

Transient boaters potential for  
economic development on  
communities that are proximate to the  
Atlantic ICW

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# The Atlantic ICW

- ⊗ Protected waterway that runs from New England to the southern tip of Florida and then up the gulf coast.
- ⊗ Maintained by the USACOE
- ⊗ Provides passage for commercial, recreational, and transient boaters.
- ⊗ Lots of data on commercial usage, but virtually none on transient use patterns.

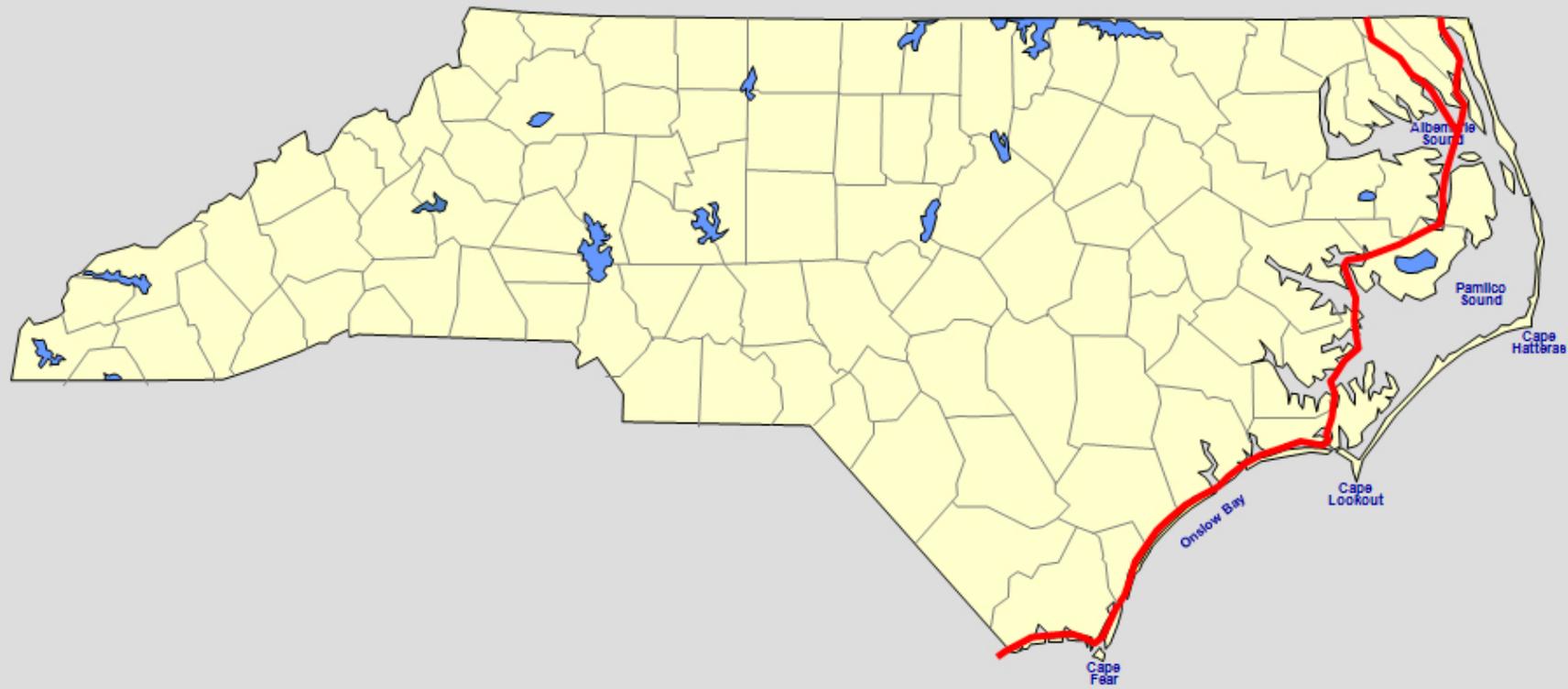
# Transient Users

- ⊗ AKA “snowbirds” use the ICW to migrate south for the winter and then north for the summer.
- ⊗ Are thought to have greater than average disposable income, and could potentially have high economic impacts to communities which are along and proximate to the ICW.
- ⊗ Virtually no information is available concerning this population.

