

Bodega Bay, California

People and Place

Location

The community of Bodega Bay lies in Northern California's Sonoma County, and is situated 67 miles north of San Francisco on U.S. Highway 1. The City covers a total area of 8.4 square miles (all land), and is located at 38°20'00"N and 123°02'49"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Bodega Bay's total population was 1423. In 2000 there were 739 males who comprised 51.9% of the population, while females comprised 48.1% of the population and numbered 684. The median age for Bodega Bay's population was 50.9 in 2000, while the national median age in the same year was 35.3. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Bodega Bay's population was 85.5% White, 0.4% Black or African American, 1.3% Asian, and 1.5% American Indian and Alaska Native. In addition, 15.2% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. A total of 9.1% of the population identified with some other race alone and 2.2% with two or more races. Approximately 19% of the population was foreign-born in 2000.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census a total of 85.9% of the population eighteen and over earned the equivalent of a high school diploma or higher, while 45.6% earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and 23.7% earned a post graduate degree or certificate. In 2000 approximately 77.7% of Bodega Bay's resident's lived in family households.

History

Long before Euro-Americans inhabited the Bodega Bay Area the Miwok and Pomo Indians lived throughout Sonoma County. These peoples traditionally harbored a close relationship with the environment as they recognized their dependence on the natural world. The Coastal Miwok fished, hunted, and gathered on a seasonal basis in the coastal areas in and around Bodega Bay for their sustenance. During the summers, the Pomo harvested clams, seals, and bird eggs, and fished in coastal waters. The first European to lay eyes on Bodega Bay was Sebastian Vizcaino in 1603, however the area's name comes from the Spanish mariner Francisco Bodega y Cuadra who anchored his schooner in the Bay in 1775.^{1, 2, 3}

The first Euro-American settlers in the area were Russian fur traders from Alaska in 1812. They sought otters and seals, as well as a warmer climate to grow food for individuals in their northern outposts. They built Fort Ross, 24 miles to the north of Bodega Bay, with the help of local Indians. The Russians enslaved the Pomo and exploited the areas natural resources. Spanish missionaries began inhabiting coastal California in the late 1700s, setting up missions on Indian and Non-Indian land. By the 1800s the Spanish had begun to use the local Miwok and Pomo Indians as laborers. California came under Mexican control during this time and plots were granted to Mexican citizens, who built ranchos along the Sonoma coast. Most Russians left the area in 1841. Many of the area's Indians went into servitude for Mexicans who, through state confiscation, now controlled much of the land that was previously under the stewardship of the Native Americans who labored for them. By 1850 those Native Americans who were not working as farm laborers engaged in fishing to earn a livelihood.^{4, 5}

Bodega Bay eventually grew into a thriving fishing center and commercial port. In 1842, Stephen Smith, a New England sea captain turned Mexican citizen established Rancho Bodega in the Bodega Bay area. Smith started a saw mill and a hotel, his efforts helped establish a shipping center on the Bay. In the late 1800s, a Miwok Indian named William Smith and his relatives contributed to the growth of commercial fishing in the area. It was around this time that Firman Camelot founded the town of Bodega Bay, although he named the town "Bay" it was later changed to Bodega Bay. The area's fishing industry received a boost when rail lines were created between Sonoma County and San Francisco in the 1870s. These rail lines opened up a large market to the area's fishers.⁶

Bodega Bay's commercial fishing industry took off during World War I. The industry, primarily focused on salmon, drove the local economy and structured local life. The fishing industry's sustainability was threatened by the deposition of silt on the Bay's floor in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Bay was dredged in 1943 and the industry bounced back. By the early 1980s the fishing fleet grew to 300 boats and the value of commercial landings reached more than 15 million during this period. After record catches in the late 1980s the salmon industry came upon hard times as the number and volume of landings plummeted. Human induced landscape changes in the area and regional drought are thought to have contributed to habitat degradation and resultant low spawning numbers of salmon. During this period many fishers left the industry as their livelihoods were jeopardized.^{7, 8}

The areas salmon population resurged in the middle 1990s. Contemporary commercial fishers harvest albacore, Chinook salmon, halibut, rockfish, Dungeness crab, sole, and more recently sea urchin. In recent years, the deposition of silt has become a problem again, as the depth of Bodega Bay's channel has been decreased to five feet in some areas. Numerous vessels have run aground in the channel's shallow waters. The siltation problem is paramount to the community as Bodega Bay is the only port between San Francisco and Fort Bragg that is large enough for many of today's ocean-going vessels. The channel was scheduled to be dredged again in the fall of 2004.⁹

