

## Charleston, Oregon

Please note that a full profile was not completed for Charleston, Oregon, due to the lack of sufficient information. Charleston is not identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as it is an unincorporated town within Coos County. Please be advised that various types data will be lacking in this profile, however, Charleston was selected for profiling due to its function as a harbor at the mouth of the Coos Bay estuary.

### People and Place

#### *Location*

Charleston is located in Coos County of mid coastal Oregon at 43°20'25"N and 124°19'44"W. The town lies at the mouth of Coos Bay, approximately 226 miles south of Portland, Oregon, and 539 miles north of San Francisco, California.

#### *Demographic Profile*

Demographic information was not available from the U.S. Census Bureau for this community.

#### *History*

The Coos Bay watershed was originally inhabited by the ancestors of the modern day Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw, and Coquille Indians. The area is Oregon's largest coastal estuary and has provided natural resources to local inhabitants for centuries. In 1579 Sir Francis Drake sought shelter for his ship the Golden Hind in the nearby area.<sup>1</sup> Spanish and English ships sailed along the coast as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that the first Europeans to explore the area were fur traders of the Hudson Bay Company in the 1820s. In 1852, the vessel Captain Lincoln shipwrecked on the north spit of Coos Bay and 52 surviving soldiers explored the area.<sup>2</sup> Upon their rescue, they drew attention to the area and merchants, settlers, and miners were drawn here. The California gold rush in the late 1840's drew more Euro-American settlers to the area and by 1853 the first group of settlers reached the Coos Bay area and established the first town, Empire City, in the area.<sup>3</sup> Sawmills, shipbuilding, coal mining, and farming activities were major industries of the surrounding settlements. In 1855-1856 a war with the Indians resulted in the forced relocation of local Tribes onto reservations on Oregon's north coast.

Coos Bay became a midway point between the ports of San Francisco and Portland for products such as lumber, coal, salmon, and agricultural goods. In the late 1880s to the early 1900s, the economy shifted to forest and coal mining industries. Dairy farming became important for local agriculturalists and shipbuilding expanded during World War I but declined after the war. The first store was built in Charleston in 1917 and in 1936 the Hallmark Fisheries Plant opened.

The area continues to be a center for commercial and recreational fishing as well outdoor activities. Charleston is home to many parks including Cape Arago State Park, Sunset Bay State Park, and Shore Acres State Park. Recreational activities include bird watching, whale watching, fishing, clamming, crabbing, beach combing, charter boat tours, hiking, biking, and kayaking. The Coos Historical Museum and the Coos Art Museum are located in the town. Various activities are scheduled throughout the year including the Charleston Merchant's Annual Crab

Feed, the Annual Salmon Barbeque, the Sandblast Show and Shine, the Charleston Seafood Festival, and the Oregon Shorebird Festival.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

Current economy information was not available from the U.S. Census Bureau for this community.

### *Governance*

Charleston is an unincorporated area that lies under the jurisdiction of Coos County, therefore Charleston is dependent on County services and does not maintain its own governance structure. The state of Oregon has no general sales tax. The lodging tax is levied at 1% of the fee charged to the customer for overnight lodging and funds the Oregon Tourism Commission. Property tax is determined by a permanent rate set for the taxing district. The tax rate ranges from \$7 to \$15 per \$1000 of real market value. Assessed values are limited to a 3 percent annual growth rate.

Fishing businesses located in Oregon or deriving income from Oregon resources must pay a corporate excise or income tax totaling 6% of their net Oregon income. Wholesale fish dealers, canners, and bait dealers pay a landing fee that is determined from a percentage of the value of the food fish purchased from commercial harvesters. Salmon and Steelhead Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) landing fees are \$0.05 per pound for round, \$.0575 per pound for dressed, and \$.0605 per pound for dressed with heads off. Other regular landing fees are based on value; salmon and steelhead are 3.15% of value (including eggs and parts); all other fish and shellfish are 1.09% of value, and near-shore species are 5% of value.

Vessel owners must pay registration and title fees, and marine fuel taxes that support boating facilities, marine law enforcement, and boating safety education. Fishing boats and equipment may be taxed as personal property if they are valued at less than \$1 million. If their value exceeds this amount, they are taxed as industrial property. In 2004, title transfer fees are \$30 and registration fees are \$3 per foot based on center length of vessel. Oregon levies a fuel tax of \$0.24 per gallon of gasoline and use fuel. The Oregon Department of Agriculture administers four commodity commissions, Oregon Albacore Commission, Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, Oregon Salmon Commission, and Oregon Trawl Commission. Fishermen pay fees to these commissions for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.