# Study Objectives

- ❁ Estimate the number of transient boaters to use the NC portion of the ICW
- ❁ Estimate the current economic impact of transient boaters
- ❁ Understand the travel patterns and ICW use of transient boaters.
- ❁ Determine what amenities and services are important to transient boaters
- ❁ Determine which of the above have the greatest pulling power to get transients to stop and stay awhile.
- ❁ Pilot test methodology and instruments for larger scale ICW study

# North Carolina Intracoastal Waterway



# Methods

- ⊗ Combination on-sight/mail-back survey methodology
  - ⊗ Intercepts were conducted at several marinas on the ICW in North Carolina
    - ⊗ Total of 112 intercepts were completed by research team
- ⊗ Participants were also asked to complete a more in-depth survey when they completed their voyage and return these through the mail in a pre-postage paid envelope.
  - ⊗ A Modified Dillman methodology has resulted in 34 completed mail-back surveys to date.
- ⊗ Data is still trickling in.

# Origins and Destinations



# Sample Characteristics

- ⊗ The Average ICW Transient boater is:
  - ⊗ Most likely to be white (85%)
  - ⊗ Median household income of \$100,000 - \$150,000
  - ⊗ A 62 year old male
  - ⊗ Either a full time employee /owner of a business or retired
  - ⊗ College Grad with post-graduate work

# Trip Characteristics

- ⊗ Average start date was 11/12/2015
- ⊗ Average end date was 11/27/2015
- ⊗ Average length of journey was 14.86 days
- ⊗ Respondents were likely to eat 60% of their meals on-board as opposed to a restaurant or pub
- ⊗ Respondents were likely to have purchased 50% of their trip provisions prior to their voyage
- ⊗ Average furthest traveled off the ICW was 35 miles
- ⊗ Spent an average of 4.3 nights in NC

# Why do they stop?

Type of attraction	Percentage
Festival or Event	13%
Historic or Cultural Sight	30%
Recreational Activities	10%
Birding or Wildlife Observation	10%
Visiting Friends/Family	33%
Visiting a Community	30%

- ⊗ Voyage Behavior

- ⊗ To what extent do you agree with the statements about your voyage:

- ⊗ 1 = Strongly Agree

- ⊗ 5 = Strongly disagree

- ⊗ Included 15 statements about ICW voyages

# Behavior Results – Most Agreed

Statement	Mean	St Dev
I spend every night of the voyage on my vessel	1.61	.827
The voyage is as important to me as the destination	1.78	.751
I enjoy spending time with others who take similar journeys	1.88	.893
I use the ICW to migrate with the seasons	2.03	1.16
My voyage schedule is flexible and open to change	2.16	1.08

# Behavior Results – Least Agreed

Statement	Mean	St Dev
When on an ICW voyage, I don't like to venture off the ICW	3.16	1.08
I never stay at one place for more than one night	3.13	1.28
My trips are carefully planned on a day by day basis before I leave home	2.78	1.26

- ⊗ Amenity preferences
- ⊗ How important are the following amenities to you when determining where you stop on or along the ICW:
  - ⊗ 1 = Strongly Agree
  - ⊗ 5 = Strongly disagree
  - ⊗ Included 18 potential amenities

# More Important Amenities

Amenity	Mean
Vessel Fuel	1.53
Deep water Dock Access	1.94
Full Service Marina	2.00
Groceries	2.23
Free Moorage/No Dock Fees	2.29
Blackwater Pumpout Station	2.34
Vessel Service/Repairs	2.38
Dockmaster On-Site	2.81
Restrooms	2.87
Laundry Facilities	2.87
Showers	2.94
Fine Dining	2.97

# Less Important Amenities

Amenity	Mean
Presence of Other Transient Boaters	3.03
Festival or Special Event	3.32
Tourist Attractions	3.35
Shopping	3.41
Fast Food	4.00

# Most important amenity

Amenity	n
Fuel	10
Value	4
Quality Dockage	7
Community Amenities	5

Respondents indicated that on average they would be willing to travel 20 miles or 3.04 hours off of the ICW.

# Summary

- ⊗ It is possible to sample transient boaters
  - ⊗ May work better in the spring
- ⊗ Transients are willing to venture off the ICW if there is good cause.
  - ⊗ Many also appear to have the flexibility to do so.
- ⊗ Communities proximate to the ICW need to market their amenities at different points along the travel experience.
- ⊗ Need to examine differences between groups for many of the variables
  - ⊗ Owner/operators vs. hired captains may have created some bi-modal responses that tend to centralize data means.

# Survey Sites

