscot Bay and that's no more. We don't see that fishery. That fishery's not around anymore and the guys hafta go so much further to catch any fish and I don't know how much longer they'll be able to hang on."

This decline in abundance of groundfish has resulted in an aging population of groundfishermen with few young people entering the fishery. Many youth do not see a viable in the future of the fishery and many families with long fishing histories are discouraging youth to enter the groundfishery.

"There's some guys down in Port Clyde that are fishermen and that fished all their life, and there's one guy, he's got a son that's going to college and does not want his son to go fishing, to even think about going groundfishing...No, you just don't know the future no more."

Another cause for this aging population of fishermen is regulations that have limited entry, making it difficult for young people to obtain licenses to fish. This is particularly apparent in the lobster fishery, causing many lobster fishermen to question the future of Port Clyde's identity as a fishing community.

“I think we’ll see a drastic dip in the number of people in the fishing business, because we’ve limited entry drastically. You take a town like this one that has 60 or 80 fishermen in it, half of those guys probably won’t be in the business 20 years from now and I don’t see 20 or 30 coming along.”

Regulatory

The reduction in groundfish and shrimp abundance has created an environment with strict regulatory controls and quotas, limiting the harvest of these species; however, many fishermen in Port Clyde understand the necessity for these regulations. When asked what major threats faced the fishing community one respondent said: “In the past I would say it would’ve been regulations but the reality is we need regulations to really keep it sustainable.” In fact, the same respondent pointed to the government’s unwillingness to stick to their regulatory guns as a cause of the decline in the shrimp fishery:

“...in the past, they did the same thing. They set the target, which is you call it quota or whatever you wanna call it and they set the season, they just – they didn’t use that target, they let the season ride out and whatever caught be caught because we know what happened afterwards. We watched it go downhill after that because you moved all the recruitments. All the recruitments are gone. You caught ‘em, it’s that simple.”

This more accepting view of regulations is a relatively new phenomenon, particularly in the groundfish industry where years of “days at sea” regulations made many fishermen hostile towards government intervention and felt that fisheries management was ineffective and punitive.

“I think the way things are goin’ (with regulations) it’s a good thing. Days at sea was a bad way because it made you fish differently and what it did to you was fish like a maniac, every minute counts and we don’t have that pressure on us anymore so we can’t – we can go catch what we’re allowed to catch at our convenience if put that way. When days at sea you is on a clock and when you’re on a clock, it’s almost like a derby fishery and you’re doin’ things you probably shouldn’t do. You don’t wanna be doin’ that to a fishery.”

The conservation ethic of lobster fishermen and the abundance of the resource are attributed to successful management of the lobster fishery in Maine. These regulations are generally regarded positively among fishermen. However, there is one constant exception to this positive opinion, and that is in regards to whale rules. One fisherman

exemplified this feeling, stating: “I say the laws that have been put on have been good laws except this right whale stuff.” Multiple fishermen stated regulations regarding whale entanglement reductions as unnecessary and egregious. This viewpoint is exemplified by the following statements:

“Is it more right to put a family in a situation where they might hafta lose their home and go in foreclosure [or] is it more right that the whale can swim freely in the ocean?”

“I don’t like the business about the right whale. That’s been a really hairy subject and what they’re trying to do to the fishermen. In fact, I think there’s a lot of people who would just assume not see another lobster trap in the ocean because it might catch a right whale.”