Charleston is approximately 104 miles from the National Marine Fisheries Service research station in Newport, Oregon. The closest Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is located in Charleston proper. The U.S. Coast Guard has a Group/Air Station located in North Bend approximately 9 miles north east of Charleston. The closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office and meetings of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council are 226 miles away in Portland.

### *Facilities*

Charleston is accessible via air, sea, and road. The North Bend Airport (9 miles), Newport Municipal Airport (104 miles), and Portland International Airport (212 miles) are utilized for air transportation. The major road connecting Charleston to nearby communities is U.S. Highway 101. There are two bus companies that operate approximately 9 miles away in

Coos Bay, Greyhound and Porter Stage. Commercial freight rail service is available in North Bend and Coos Bay, the closest passenger service is provided by Amtrak located in Eugene.

Coos Bay School District #9 and the North Bend District #13 are utilized by school-aged children living in Charleston. The South Coast Education Service District also provides Coos County special educational programs and services. Southwestern Oregon Community College is the local community college and the University of Oregon is the closest four-year college located in Eugene, Oregon. In Charleston proper, the University of Oregon's Institute of Marine Biology conducts research and offers courses in marine biology and related fields.

Water is supplied to Charleston residents by the Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board, Verizon Communications provides telephone services, and electric power is administered by Pacific Power. Public safety is provided by the Coos County and the Charleston Fire District. The closest hospital is the Bay Area Hospital located in Coos Bay, followed by the Coquille Valley Hospital in Coquille, Oregon. There are approximately 3 hotels in Charleston proper, 4 bed and breakfast facilities, and 6 state, county, and private campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks identified by the local Chamber of Commerce.<sup>4</sup>

The Charleston Marina Complex falls under the management of the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay, and in the port district of Coos Bay Harbor. The Charleston Marina supports most recreational and commercial fishing. The majority of the commercial fishing vessels, approximately 95-99% are moored in Charleston which provides approximately 550 moorages of which approximately 200 are occupied by commercial fishing vessels.<sup>5</sup> Recreational fishers are drawn to the area because of its safe conditions in a protected bay and bar area. Marina facilities include charter fishing, marine supplies, a shipyard, fuel, groceries, lodging, dining, and recreational activities.

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

In 2000, there were no vessels that delivered landings to Charleston. However Charleston residents owned 36 vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries, including 23 vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Charleston residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/11/2), groundfish (0/3/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/33/5), shellfish (NA/3/NA), and shrimp (NA/9/1).<sup>6</sup>

In 2000, a total of seven federal groundfish fishery permits were held seven community members. Recorded data indicates that the number of Charleston residents holding permits in each said fishery in 2000 by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/10/2), groundfish (0/3/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/25/7), shellfish (0/2/NA), shrimp (3/6/2), and other species (5/0/0).<sup>7</sup>

According to the available data, 76 permits were registered to Charleston residents in 2000, of which 69 were registered state permits and seven were federal permits. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/4/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/29/11), shellfish (0/3/NA), shrimp (3/9/2), and other species (6/0/0).<sup>8</sup>

There were at least four seafood processors operating in Charleston in 2000. In the same year approximately 281 individuals were employed by these processors, processing an estimated 6,721,831 lbs of fish at a value of \$19,841,262. In 2000 the top three processed products in the

community, in terms of pounds and revenue earned were flounder (2,840,741 lbs/\$10,200,376), crab (1,693,587 lbs/\$4,457,208), and halibut (1,230,700 lbs/\$2,790,900).

### *Sportfishing*

Charleston had two licensed charter vessel businesses located in the community in 2003. Internet fishing guide sources indicate that there are currently at least two sportfishing businesses.<sup>9</sup> Charleston has two sportfishing license vendors.

## **Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

In 2000, there were no vessels owned by Charleston residents that participated in North Pacific fisheries. One resident served as a crew member on a vessel involved in North Pacific fisheries. Charleston residents held two federal permits and one groundfish License Limitation program (LLP) permit.

### *Sportfishing*

Fishermen based in Charleston purchased five sportfishing licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Coos Bay Oregon. No date. History of Coos Bay, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.coosbay.org/cb/aboutcb/CBHistory.htm> (access date - August 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Coos County Historical Society. 2004. *A Selective Chronology of South Coast History: Origins to 1900*, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cooshistory.org/> (access date - August 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Bay Area History. No date. No title, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.coohistory.org/ptwo.html> (access date - August 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Oregon's Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. No date. No title, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://oregonsbayareachamber.com/cbplain.htm> (access date - August 2005).

<sup>5</sup> M. Callery, Communications Director, Port of Coos Bay, OR. Pers. Commun. October 2005.

<sup>6</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."

<sup>7</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."

<sup>8</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."

<sup>9</sup> Charleston Marina Complex. No date. No title, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.charlestonmarina.com/visitor.htm> (access date - August 2005).