

## **Warrenton, Oregon**

### **People and Place**

#### *Location*

Warrenton is located on the northwestern tip of Oregon, bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west and the Columbia River on the north. The area encompasses 16.7 square miles of land and 4.4 square miles of water. At 46°09'55''N and 123°55'21''W, Warrenton is 92 miles from Astoria's city limits and Portland is the nearest major U.S. City.

#### *Demographic Profile*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Warrenton was 4096. During the 1990s, Warrenton's population nearly doubled, and continues to grow rapidly. The 2000 U.S. Census shows that 49.3% of Warrenton's population was female and 50.7% was male. The median age of the population was 36.6 years, slightly above the national average of 35.3. The age structure of Warrenton demonstrates usual population trends for the United States. A total of 82.4% of the population lived in family households in 2000.

The majority of the population of Warrenton recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was White (92.5%). Other racial categories with which people identified were American Indian and Alaska Native alone (1.3%) and Asian alone (1.8%). Additionally, members of the population identified with some other race alone (1.3%) or with two or more races (2.8%). Of the total population of Warrenton surveyed by the 2000 U.S. Census, 3% identified as Hispanic or Latino. A small percentage (2.5%) of the population was foreign-born; the majority from the Americas outside of the U.S, followed by a number of people born in Asia and Europe. Warrenton is also home to people of Scandinavian, British, and German heritage.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, of the surveyed population 18 years and older, 82.7% had a high school education or higher, 11.4% had earned a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher, and 4.1% had attained a graduate or professional degree. For 27% of the surveyed population, a high school degree or equivalent was the highest level of educational attainment.

#### *History*

American commercial interest in this area began in 1792 when Captain Robert Gray came across the Columbia River on his fur-trading ship. Lewis and Clark's 33-member expedition, the Corps of Discovery, arrived near present-day Astoria and Warrenton in the winter of 1805-06. The expedition is commemorated by the Astoria Column.<sup>1</sup> The Chinook and Clatsop populations each numbered about 400 when the Corps of Discovery visited their villages along the south bank of the Columbia River. Lewis and Clark noted that the tribes lived in wooden plank houses, were proficient seafarers in their large dugout canoes, and lived off the fish, roots, and berries plentiful in the area. Settled in the area to the south, in villages between the mouth of the Necanicum River and Tillamook Bay, was the considerably larger Tillamook population. By the mid-19th century the Tillamook population, had declined to about 200 people and today the tribe is no longer officially organized.<sup>2</sup>

The Corp of Discovery built Fort Clatsop close to the mouth of the Columbia River and sheltered there throughout the winter months. Members of the Pacific Fur Company arrived subsequently and established Fort Astoria. The resulting community, which grew into Astoria, is now the oldest U.S. settlement west of the Rocky Mountains. By 1850 the first post office and U.S. Customs office west of the Rocky Mountains were established and integrated the community into the national communication and trade network. By the end of the century, salmon canneries, forestry, and shipping industries made the town the most commercially significant hub between Seattle and San Francisco. Until the 1900s emigrants to the area were predominantly of Scandinavian descent, bringing diversity to the area's cultural heritage and economy. Regardless of pervasive Scandinavian traditions such as public steam baths, lutefisk, smorrebrod platters, and church services in Finnish, the Astoria-Warrenton area has become a popular backdrop to represent the all-American city in numerous movies.<sup>3</sup>

A devastating fire in 1922 required the downtown of Astoria to be rebuilt. Reconstruction involved extending the land area into the Columbia River with artificial fill. The Port of Astoria initiated a project to build a bridge, spanning the Columbia River between the Oregon and Washington State borders in 1953. With the help of the Oregon Highway Department, and \$100,000 in funding from the Oregon and Washington State Legislatures, the "Bridge to Nowhere" opened to the public ten years later.<sup>4</sup> Over 2000 major shipwrecks testify both to the importance of the mouth of the Columbia River to commerce and fishing, and to its dangerous terrain which has earned it the nickname, "The Graveyard of the Pacific."<sup>5</sup>

Today the towns of Astoria and Warrenton form a deeply connected community, sharing not only history, but also infrastructure, such as the chamber of commerce, and other characteristics. This connection is particularly reflected in their involvement in the fishing industry. While separate profiles have been compiled for Warrenton and Astoria, the Astoria-Warrenton area can be considered as a cohesive community.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

Fishing, lumber, agriculture, and food production rank among the largest industries in Clatsop County, although retail ranks among the largest economic sectors in Warrenton itself. The five largest public and private employers in Warrenton in 2004 were Fred Mayer (retail; 220 employees), Weyerhaeuser Co. (lumber; 155 employees), Pacific Coast Seafoods Co. (fish processing; 125 employees), Warrenton School District (education; 100 employees), and Costco (retail; 120 employees).<sup>6</sup>

According to the 2000 U.S. Census natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed a small percentage of the population (3.4%), however this is not inclusive of the self employed population, many of whom may be involved in the fishing industry. At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 14.2% of the employed civilian population 16 years of age and over was employed within local, state, or federal governments. The main employment sectors were "education, health, and social services (19.3%)" and "retail (18.6%)."

