

## **Point Arena, California**

### **People and Place**

#### *Location*

Point Arena is a small Pacific Coast community covering 1.36 square miles of land but no water. It is located in Mendocino County along U.S. Highway 1, approximately 178 miles northwest of Sacramento and 129 miles north of San Francisco. The geographic coordinates of Point Arena, California are: 38°54'32"N, 123°41'31"W.

#### *Demographic Profile*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the population of Point Arena was 474, a 16.5% increase from the 1990 U.S. Census. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more males (52.5%) than females (47.5%). The median age in 2000 was 33.3, which is comparable to the national median of 35.3 for the same year. According to the same data, 32.9% of the population was under the age of 18, and 42.2% of the population was between the ages of 30 and 59. For the population 18 years and over, 75.6% had a high school education or higher, 17.2% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 3.4% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma/equivalency for 24.1% of the population, while 30.3% reported having some college but no degree. In 2000, 77.2% of the population lived in family households.

The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that the racial composition was predominantly White, (73.6%), followed by American Indian and Alaskan native (3.8%), Black or African American (1.1%), and Asian (0.2%). Overall, 18.8% classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 2.5% of the population identified themselves with two or more races. A total of 28.5% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Slightly less than a quarter (22.8%) of the population was foreign-born. Of those, 85.6% were born in Mexico.

#### *History*

Archaeological findings suggest that this area of the north-central California coast has been inhabited by Native American groups for at least 10,000 years. Point Arena is located in Mendocino County, an area that was home to the Central and Western Pomo Indians and other native groups prior to European contact. The Pomo were known for their expertise in basket-making and lived a subsistence lifestyle that centered on marine resources.<sup>1</sup> The name "Mendocino" comes from Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the famous 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish navigator, who led a voyage along the Pacific coast in 1542 and named the area in honor of Don Antonio de Mendoza, the first Viceroy of New Spain (Mexico). Even after such early expeditions, this area had no permanent European settlements for almost three centuries after contact.<sup>2</sup>

On July 25, 1850, a merchant ship called "The Frolic" ran aground near present-day Mendocino. The ship and its captain, Edward Horatio Faucon, had sailed some 6000 miles from China hoping to deliver a valuable cargo of silks, jewelry, and furniture to the growing city of San Francisco. An expedition that was organized to salvage some of the goods from the shipwreck found little cargo, but yielded the discovery of huge redwood trees, which would become one of the most symbolic and valuable commodities of this

region of the California coast. Shortly after the expedition, Henry Meiggs bought a steam-powered sawmill to cut and process the region's redwood timber, and established the first settled town in the area, which he called Meiggsville. The town, and later the county, were renamed Mendocino.<sup>3</sup>

The Point Arena Lighthouse, a notable local historic landmark, was constructed in 1870 and nearly destroyed in the 1906 earthquake that devastated San Francisco. The damage to the lighthouse was so extensive that it was ultimately condemned. The lighthouse that now stands on the site was constructed in 1908 and stands 115 feet tall.<sup>4</sup> Today Point Arena remains a small community; thanks to its location on a scenic stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway, however, the community is visited frequently by tourists and outdoor enthusiasts.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 78.7% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 2.6% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population over the age of 16, 19.2% were not in the labor force. Approximately 16.7% of the employed civilian population worked in 'Accommodation and food services' while 14.1% worked in 'Educational, health and social services' and 13.3% worked in 'Retail trade.' A total of 14.4% of the employed civilian population was employed by the government, with 7.9% reported as working for the government in the 'Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining' industries. A total of 8.0% 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.

Point Arena's per capita income in 1999 was \$12,591 according to the 2000 U.S. Census, while the median household income was \$27,083. In 1999 a total of 26.0% of the population was below the poverty level, twice the national average for the same year (12.4%). In 2000 there were 218 housing units in Point Arena, 87.6% of which were occupied, 12.4% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 38.7% were owner occupied and 61.3% were renter occupied. Almost half (44.4%) of the vacant housing units were 'For seasonal, recreational, or occasional' use.

### *Governance*

Point Arena is an incorporated City within Mendocino County. It is governed by a 5-member City Council, which includes a mayor and vice-mayor. City revenue is generated from secured property taxes, a transient occupancy tax, and taxes on pier facility services and products.<sup>5</sup> Sales taxes are 7.25% based on the standard statewide rate. The annual property tax for Mendocino County is approximately 1.11% of the property's assessed value, plus voter-approved special taxes or assessments.

