

Costa Mesa, California

People and Place

Location

Costa Mesa, covering 15.62 square miles of land and 0.1 square miles of water, is located along Interstate 5, approximately 42 miles south of Los Angeles and 89 miles north of San Diego. The geographic coordinates of Costa Mesa, California, are: 33°38'28"N, 117°55'04"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Costa Mesa was 108,724 in 2000, a 12.8% increase from the 1990 U.S. Census. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more males (51.2%) than females (48.8%). The median age of the population in 2000 was 32.0, which is comparable to the national median of 35.3 for the same year. According to the same data, 23.2% of the population was age 17 or under, 57.7% was between the ages of 22 and 59, and 7.4% was age 67 or older. For the population 18 years and over, 78.1% had a high school education or higher, 26.5% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 7.2% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma or equivalency for 17.7% of the population. In 2000, 75.0% of the population lived in family households.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the racial composition was predominantly White (69.5%), followed by Asian (6.9%), and Black or African American (1.4%). American Indian and Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent of the population in 2000 (0.8% and 0.6% respectively). Overall, 16.6% classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 4.3% of the population identified themselves with two or more races. A total of 31.8% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 29.2% of the population was foreign-born, with 53.1% born in Mexico.

History

The Chumash are one of the earliest peoples to inhabit the greater Los Angeles metropolitan and surrounding areas. They first settled there sometime between 5000 and 2000 B.P.^{1,2} The Chumash relied heavily on a maritime economy for centuries (e.g., gathering and fishing). By 500 AD, the Tongva Indians arrived in Southern California from the Mojave Desert. At the onset of European migration into North America it is estimated there were 300,000 Native Americans in California. This number was drastically reduced as European diseases killed off approximately two-thirds of the native population during the colonial era.³ Today the Gabrieleno/Tongva Tribe is headquartered within the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area in San Gabriel. They have sought federal recognition since 1994 and may obtain federally recognized fishing rights as their historic use of marine resources is well known. In 1542, before the Spaniard Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo landed on the California coast he was met by Tongva Indians on their boats. Cabrillo was the first European to enter what would be the Los Angeles area.^{4,5}

Costa Mesa gains its name from the "coastal tableland" landscape above Newport Bay. Originally grazing grounds for cattle belonging to the Mission San Juan Capistrano

it became a gathering spot for vaqueros (cowboys) tending the cattle. The area was owned in totality until the late 1800s when settlers began buying portions of the rancho and established the town of Fairview. Following a devastating storm, the community was revived with the new name of Harper – named for a nearby rancher. Harper himself, however, officially changed the community’s name to Costa Mesa in May 1920. Agriculture, and subsequently building and oil drilling industries, brought new growth to the area until these industries crashed during the depression. Since the end of World War II however, the population has boomed due to the military and civic institutions located in the area. Today, Costa Mesa is a major commercial and industrial center of Orange County.⁶

Infrastructure

Current Economy

The California Employment Development Department lists Apria Healthcare Group Inc., ICN Pharmaceuticals Inc., and Nordstrom as major employers in Costa Mesa.⁷ According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 66.0% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 4.7% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population over the age of 16, 30.8% were not in the labor force. Of the employed civilian population, 15.6% worked in “Educational, health and social services” while 12.7% worked in “Manufacturing.” Additionally, a total of 11.0% worked in “Retail trade” and 9.1% worked in “Accommodation and food services.” The local, state, or federal government employed a total of 9.0% of the employed civilian, however none were reported as working for the government in the “Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining” industries. Only 0.3% of the employed civilian population over the age of 16 was involved in “Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting” according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Costa Mesa’s per capita income in 2000 was \$23,342 according to the U.S. Census, while the median household income was \$50,732. In 1999 a total of 12.6% of the population was below the poverty level. In 2000 there were 40,406 housing units in Costa Mesa. A total of 97.0% of the housing units were occupied and 3.0% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 40.5% were owner occupied and 59.5% were renter occupied. Over half (56.5%) of the vacant housing units were “For rent,” and 11.4% were “For seasonal, recreational, or occasional” use.

Governance

Costa Mesa is a general law city with a Council-Manager form of government. The City has a 5-member City Council, including a Mayor and four Council members. Costa Mesa levies a 7.75% sales and use tax rate. Orange County uses a 10.0% transient lodging tax rate, which earned \$337,549 in revenue for the 2000-2001 fiscal year.⁸

California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.⁹ Vessels registered in California with either the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are assessed property taxes by the county tax collector where it is moored.¹⁰ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.¹¹ 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.¹²

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.¹³ 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.¹⁴

A California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region Field Office and a U.S. Coast Guard station are located approximately 80 miles away in San Diego. Del Mar, approximately 70 miles away, is the nearest city that hosts Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Southwest Regional office is located in Long Beach. Eight Coast Guard vessels are stationed at the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office/Group Los Angeles – Long Beach located approximately 38 miles away in San Pedro.