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 62.1% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 3.5% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force) in Warrenton in 2000. A total of 35.6% of the

population over 16 years of age were not in the labor force as compared to the national average of 36.1% for the same year. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that in 1999 the income of 14.2% of the population was below the poverty level. The median household income in 1999 was \$33,472 and the per capita income was \$16,874, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. In 2000 there were a total of 1799 housing units in Warrenton, 90.1% of which were occupied. Of the occupied housing units, 65.3% and 34.7% were owner and renter occupied respectively. Of the vacant housing units, 29.8% were for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

### *Governance*

The City of Warrenton, located in Clatsop County, was incorporated in 1899 and provides a full range of municipal services. Warrenton's local government is organized according to a Mayor-Council system in which the legislative and policy-making body is a popularly elected Council. The State of Oregon has no general sales tax but levies a 1% tax on overnight lodging.

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.

An Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Field Office and U.S. Coast Guard station are based in neighboring Astoria. There is also a Northwest Fisheries Science Center field station located to the west in nearby Hammond. Portland, approximately 91 miles to the east, holds both Pacific and North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings. The district office for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is also based in Portland.

### *Facilities*

Warrenton is accessible by ground, air, and sea. Highway 101 connects Warrenton and neighboring Astoria to other major transportation routes. Local bus services provide overland transportation to local residents. Operated by the Port of Astoria, the Astoria Regional Airport provides Astoria, Seaside, and Warrenton with

local air transport. The closest major commercial airport is located in Portland. Facilities at the Warrenton Marina include restrooms, showers and a fish cleaning station. The marina contains 370 slips and offers overnight moorage for commercial and recreational vessels.<sup>7</sup> The nearby Port of Astoria expands Warrenton's marine and fisheries-related infrastructure significantly. The Port of Astoria is the first deep-draft port encountered upon entering the Columbia River, and is located 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The Port maintains nearly 7250-feet of total dock space on three piers.<sup>8</sup>

A primary and high school are provided by the Hammond-Warrenton School District. Tertiary education is provided by the Clatsop Community College in neighboring Astoria. The City of Warrenton relies on surface water from Lewis & Clark River, Big S Fork, Little S Fork, and Camp Creek. Available utilities provided by the City of Warrenton include natural gas, electrical power, and solid waste management. The Warrenton Fire Department operates two stations, and is made up of 37 paid and volunteer firefighters. Public safety is administered by the Warrenton Police Department, comprised of 15 paid and reserve officers. The Columbia Memorial Hospital is located in neighboring Astoria and area residents receive emergency services from ambulance and Life Flight Services. Additionally, one general clinic is available.<sup>9</sup> There are several accommodation options in Warrenton, including bed and breakfasts, hotels, and motels.

Several local and regional associations and networks operate in the Astoria and Warrenton area; for more information on these associations please consult the Astoria Community Profile. Additionally, several festivals take place in the Astoria-Warrenton area including the Blessing of the Fleet, held in nearby Ilwaco in early May and Seaman's Day and the Annual Crab Derby, both held in Warrenton in late July. The Astoria Warrenton Crab and Seafood Festival occurs in late April. Numerous readers, musicians, artists, story tellers, and workshop presenters who work in commercial fishing and related industries come to Astoria for the event which attracts a wide audience.

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

A total of 334 unique vessels, all commercially-registered, delivered landings to the Astoria-Warrenton port complex in 2000. West Coast fishery landings made in Astoria-Warrenton in 2000 include (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (5907 t/\$794,612/29), crab (1399 t/\$6,530,137/92), groundfish (45,284 t/\$12,980,569/151), highly migratory species (1682 t/\$3,273,354/112), other species (178 t/\$633,751/84), salmon (52 t/\$138,537/82), and shrimp (3947 t/\$3,816,430/48).