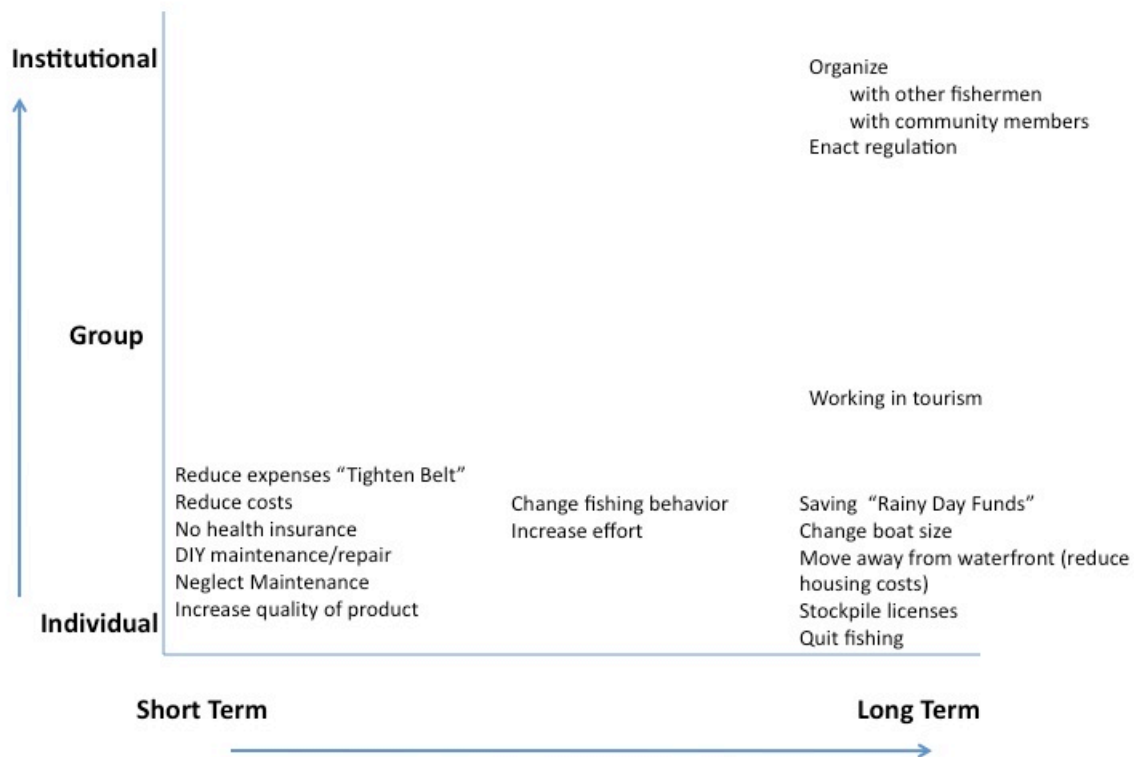
While not as unanimous as the feeling regarding whale rules, some fishermen mentioned that the current trap limit is not effectively limiting effort in the lobster fishery.

“I think that 800 traps is excessive. That’s my opinion. I think they could cut that down. I think, realistically, on the shore 600 might be a better number to try for a while. See how it works. I think you’d be putting less bait in the water. You have less problems with cut-offs and whale interactions...Either way, that’s a lot of traps to reduce and I think you’d catch just as many lobsters.”

Many people also feel that a reduction in traps will not actually reduce effort, because fishermen will respond by hauling their traps more frequently.

Responses

The ability of fishermen to respond to these threats varies, as some are simply beyond their control. For those that are within their ability to respond, respondents reported a variety of long-term and short-term strategies.



Short and long-term responses to threats

Organizing

"We're probably more organized than a lot of communities."

As mentioned earlier, the groundfishermen in Port Clyde formed the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association in response to a feeling that small community fishermen were being excluded from the groundfish management conversation. This organization has been successful in working with regulators on numerous initiatives including the transition to the catch share system and sector management. This new management system has also helped to reinforce the organization and cooperation among groundfishermen because the fishermen get individual allocations that they then trade with other members of the sectors. One member of the Port Clyde Community Sector explains that the sector has "really gotten the fishermen more vocal with each other...They're talkin' more, they're workin' together more and when you start that roll, it makes it easier to communicate on other fishing issues." Many fishermen from Port Clyde are beginning to see the value in their increased level of organization and a few have become involved in the discussion on shrimp management. As one member of the Association who fishes both groundfish and shrimp stated:

“I stopped going to meetings for four or five years because when I did voice my opinion, and sent in a letter, it didn’t mean nothin’ but now I can send in a letter because I belong to groups and groups seem to stand out more and they’re out in the public more...you know, the Midcoast Fishermen’s Association...it has a voice when individuals didn’t.”

Because of this high level of organization, the fishing community has been able to leverage support from organizations and individuals who are not directly involved in the fishing industry. As one fisherman stated, “Port Clyde has quite a few people that are concerned about the fishermen.” This community support played an integral role in two of the Association’s most successful projects. Both the Port Clyde Fishermen’s Cooperative and Port Clyde Fresh Catch received sizable amounts of funding from local philanthropists and nonprofit organizations and would not have been possible without the perception that the fishermen in the community are highly organized. As one fisherman stated,

I don’t think that Fresh Catch would even be there if it wasn’t for subsidies and by intervention – by certain organizations that made it possible for them to try what they’re trying. I don’t think that they could ever have done that on their own to start up and go do it and do it in a manner that they’re doing it. They wouldn’t have the facility for one thing and I think that their marketing techniques still need to be refined a bit.”

The same cannot be said for the lobster community in Port Clyde. This may be because lobstermen have not faced the same level of adversity as groundfishermen. Fishermen are notoriously independent and may not see the value in cooperating until a crisis. However, some fishermen feel that the number of lobstermen is just too large to ever form a cohesive organization:

“There’s just too many people in the lobstering industry... they can’t get together. They’re too independent... you could have 3,000 guys agreeing on doing something and you have one guy saying, ‘No, I’m not goin’. I’m gonna do it my way’ and the 3,000 will rapidly join ‘em.”