The commercial fishing industry remains a staple of Bodega Bay's economy. However, tourism and an ancillary sportfishing industry have developed in the area in recent years. In the 1980s the number of motel rooms in the area grew by 150%. The Bodega Bay area harbors a range of tourist attractions including: beaches, nearby parks, sportfishing (primarily for tuna and salmon), golf courses, and a host of historical sites.¹⁰ Several annual festivals demonstrate the emphasis community members place on the economic and cultural significance of fishing as part of their past, present, and future. The Fisherman's Festival, occurring annually in April, is a major event as the town stages a two-day festival featuring a boat parade and a blessing of the fleet for the approaching salmon season. The Seafood, Art, and Wine Festival occurs annually in August. The festival features live music, wine and beer tasting, and seafood.

Bodega Bay is still home to families who have fished commercially in the area for generations. Currently the Coast Miwok and the Pomo are dispersed throughout the Bodega Bay area. The Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo banded together in the 1990s and were recognized as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria in 2000. Native fishers harvest salmon and various other species. Salmon holds cultural significance for the Miwok and Pomo as it was historically a staple of their diet. In recent decades native

fishers have seen a decline in the size of the area's salmon populations, although the number of coho salmon seems to have risen in the last few years (T. Colombo¹¹).

Infrastructure

Current Economy

A phone survey by Coldwell Banker in October of 1999 identified six major employers in the Bodega Bay area, including The Tides Wharf (150 employees during peak season), The University of California Marine Lab (125 employees during peak season), Inn at the Tides (80 employees during peak season), Bodega Bay Lodge (65 employees), Bodega Harbor (62 employees), and the U.S. Coast Guard (25 employees). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately 26.5% of Bodega Bay's employed civilian population (16 years of age and over) worked in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services industries, while 16.9% of the population worked in the professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services. In addition, the education, health and social services industries employed 16.8% of the employed civilian population in the same year. The unemployment rate for the community in 2000 was 2.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), while 52.8% of those 16 years of age and older were employed and 45.8% were not in the labor force. A total of 5.5% of the civilian population over 16 were employed in agriculture, fishing, forestry or hunting occupations, and 10.9% was employed by the government.

In 2000 Bodega Bay's per capita income (\$37,226) and median household income (\$56,818) were higher than the national figures (\$21,587 and \$41,994 respectively) for the same year. In addition, four percent of the city's population lived below the poverty level in 1999. According to the 2000 U.S. Census there were 1144 housing units in the community, including 58.5% occupied units and 41.5% vacant units. The percentage of occupied units that were owner and renter occupied was 72.2% and 27.8% respectively. A total of 88.4% of the vacancies were due to seasonal use.

Governance

Bodega Bay is an unincorporated area and falls under the governance of Sonoma County. Bodega Bay has a 7.50% sales and use tax rate and a 9% transient lodging tax. California state law assesses commercial fishing vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value for property tax purposes. Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage. California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes vary by species and range between \$.0013 and \$.0125 per pound of fish. The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.

The nearest enforcement office for the National Marine Fisheries Service is located approximately 23 miles away in Santa Rosa. While the closest California Fish

and Wildlife Office is located in Yountville, in neighboring Napa County, 60 miles away. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Office is 67 miles away in San Francisco, as are the closest meetings of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Bodega Bay is home to a U.S. Coast Guard Station.

Facilities

Bodega Bay is accessible by road via U.S. Highway 101 and smaller county roads, and by air via the Sonoma County Airport, located 21 miles from the community. The larger San Francisco International Airport is located 68 miles away from Bodega Bay.

The community of Bodega Bay lies in the Shoreline Unified School District. The community's children may attend primary school in Bodega Bay, while middle school and high school are offered in the neighboring town of Tomales. Electric service is provided to residents by Pacific Gas and Electric. Bodega Bay Public Utilities District supplies the town with water and sewage treatment. Law enforcement in Bodega Bay is administered by the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office and the California State Highway Patrol. While Bodega Bay does not have a hospital the nearby community of Sebastopol (16 miles away) has a hospital with emergency services. Bodega Bay has 18 businesses offering overnight accommodations, from inns, to hotels, to bed and breakfasts, and a recreational vehicle park.