Warrenton residents owned 52 vessels in 2000. In that year, community members owned 27 vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Warrenton residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/19/1), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/33/1), shellfish (NA/3/NA), and shrimp (NA/8/0).<sup>10</sup>

Eleven Warrenton residents held a total of ten Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permits in 2000. In the same year recorded data indicates that the number of Warrenton residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab

(2/18/1), groundfish (1/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/1), salmon (1/34/0), shellfish (0/3/NA), shrimp (5/6/1), and other species (0/0/1).<sup>11</sup>

According to available data, 31 state and federal permits were registered to Warrenton residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (4/0/1), groundfish (3/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (1/0/0), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (9/0/2), and other species (0/0/1).<sup>12</sup>

There were at least four seafood processors operating in Warrenton in 2000: Bio-Oregon, Inc.; Oregon Ocean Seafoods; Pacific Coast Seafoods Company; and Warrenton Deep Sea Inc. Approximately 168 employees were employed by these processors in 2000. In the same year approximately 39,523,763 lbs of fish were processed at a value of \$22,361,265. In 2000 the top three processed products in the community, in terms of pounds landed and revenue earned, were Dungeness crab, flounder, and shrimp.

### *Sportfishing*

In 2003 at least two outfitter guide businesses and two licensed charter vessel businesses were based in Warrenton. For the Astoria-Warrenton port complex, the 2000 recreational salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was 766 Chinook salmon and 13,712 coho salmon. The recreational non-salmonid catch was a total of 1533 fish, a vast majority being black rockfish.

### *Subsistence*

Many local community members engage in subsistence fishing. Both tribal and nontribal fishermen utilize marine and stream resources for subsistence means from the areas within and surrounding Warrenton. Under the trust doctrine, the federal government is charged to protect tribal resources and by constitutional mandate to protect natural resources. The government-to-government agreements made between tribal groups and the United States through treaties guarantee fishing rights on traditional grounds. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Warrenton is not discussed in detail in this profile due to the lack of available data on both state and federal levels.

## **Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

In 2000, Warrenton residents owned 9 vessels that participated in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year community members landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab (confidential/confidential/2), Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish (confidential/confidential/2), finfish (confidential/confidential/1), Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish (1,428.9 t/\$590,250/4), halibut (404.1 t/\$2,243,050/5), and salmon (71.7 t/\$118,060/5).

In 2000 a total of 24 Warrenton residents served as crew members in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year nine community residents held registered state permits and 18 held registered federal permits.

A total of 26 state and federal permits were registered to individuals in Warrenton in 2000. In the same year Warrenton residents held three groundfish License Limitation Program permits. Warrenton residents held 2 crab, 1 finfish, 7 BSAI groundfish, 5

halibut, and 3 salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits in 2000. The halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota shares for people residing in the community in 2000 were 3,625,964 and 702,524, respectively.

### *Sportfishing*

A total of 42 Alaska sportfishing licenses were sold to Warrenton community members in 2000. In the same year no local sportfishing businesses participated in Alaskan fisheries.

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<sup>1</sup>State of Oregon. No Date. City of Astoria History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.stateoforegon.com/cgi-bin/cities/history.pl?&city=astoria&history> (access date - July 2004).

<sup>2</sup>National Geographic. No Date. Lewis and Clark, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey\\_leg\\_14](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark/journey_leg_14). (access date - July 2004).

<sup>3</sup>NW Source: Travel. 2004. Astoria, OR, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.nwsourc.com/travel/scr/tf\\_detail.cfm?id=2825](http://www.nwsourc.com/travel/scr/tf_detail.cfm?id=2825) (access date - July 2004).

<sup>4</sup>State of Oregon. No Date. City of Astoria History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.stateoforegon.com/cgi-bin/cities/history.pl?&city=astoria&history> (access date - July 2004).

<sup>5</sup>Astoria Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce. 2004. Historical Facts, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.olderogon.com/Pages/Quickfacts.htm> (access date - July 2004).

<sup>6</sup>Economic and Community Development Department. 2004. Warrenton Community Profile, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://info.econ.state.or.us:591/FMPro?-db=Community.fp4&-Format=forms.htm&-lay=webpage&-op=eq&sort%20name=Warrenton&-script=hit%20count&-Find> (access date - July 2004).

<sup>7</sup>The Daily Astorian. 2005. Launch of Dock on the Columbia River, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dailyastorian.info/Main.asp?SectionID=53&SubSectionID=585&ArticleID=14052> (access date - April 2005).

<sup>8</sup>Port of Astoria. 2004. Port Facilities, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.portofastoria.com/portfacilities/cruise/index.html> (access date - August 2004).

<sup>9</sup>Economic and Community Development Department. 2004. Warrenton Community Profile, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://info.econ.state.or.us:591/FMPro?-db=Community.fp4&-Format=forms.htm&-lay=webpage&-op=eq&sort%20name=Warrenton&-script=hit%20count&-Find> (access date - July 2004).

<sup>10</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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