Fishing behavior

Many fishermen change the way that they fish in order to respond to changes in the fishery and markets that decrease the profitability of their fishing. Some lobster fishermen have changed the type of bait they use in response to herring shortages. Others respond to an increase in bait prices by trying to use less bait, however this sometimes has unintended consequences: “You take good care of the bait, make sure you don’t have spoilage and waste. But you can’t catch lobsters without bait so what

you do in that case sometimes is put out a few more traps to try to help offset the increased cost of bait and gas.”

Increasing fishing effort is a common response to tough times in the lobster fishery. One downside of increasing effort, however, is that it also tends to increase costs and can backfire by decreasing the product price. This negative feedback loop is explained by one lobsterman from Port Clyde:

“When the price drops they go harder to try to make up for price difference, which you start to use more bait so when you start to use more bait it increases the bait price and, as you go harder, you burn more fuel and then you—you start catching even more lobsters that even drives the price of lobsters even further down so it’s not a really good business plan, if you—you know?”

An opposite strategy used by some groundfishermen in response to rising expenses is to increase the quality of the product in order to receive better prices. This requires a lot of extra effort and hours from the crew but can pay off. One fisherman describes this process:

“Quality is for the most part, most of the time, there, there are times it isn’t. They just need the fish, they don’t care what the quality is, but when they do care, it really pays off and they can make upwards of \$0.50 to a \$1.00-a-pound difference. Handlin’ your fish...makes a huge difference where your quality is...The more work ya put in, the more benefit you get from it but with just two of us sometimes. We did it that one year and...I haven’t been able to do since because it took too much out of us. It took 10 years off my life.”

Some fishermen have adopted new technology in order improve the quality of their harvest. Most shrimp fishermen in Port Clyde use a modified Nordmore Grate which allows small shrimp to pass through the net and reduces by-catch of groundfish. Not only have by-catch levels been reduced from 20-50% down to 5-20%, it saves fishermen time because they don’t have to pick through all the small shrimp. Additionally, this added quality has made the shrimp more marketable:

“We gained market down here on a local level because of it and they decided it was quality shrimp versus other ports and they came here for it and word-of-mouth passed it on and we gained more markets right here at the dock because the quality of the shrimp.”

Improving the quality of the product can help keep the balance books in the green by increasing the money coming in. Another, more common strategy used by fishermen to keep their business profitable is to reduce the amount of money going out.

Reduce expenses

There are numerous ways in which fishermen reduce their expenses, some of which are related to fishing and others are not. In response to the increased value of waterfront property and associated taxes, many fishermen have sold their property and moved farther away from the water. “That’s one other topic that goes on around here, the access from the harbor and the fishermen have sold out. Well we have, you know? I’ve done it up there but I’ve done it as a survival thing. It wasn’t to make money.”

Another cost saving strategy is to go without healthcare, “It’s kinda sickening, you wear yourself out...and the business can’t even afford the health insurance to put ya back to health.”

Many fishermen also neglect much-needed maintenance projects on their boats to pay for other, more immediate expenses. One groundfisherman described the status of his boat as:

“Well, the engine’s getting tired. The engine should be rebuilt, or replaced. There’s a lot of just regular woodwork and maintenance, painting and woodwork and painting that needs to be done, along with the steel structure that’s gotta be needle gun and painted. And I got one shaft in the boat that’s getting kinda tender. Needs a lotta work. I go down and look at it, and it just makes me sick. It’s like, ‘When the hell you gonna get the money to do this?’”

One groundfisherman in Port Clyde is working on a pilot project to replace human observers with video cameras in order to reduce the cost of on-board observers. These cameras will record footage of the deck when the fishermen haul back their nets and 90 minutes after the hydraulics disengage. This is a more cost-effective way to monitor discards that fishermen hope will become the norm in the future.

“Maybe we’ll be able to stay in business long enough for the fish to return. I hope. I don’t think that’s going to be as much for me as it will be for future generations, which I hope we can preserve it for. Cause the cost for an observer...(is) going to be really cost-prohibitive to stay in business.”

Changing involvement in fishing

“Years ago, they were all dragging. Now they’re all lobstering.”

As the abundance of fishing resources have changed, many fishermen in Port Clyde have responded by changing their involvement in the industry by either changing the species they target, or expanding into other opportunities that do not involve directly extracting

the resource. In response to recent declines in groundfish and shrimp stocks, many fishermen have transitioned to specializing in fishing lobster, a resource that has had more consistent and lucrative landings. One fisherman describes his transition into lobstering as a “slow progression”:

“...’Cause ground fish stocks declined and lobster stocks increased...There was a lot of factors, but the money was the main thing. I wasn’t making it with the groundfish. I needed to make house payments and car payments and all that stuff. Doing a little bit of lobstering—cause groundfishing didn’t decline like, boom all over, it’s a slow progression and decline...If groundfishing declines much more, it will be more traps and less groundfish.”

