



Working Waterfront Dock Walk



Once lined with world wandering whaleships, today the docks of New Bedford are home to hundreds of commercial fishing vessels. The fleet, made up of mostly groundfishing boats (draggers) and scallopers, has consistently made New Bedford the number one fishing port in the country in terms of the dollar value of its catch. The waterfront is the essence of this seaport community and offers an unobstructed view into the mechanics of the city's thriving fishing industry.

Before You Get Started

This self-guided walking tour highlights various locations on the working waterfront and serves as a companion to the exhibits at the Waterfront Visitor Center (Wharfinger Building) and the information found on the interpretive wayside panels along the route.

The New Bedford waterfront is located in a Designated Port Area. This special designation was established in 1978 to "preserve and promote maritime industry" through land use and other restrictions. As is true of any industrial area, New Bedford's waterfront is bustling with truck and vehicular traffic and other maritime related activity. For your safety, we recommend that as you explore New

Bedford's docks you observe the following basics: 1. Walk along the sides of the dock to stay clear of vehicular traffic, 2. Keep a safe distance from workers who may be servicing or repairing boats, and 3. Use caution when approaching the edges of the docks as there is little to prevent a fall. Finally, we hope that you have a safe, enjoyable and informative visit as you explore New Bedford's working waterfront.

Several other self-guided tour options including *Melville's New Bedford*, *The Underground Railroad in New Bedford* and *The Nautical Mile* are available at the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park Visitor Center located at 33 William Street.

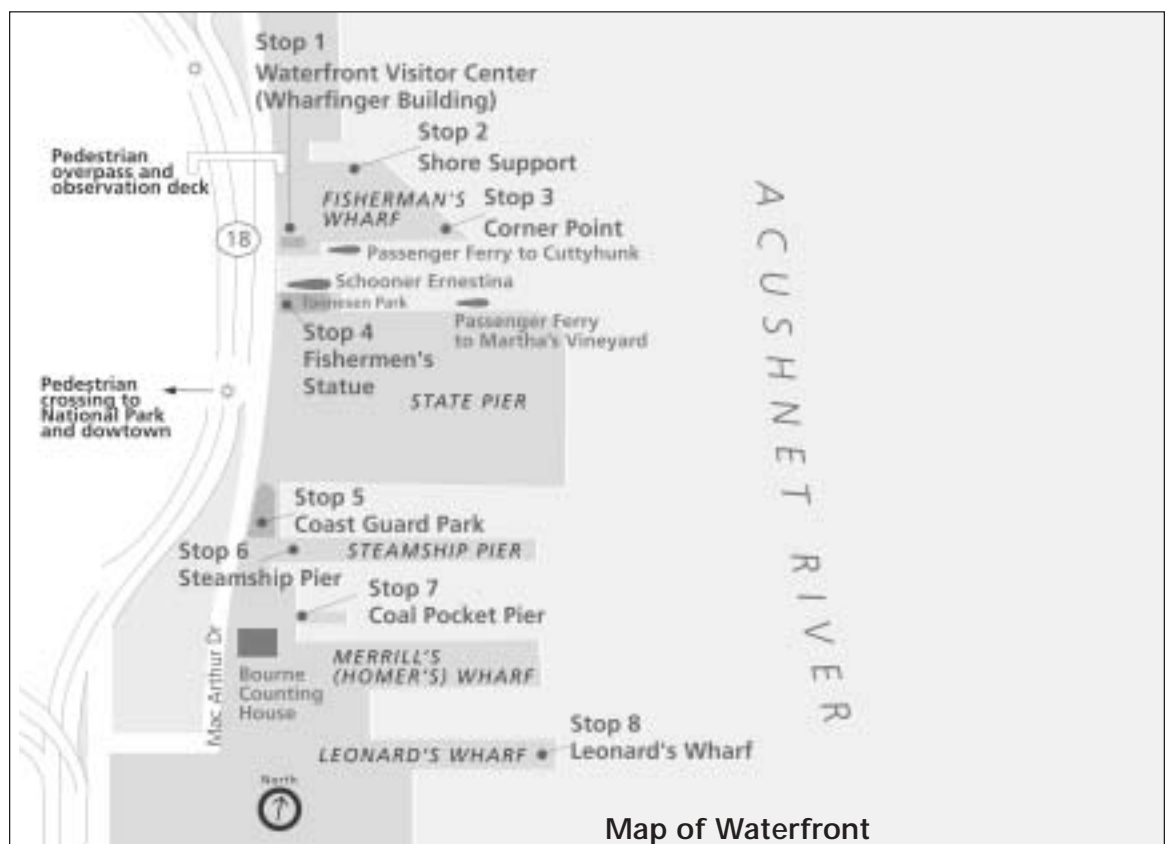
What boat is that?



Scalloper - These boats drag two steel dredges (one on either side of the boat) along the ocean floor for sea scallops.



Dragger - Draggers harvest flatfish from the ocean floor using a net that comes off a large spool at the back of the boat.