Facilities

Costa Mesa is located North of Newport, spanning the distance between Highway 1 and Highway 405, with one edge of coastline. John Wayne Airport is just over 4 miles away. Costa Mesa falls within Newport-Mesa Unified School District, which supports 33 schools. Public safety is provided by the Costa Mesa Police Department and Fire Department and there are six hospitals located within Costa Mesa serving area residents. Gas, water, sewer, and refuse services are provided by the City of Costa Mesa. Costa Mesa links into the greater Los Angeles area and its extensive tourism industry with a well established infrastructure, including accommodations, catering to a multitude of tourism activities. No commercial harbor facilities are available within Costa Mesa, but private recreational facilities are plentiful.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Landings data for Costa Mesa were recorded as part of the Other Los Angeles and Orange County Ports port group which includes the nearby communities of: Los Angeles Area, Redondo Beach, Avalon, Sunset Beach, Pacific Palisades, Los Alamitos, Catalina Island, Torrance, Malibu, Norwalk, Norco, Elsinore, Venice, Ocean Park, Topanga Canyon, West Lost Angeles, Laguna, Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Whittier, Orange, Bell Gardens, Anaheim, Mission Viejo, Carson, Hawaiian Gardens, El Segundo, Fountain Valley, Corona Del Mar, Balboa, Alhambra, Manhattan Beach, Seal Beach, Point Dume, Hermosa Beach, Lancaster, Upland, Vernon, San Bernardino, Walnut, Fullerton, Harbor City, Paramount, Lynwood, Playa Del Ray, Chatsworth, Ontario, Reseda, Newhall, Pasadena, La Canada, Bloomington, Irvine, Beaumont, Inglewood, Gardena, Capistrano, Santa Ana, Riverside, Huntington Beach, San Clemente, Granada Hills, Rancho Palos Verdes, Covina, Westminster, South Gate, and Glendale. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (73 t/\$54,656/13), crab (16 t/\$53,799/14), groundfish (38 t/\$196,068/24), highly migratory species (4 t/\$22,968/18), shrimp (6 t/\$110,054/5), and other species (91 t/\$431,800/52).

See the Santa Ana Profile for additional information about this community. According to available data, there were no seafood processors operating in Costa Mesa in 2000.

There were eight commercial vessels owned by Costa Mesa residents in 2000, including one that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Costa Mesa residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/0/0).¹⁵

In 2000, seven federal groundfish permits were held by six community members. In the same year, recorded data indicates that the number of Costa Mesa residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/3), groundfish (0/0/4), highly migratory species (NA/0/2), salmon (0/0/1), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/1), and other species (0/0/20).¹⁶

According to available data, there were at least 50 commercial fishing permits, including 43 registered state permits, held by Costa Mesa residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Costa Mesa residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/4), groundfish (0/0/5), highly migratory species (NA/0/2), salmon (0/0/1), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/1), and other species (0/0/30).¹⁷

Sportfishing

A number of charter vessels operate out of Costa Mesa targeting albacore tuna, rock cod, salmon, and other species. Many of these charter vessels also offer seasonal whale watching tours. In 2002, at least 11 charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in Costa Mesa. There are three license agents selling sportfishing licenses in Costa Mesa. In 2000 Orange County residents purchased: 26,250 resident sportfishing licenses, 47 nonresident sportfishing licenses, 7 sport salmon punch cards, and 29 abalone report cards. In the port group surrounding Newport, a total of 21 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 57,515 anglers in 2000. These vessels reported 247,746 landings composed of more than a dozen species. Sea bass (various species) and barracuda accounted for 59.1% and 8.8% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Costa Mesa area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Costa Mesa 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

In 2000 there were two vessels owned by Costa Mesa residents that participated in North Pacific fisheries. These vessels made landings in the North Pacific salmon fishery, but specific information (landings in metric tons/value of landings) is confidential.

Three Costa Mesa residents worked as crewmembers on vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries in 2000. In the same year, two community residents each held a single Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) salmon permit.

Sportfishing

While the majority of the sport fishermen in Costa Mesa target West Coast fisheries, a total of 123 Costa Mesa community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

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- ¹ The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. 2002. Chumash Indian Life, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sbnature.org/research/anthro/chumash/index.htm> (access date - July 2004)
 - ² Los Angeles Almanac. 2004. Los Angeles County – Pre-History to 1799, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.losangelesalmanac.com/topics/History/hi01a.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ³ United States Geological Survey. 2004. Regional Trends in Biological Resources: California, [Online]. *In* Status and Trends of the Nations Biological Resources. Available: URL: <http://biology.usgs.gov/s+t/SNT/noframe/ca162.htm> (access date – July 2004).
 - ⁴ Los Angeles Almanac. 2004. Where did the name Los Angeles come from, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.losangelesalmanac.com/topics/History/hi03a.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ⁵ Gabrieleno/Tongva. 2004. Gabrieleno/Tongva, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.tongva.com/> (access date - July 2004)
 - ⁶ City of Costa Mesa. No Date. History, [Online]. Available: <http://www.ci.costa-mesa.ca.us/about/history.htm> (access date - February 2005)
 - ⁷ State of California. No date. Labor Market Information: Major Employers in Orange County, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/majorer/oraner.htm> (access date - November 2004).
 - ⁸ State of California. 2004. California Counties Transient Lodging Tax Revenue, [Online]. Available URL: <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locrep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
 - ⁹ State of California Board of Equalization. No date. Property Tax Rules, Rule 151. Vessels Subject to the Four Percent Assessment, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/pdf/r151.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁰ California Department of Motor Vehicles. 2003. How to register a vessel, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/boatsinfo/boatreg.htm#how> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹¹ State of California Board of Equalization. 2004. Ballast Water Management Fee, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/sptaxprog/bllstweb12.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹² U.S. Department of Transportation. 2001. Provisions Governing the Distribution of State Motor Fuel Tax Receipts: California, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/hwytaxes/2001/california.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹³ State of California. No date. Fish and Game Code Section 8040-8070, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycod?section=fgc&group=08001-8070> (access date – July 2004).
 - ¹⁴ State of California Department of Agriculture. 2004. List of Marketing Programs, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cdafa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/mktbrds.html> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁵ ‘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.
 - ¹⁶ ‘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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