California state law assesses commercial fishing vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels are assessed at 4% of their full cash value for tax purposes. Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service office is located in Ukiah, 51 miles east of Point Arena. Point Arena is within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Central Coast Region 3, which has its headquarters in Yountville, approximately 122 miles to the south. The U.S. Coast Guard has its nearest office in Bodega Bay, 62 miles south of Point Arena. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services location is in San Francisco, 129 miles south. Pacific and North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are held in Foster City (150 miles south of Point Arena) and Portland, Oregon, (approximately 592 miles to the north) respectively.

### *Facilities*

Point Arena is accessible primarily by road via the Pacific Coast Highway. The nearest airports available for public use are located nearby in Little River (Mendocino County Airport) and Gualala (Ocean Ridge Airport). The closest major airport is located in San Francisco, approximately 129 miles south of Point Arena.

Local schools include 1 elementary school, 1 school offering instruction to grades K-12, and 1 high school. A privately owned water company provides water services to the City of Point Arena for domestic and commercial use and for fire protection. Law enforcement is administered by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office. Several officers from the Sheriff's Office also provide contract law enforcement services to the City of Point Arena. Point Arena has a volunteer fire department; in addition, the Redwood Coast Fire District, headquartered in Manchester City, provides fire and emergency services.<sup>10</sup> Point Arena has a medical and dental clinic; a larger regional hospital is located in Ukiah, the seat of Mendocino County. Local lodging accommodations include three small bed and breakfasts and there are a variety of hotels located in the nearby community of Gualala.

The Arena Fishing Pier, located in Arena Cove, has a small wharf building where fishing vessels deliver commercial fish landings. The pier is also a popular sportfishing destination. Recreational facilities and attractions in the immediate vicinity include Schooner Gulch State Beach and Manchester State Park.

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

Commercial landings were delivered to Point Arena by 46 vessels in 2000. In the same year recorded data indicates that landings in Point Arena were made in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab (7.1 t/\$39,950/7), groundfish (6.6 t/\$64,640/16), highly migratory species (confidential/confidential/2), salmon (4.4 t/\$21,916/6), and other species (552.6 t/\$1,109,974). According to available data, there were no seafood processors in Point Arena in 2000.

There were 12 commercial vessels owned by Point Arena residents in 2000, none of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Point Arena that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/0/3), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/0/0).<sup>11</sup>

In 2000, no federal groundfish permits were held by community members. In the same year, recorded data indicates that the number of Point Arena residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/2), crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/5), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/7), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/1/14).<sup>12</sup>

According to available data, there were at least 39 commercial fishing permits, all state registered, held by Point Arena residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Point Arena residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/3), crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/6), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/11), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/2/15).<sup>13</sup>

### *Sportfishing*

Point Arena has a relatively small (330-foot long) public fishing pier. A number of charter vessels operate out of the area targeting albacore tuna, rock cod, salmon, and other species. In 2002, at least eight charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in Point Arena. There are no license agents selling sportfishing licenses in Point Arena. In 2000 a total of 8838 resident sportfishing licenses, 64 non-resident sportfishing licenses, 382 sport salmon punch cards, and 8864 abalone report cards were sold to Mendocino County residents.

### *Subsistence*

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Point Arena 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 was no involvement in North Pacific fisheries by Point Arena residents.

### *Sportfishing*

While the majority of the charter boats in Point Arena target West Coast fisheries, six Point Arena community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000. In the same year there were no sportfishing businesses in Point Arena that participated in Alaskan fisheries.

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- <sup>1</sup> Kroeber, Alfred L. 1953. Handbook of the Indians of California: The Pomo. Berkeley: California Book Company.
- <sup>2</sup> County of Mendocino. No date. History of Mendocino County, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/history.htm> (access date - April 2005).
- <sup>3</sup> Mendocino.com. 2005. Picturesque Victorian Village By the Sea, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.mendocino.com/> (access date - April 2005).
- <sup>4</sup> Point Arena Lighthouse Keepers. 2005. Point Arena Lighthouse, [Online]. Available: <http://www.pointarenalighthouse.com/> (access date - April 2005).
- <sup>5</sup> City of Point Arena. 2005. City of Point Arena, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cityofpointarena.com/> (access date - April 2005).
- <sup>6</sup> State of California Board of Equalization. 2004. Ballast Water Management Fee, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/sptaxprog/blstweb12.htm> (access date - July 2004).
- <sup>7</sup> 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).
- <sup>8</sup> California Fish and Game. No date. California Fish and Game Code, Sections 8040-8070, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fgc&group=08001-09000&file=8040-8070> (access date - January 2006).
- <sup>9</sup> 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).
- <sup>10</sup> Mendocino County, 2002. Mendocino County Grand Jury Final Report: Point Arena City Government, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury/01-02/08-Point\\_Arena\\_City\\_Government.pdf](http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury/01-02/08-Point_Arena_City_Government.pdf) (access date - April 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> '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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