Map of Waterfront

Stop 1 Wharfinger Building

Start the Dock Walk at the Wharfinger Building. Constructed in 1934-35 under the Work Projects Administration (WPA), this building originally served as the offices for the City Wharfinger, an official who collected wharfage fees and oversaw other shipping activities. From 1947-85, it was the location of the city's seafood auction. Incoming fishing boats and their catch would be listed for

bidding each day at 8:00 a.m. with the auction lasting no longer than 22 minutes. The auction was unique as it was "sight unseen," meaning the buyers did not see the product they were bidding on. Today, the building serves as a city-operated visitor center with exhibits that highlight the building's history and the working waterfront.

Stop 2 Shore Support

Directly in front of you, commercial boats and pleasure craft re-fuel and pick up supplies for a journey at sea. Small fuel barges also leave from this area to supply boats that are moored or berthed in the harbor. The large brick building is an ice house which mainly supplies the fishing industry. Boats

pull alongside the building where hoses blow ice into the boat's hold to keep its catch fresh while at sea. To your right is the historic New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge (Route 6). Since 1902 this swing span bridge has allowed maritime traffic to access the northern part of New Bedford Harbor.

Stop 3 Corner Point of Fisherman's Wharf

From this spot, you can see fishing boats of every type. Can you distinguish the scallopers from the draggers? Average voyages for a dragger can last more than a week and scallopers often stay at sea for more than 10 days. Fishermen go out to sea year round. Directly across the harbor is the town of Fairhaven which is home to ship repair facilities that

have served the vessels of New Bedford harbor and the world since the 1800s. Dotting the skyline are the spires of the Town Hall, Unitarian Church, and Millicent Library. To the left is Pope's Island Marina and Marine Park. To your right is State Pier where passenger ferry service to Martha's Vineyard departs.

Stop 4 Fishermen's Statue

At the entrance to Tonnessen Park is the ten foot, 2,000 pound statue of a mythical sea god and marine life designed by noted American Sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington (1876-1973). In 1962, Ms. Huntington offered the statue to the city as a memorial "...to those seamen who's only graves are the ocean floor." The statue was publicly dedicated as a

"Memorial to the Whalemens and Fishermen." The top of the statue shows a mythical sea god holding a cod in his left hand and a sturgeon in his right. Further down the statue are many examples of marine life found in all seven seas, including a scallop, lobster, clam, octopus, and sea turtle. How many other types of sea life can you identify?

Stop 5 Coast Guard Memorial Park

In 2002, this area was dedicated as Coast Guard Memorial Park in honor of the U.S. Coast Guard, which established its first academy in New Bedford in 1876. The site is also adjacent to the former Lighthouse Depot, which serviced all district light-houses and lightships. The bell in the center of the park was commemorated in 1999 as a memorial "to the heroes of the United States Lightship Service

who gave their lives in service to fellow mariners." The bell was aboard the *Vineyard* Lightship which went down in a hurricane in September 1944 taking the lives of all 12 crew members. At the north entrance of the park is the Claghorn Memorial. The park is a great spot to observe the activity of the working waterfront.

Stop 6 Steamship Pier

For nearly 150 years, this historic pier served as a terminal for ferries operating between New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and points west such as New York City. On June 25, 1818, the steam powered *Eagle* began the very first scheduled steamship service in New England when it left New Bedford for Nantucket. In the heyday of steamers (1897-1933) a fleet of more than a dozen ships regularly called on New Bedford. After 1933, the combined effects of World War II and the Depres-

sion brought an end to the era of steamer travel. In the late 1940s service resumed with introduction of modern vessels that improved service and lowered costs. Advances in the automobile and state highway system made Woods Hole a more desirable port for the shorter trip to the islands, ending ferry service from New Bedford in 1961. In 2004 ferry service to Martha's Vineyard was re-established, now disembarking from State Pier. Steamship Pier is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Stop 7 Coal Pocket Pier

This short pier was a receiving point during the golden age of whaling for thousands of casks of whale oil. The terms cask and barrel are frequently used interchangeably, but a standard cask containing 33 1/3 gallons was the most common. In the late 19th century, this pier supported tall containers or

'pockets' where coal was received and stored until being shipped out by wagons, and later trucks, thus the name Coal Pocket Pier. Today, the pier is used for berthing fishing and lobster boats. To your right are seafood processors where boats pull up and **lumpers** offload their catch.

Stop 8 Leonard's Wharf

From Leonard's Wharf, you can see three of the harbor's most prominent landmarks: the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier, Lightship *New Bedford* and Palmer's Island Lighthouse. The Hurricane Barrier was built between 1962-66 to protect the harbor's buildings and fishing fleet. The barrier, staffed 24 hours a day by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is 3.5 miles long and has a 150' wide, 35' deep opening. The gates are closed during times of severe weather and high tides. The Lightship *New Bedford*, built in 1930, was originally named *Pollock's*

Rip and served the east coast until 1971. Palmer's Island Lighthouse, adjacent to the opening of the barrier, was first lit, by whale oil, in 1849 to warn whaling ships and other vessels of dangerous rocks. The lighthouse was staffed around the clock by the "lighthouse keeper" until it was automated in 1941. This whaling era lighthouse, oldest of four in New Bedford, was restored by the city in 1999 and serves as a reminder of New Bedford's proud and remarkable maritime history.



Palmer's Island Lighthouse

Artwork provided courtesy of the Arthur Moniz Gallery, 22 William Street in New Bedford Whaling NHP

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