

## Community Profile

### Jones Inlet, New York

By Johnelle Lamarque

Jones Inlet, located in Nassau County, has been called “the birthplace of American suburbia” ([www.lihistory.com](http://www.lihistory.com)). Informants often refer to Jones Inlet as one large place that encompasses Point Lookout, Freeport and other communities within the marshy bays of southwestern Long Island from Middle Bay to East Bay. These areas within Jones Inlet require mention because they are locations where fishers and fishing families live and where commercial and for-hire boats dock. Freeport and Point Lookout are the two places profiled in our community project because they are the crux of the commercial and for-hire fisheries within Jones Inlet. The inlet itself is a 12-foot-deep, 250-foot-wide channel (<http://www.nan.usace.army.mil/business/buslinks/navig/cntldpth/jones3.pdf>) that links southwestern Long Island bays and the Atlantic Ocean. The eastern border of Jones Inlet is Jones Beach State Park, a popular New York summer destination and venue for big-name rock concerts. The inlet’s western border is the hamlet of Point Lookout, New York, a commercial and recreational fishing location and well-to-do summer community with an emerging year-round residential base. Freeport, New York, is a larger town north of Point Lookout.

Scattered along the marshy coast of this suburban area are towns such as Oceanside, Merrick and Baldwin Harbor. Merrick is a larger suburban community where commercial and for-hire fishermen live. Baldwin Harbor, adjacent to Freeport, houses a couple of baymen and their boats. Dozens of other commercial clam diggers live throughout the Jones Inlet area. Oceanside’s marshland was developed after the 1920s and converted the town from “a rural and fishing hamlet into a city suburb” ([www.lihistory.com](http://www.lihistory.com)). Currently, a dozen or so surf clam boats dock in Oceanside, also called “Oil City” for its petroleum industry developments. Many of the surf clam boats are referred to by local commercial fishermen as the “big blue boats” and seem to be owned by Barney Truex’s operation. The crew and captains of these boats commute from elsewhere and do not live in the area. Also in Oceanside are at least one fishing station and two charter boat businesses. Until recently, the NMFS combined Point Lookout and Freeport for data reporting purposes. The two locations are often considered together in descriptions of the fishing industry. “Together, the Point Lookout and Freeport areas support the largest concentration of commercial fishing activity near New York City” (Steadman 1999).

## **References**

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