

Marine Resources draft

VII. A: INTRODUCTION

State Goal:

To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.

VII. B: SUMMARY OF 1998 PLAN

Orland has relatively limited marine resources when compared to many coastal Hancock County towns. This is due in part to its location on a tidal river rather than on the open ocean. While there are a limited number of commercial fishermen and marine worm diggers in town, there are no official records of shellfish harvesting for at least 20 years. Poor marine water quality due to high levels of fecal coliform (per the DMR) is one factor that would limit any shellfish harvests.

Marine-related facilities are very limited. There are no public boat launching ramps on salt water. The Orland River channel is relatively shallow and is limited to small craft.

VII. C: KEY MARINE RESOURCES FINDINGS & ISSUES 2017

Marine resources play a limited economic role in Orland. Those who work in the fishing sector generally work out of town. The poor water quality and lack of deep-water access limit its likelihood for expansion of its marine resource potential. The Alewife harvest below the dam in the village is a traditional activity and a point of local pride. Orland is one of the few towns in the state that maintains a right to harvest alewives. The town maintains the license and a Fish Committee is elected to ensure compliance and maintain the fishway. The money paid by the contractor goes into a fund to maintain the village dam and fishway.

The waterfront has the potential to be developed as a recreational asset. A hazardous mercury deposit in the tidal Orland River was a factor in the Town's 2016 vote to keep the village dam.

VII. D: ANALYSIS

1. Fishing/Marine Resource Capacity

Fishing and related marine resource activities play a limited role in Orland's economy. According to the Maine Department of Marine Resources, there were 33 marine licenses issued in 2016 (see Table VII.1). These licenses are based on residency, not where the person fishes. Although no firm data are available, the combination of limited public access, the shallowness of the river, and poor

water quality mean that most licensees fish elsewhere. A Spring Alewife and Elver harvest takes place on the East Bank of the Orland River below the village dam.

Table VII.1 Marine Licenses, Orland Residents 2016 (will be updated May 2019)	
Type	Number
Commercial fishing (crew)	1
Commercial fishing (single)	1
Commercial Shellfish	3
Eel Pot Hoop Net	1
Elver 2 Fyke Nets Crew	1
Elver-dip net	3
Green Crab	1
Lobster/crab non-commercial	6
Lobster/crab class 1	3
Lobster/crab class 2	1
Lobster/crab class 3	1
Lobster/crab over age 70	1
Lobster/crab Apprentice	5
Lobster/Crab Student	2
Marine worm dealer	1
Scallop Non-Commercial	1
Sea Urchin with Tender	1
Total	33
SOURCE: Maine Department of Marine Resources	

2. Water Quality

Due to mercury contamination from the former HoltraChem chlor-alkali plant in Orrington, the Penobscot Bay from Stockton Springs north is permanently closed for harvesting lobster and crabs. There is no record of major sources of pollution originating from Orland. [See Natural Resources and Water Resources chapters for more discussion of mercury concentrations in the Orland and Narramissic Rivers]

3. Public Access

Public access to salt water is discussed at length in the *Village and Waterfront Plan*. In brief, there is limited access via hand-carry sites, limited parking, and no trailer launch sites on salt water.

4. Future Plans

As mentioned above, the town prepared a detailed plan for the village and waterfront. This would increase opportunities for recreation and tourism. Orland has potential to capitalize on its beauty, wildlife, and forested shoreline. Its marine resources, while of limited economic value by themselves, contribute to the overall character of the town and are a matter of civic pride. A public salt water launch site is recommended in the *Village Waterfront Plan*.

The Orland Village Dam Alternatives Feasibility Study (2013) found that taking no action to remove or replace the Village dam would allow for “adverse impacts to fisheries resources” in the Narramissic, due to the “poor performance of the Orland Village Dam fishpass” and conditions in the impoundment that are suited for introduced non-native fish. As a result the Dam Committee recommended that the fishway be improved or replaced, in order to maintain a healthy alewife population and allow other species to pass the dam.

The 2013 Dam Alternatives Feasibility Study recommend that \$15-20,000 per year be set aside for repair and eventual replacement of the Village Dam. The Town currently sets aside \$5-10,000 on the budget. It was also recommended that the fishway be improved or replaced in order to maintain a healthy alewife population.