Many groundfishermen in Port Clyde wish that they had this opportunity to supplement their income with lobster landings but they gave up their lobster licenses when groundfish were plentiful. Others, who have witnessed the ups and downs of both lobster and groundfish stocks and have the financial ability, have kept permits for fisheries they are no longer involved in as a contingency plan. One lobster fisherman explains his strategy in keeping his groundfish permits the following way:

“I mean my permits are worth around \$700,000. If I sold ‘em I’d be outta the fishery and if I wanted to get back into the groundfishery, I’d hafta go out and buy other permits to get in it so why not just keep ‘em?.. you put all your eggs in one basket it’s not a very good place to be. That’s the only reason I held on to my groundfish permits, you’ll never know. I got something to fall back on.”

Other fishermen have responded to changes in resource abundance by relying less on the extraction of the resource, taking advantage of the tourism that a fishing port brings. One lobsterman provides tours to visitors who are interested in learning about the area and lobster fishing. “I take [tourists] out for two hours with all 20 traps. Usually I go out and spot a few seals for them. They love that and take pictures. I tell them about Port Clyde and the community, fishing and whatever else. What I don’t know, I just give them a good story and they love it.” Another lobsterman runs a take-out stand with his wife that sells seafood to tourists in the summertime. These opportunities to take advantage of the tourism in Port Clyde are less available to groundfishermen whose main fishing season is in the summer and overlaps with prime tourist traffic.

[Quit Fishing](#)

“That year when fuel went to \$4.00, a couple of my friends had to stop fishing. It got that bad... when you go out and make a trip, you don’t get enough for your fish to cover the expenses [you’ve] made on that trip ...

one friend of mine, three trips in a row, he didn't even cover his fuel. So that put him out."

There are some threats that, when considered cumulatively, fishermen have been unable to cope or adapt to and have been forced out of the fishing industry completely. This is obviously, for most fishermen, a decision only made as a last resort. Some of these people are older and have retired, others got jobs outside of fishing and others have moved away from the town.

Summary

"Port Clyde will always be a tourism place. I'd like to see fishing hang on. I think that's part of the attraction."

Port Clyde is a community that has gone through multiple transitions. Historically an important groundfishing port, many residents agree that "things have changed now, it's basically, mostly just the lobstering port with a straggling few groundfishermen left." There is widespread concern that the groundfishing fleet will not survive the next 10 years. Despite proving their resilience through organizing, harnessing community support and creating new marketing strategies, continued uncertainty in stock abundance and rising costs may eventually prove too difficult to overcome. As one community member stated, "I'll be very surprised if in ten years, the dragger fleet is in Port Clyde...Can you tell me what the price of fuel will be in ten years?"

If the groundfishing fleet were to collapse, many see a prosperous community reliant on lobstering and tourism in the future. One groundfisherman shared this view, stating that:

"The community itself is gonna be fine 'cause the majority of the community down here are lobstermen and people that got land jobs and everything. I can't see much changing it. The fleet is so small now that hopefully, we'll all survive. But as far as the whole community, even if we did crash and it was down to two or three draggers, I don't really think it's gonna change the community that much 'cause there's not enough of us to amount to anything anymore, you know."

Other community members are more skeptical that a community reliant on lobsters and tourism would be prosperous: "For these young guys to think there's a certainty that lobster business is gonna be like it is today 15 years from now is absurd." Due to the uncertain future of the lobster industry, many people feel that tourism will become a more significant part of the Port Clyde economy. One fisherman stated: "We lose the groundfish boats, we lose most of the shrimp boats. We have lobstering, still, but it will turn to more tourism."

Tourism already plays an important role in Port Clyde:

“Tourism is big business. You take this town we’re in right here, non-residents pay about 52% of our taxes so they’re very important. And they’re very supportive. Those who come and have homes and they pay the taxes and insurance, have property keepers, all those things, they bring a lot of money into this state.”

While tourism may increase if fishing declines, the two are interrelated as the character of the fishing community is one of the main draws for tourists who visit Port Clyde: “They came to see lobstering, to see it, learn about fishing, eat fresh fish, eat fresh lobster – that’s why they come. They come for fishing when they come to Port Clyde. That is one of the biggest attractions. So if we lose it...”

Many long-time residents understand the importance of tourists and “people from away” and appreciate the support they have given to the community. However, there is a resounding skepticism of how long that support will last and what the community will look like if the attitude of new migrants changes. “I mean the thing that upsets a lot of those that have had roots here for a few generations is when people like the area and they move into the area and then the first thing they wanna do is change stuff.”

Port Clyde has proven its ability to adapt and respond to changes in the past, but its future as a fishing community may hinge on their ability to respond to two future uncertainties: the attitudes of new people in the community and the abundance of fishing resources.

Recommendation

- Preserve working waterfront: Maintain/upkeep existing infrastructure and identify opportunities to create new working waterfront access areas.

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