There are four marinas in the Bodega Bay area. Spud Point has 244 berths (80% of which are allocated to commercial fishing), shower facilities, Laundromat, service dock, and a boat yard. Mason's Marina has 115 berths, a hoist, several docks, fuel, and a small store. Porto Bodega has 95 berths, several boat docks, a launch, and trailer hook-ups. In addition the Golden Hinde Inn has an adjacent marina, and Sonoma County provides boat launching at Doran and Westside parks.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In the year 2000, a total of 317 vessels, all commercially registered, delivered fish to Bodega Bay. Landings data for Bodega Bay also includes records from the nearby community of Timber Cove. In 2000 residents of Bodega Bay and Timber Cove landed fish in the following West Coast Fisheries (data shown represents landings in tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (22 t/\$21,133/5), crab (191 t/\$1,047,625/66), groundfish (35.7 t/\$247,021/65), highly migratory species (59 t/\$144,711/32), salmon (300.6 t/\$1,245,430/210), and other species (283 t/\$560,426/39). In addition, the town of Bodega Bay housed one processor plant in 2000.

Community members owned 58 vessels that participated in the region's fisheries in 2000, 34 of which took part in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by residents of Bodega Bay that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (0/0/30), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/1/43), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/1), and other species (1/0/2).¹²

In 2000 a total of three federal groundfish fishery permits were held by three community members. Recorded data indicates that the number of residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) in 2000 was: coastal pelagic (0/0/24),

crab (0/0/31), groundfish (0/0/14), highly migratory species (NA/0/3), salmon (0/1/66), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/6), and other species (1/0/18).¹³

Community members held at least 245 permits in 2000, including 242 state registered permits. According to recorded data the number of permits held by community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/41), crab (0/0/33), groundfish (0/0/17), highly migratory species (NA/0/2), salmon (0/1/117), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/12), and other species (1/0/21).¹⁴

Sportfishing

The community of Bodega Bay belongs to the Princeton-Bodega Bay port complex, which received a total of 147,926 commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) landings in 2000, made by a total of 27,274 anglers. The top five species landed, in descending order, were unspecified rockfishes, king salmon, lingcod, cabezon, and albacore. In 2002 and 2003 there were four licensed sportfishing businesses in Bodega Bay. Two of these businesses were licensed CPFVs and two of these were CPFVs with shrimp vessel permits.

Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Bodega Bay is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

According to available data the community of Bodega Bay did not participate in the North Pacific commercial fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

According to available data a single Alaskan sportfishing license was purchased in the community in 2000.

¹ Bodega Bay.com. 2004. Bodega Bay Area History – 200 Years of Change, [Online]. Available: http://www.bodegabay.com/visitor_info/overviewmap.html (access date - September 2004).

² Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. No date. Historical Background, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.coastmiwok.com/basicinterface/tools/custom/personal.asp?owner=0&id=3&user=coastmiwok524200023&bkgd=8&col=2&templ=16> (access date - September 2004).

³ Go Boating America. 2004. Windswept Getaway, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://goboatingmag.com/main/article.asp?id=528> (access date - September 2004).

⁴ Bodega Bay.com. 2004. Bodega Bay Area History – 200 Years of Change, [Online]. Available: http://www.bodegabay.com/visitor_info/overviewmap.html (access date - September 2004).

⁵ Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. No date. Historical Background, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.coastmiwok.com/basicinterface/tools/custom/personal.asp?owner=0&id=3&user=coastmiwok524200023&bkgd=8&col=2&templ=16> (access date - September 2004).

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- ⁶ Bodega Bay.com. 2004. Bodega Bay Area History – 200 Years of Change, [Online]. Available: http://www.bodegabay.com/visitor_info/overviewmap.html (access date - September 2004).
- ⁷ Coldwell Banker. 2002. Bodega Bay Area Profile: Economy, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.bodegabayhomes.com/economy.html> (access date - September 2004).
- ⁸ Go Boating America. 2004. Windswept Getaway, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://goboatingmag.com/main/article.asp?id=528> (access date - September 2004).
- ⁹ Benfell, Carol. 2004. Channell Dredging to Begin, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www1.pressdemocrat.com> (access date - September 2004).
- ¹⁰ Coldwell Banker. 2002. Bodega Bay Area Profile: Economy, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.bodegabayhomes.com/economy.html> (access date - September 2004).
- ¹¹ T. Colombo, Tribal Representative for the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Bodega Bay, CA. Pers. commun., 28 September 2004.
- ¹² ‘NA’ refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
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