

4.2.2 Kodiak Island

Communities

[Akhiok](#)

[Alitak Bay](#)

[Karluk](#)

[Kodiak](#)

[Larsen Bay](#)

[Old Harbor](#)

[Ouzinkie](#)

[Port Lions](#)

Geographic Location

Kodiak Island is the second largest island in the United States encompassing approximately 3,500 square miles and spanning 100 miles in length. It is located across the Shelikof Strait from the Katmai Coast on the Alaska Peninsula, and is on the western edge of the Gulf of Alaska. The family of islands that make up the Kodiak Island Borough include Kodiak Island, Afognak Island, Sitkalidak Island, the Trinity Islands, Raspberry Island, Shuyak Island, and Marmot Island, along with many additional small islands. The total area of the borough is 6,559.8 square miles of land and 5,463.8 square miles of water. It is located at approximately 57.78333 °North Lat. and 152.4 °West Long. Kodiak Island is about 252 air miles south of Anchorage (a 55 minute flight).

Weather

Kodiak is protected from the extreme temperatures experienced on the mainland because of the strong marine influence in the area, with the Japanese current warming the island. Temperatures in the area usually range from 32 °F at the lowest to 62 ° F at the highest. There is frequent cloud cover on Kodiak Island as well as fog, with moderate rain, and rarely freezing temperatures. Harsh storms during the months of December through February are common with winds sometimes reaching 90 miles-per-hour. The weather can fluctuate substantially during the day, from windy to calm to rainy in quick succession. Alternatively, rain can fall for up to 50 consecutive days (Rennick 2002, p.9). On the windward side of the island, the yearly precipitation is 60 inches; approximately 40 inches on the leeward side. Intense winds and rain often cause airport closures or delays.

General Characterization

The area of Kodiak Island is very fisheries-dependant, with one of the largest fishing ports in the United States situated in the city of Kodiak. All outer island communities are dependent on commercial,

sport, or subsistence fishing, or a combination of the three. Current and past commercial fishing operations brought a wide variety of people to the area where remnants of Russian occupation are evident. In 2000, about 60% of the population of the Borough was White, 17.6% Alaska Native, and 16% Asian. Of the 13,913 residents of the Kodiak Borough, as reported by the 2000 census, 46% lived in the city of Kodiak. About another 1,000 lived in the surrounding areas and 1,840 people lived on the U.S. Coast Guard Base, Kodiak Station. The rest of the population represents the unincorporated population of the island living in the bush, which, for the most part, is only accessible by boat or floatplane.

Institutional Framework

Kodiak Island Borough was incorporated in 1963. It includes Kodiak Island, the surrounding islands, and part of the Alaska Peninsula. The communities included in the Borough are Akhiok, Aleneva, Chiniak, Karluk, Kodiak, Kodiak Station, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, Port Lions, Uganik, and Womens Bay. Kodiak Island Borough School District is comprised of a total of 15 schools consisting of 2,742 students and 191 teachers.

The Native regional corporation for the area is Koniag, Inc. whose 10-year plan focuses on more diversified investments in four areas: “operating companies with high potential for growth and return, sound real estate opportunities, a balanced securities portfolio and venture capital” in order to provide dividends to its shareholders (Koniag Inc. 2003). The corporation’s original share of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) settlement was “\$23 million, 800 acres of land and the ‘subsurface estate’ of lands allocated to the village corporations within the region” (Koniag Inc. 2003). The Koniag Education Foundation, part of Koniag, Inc., provides scholarships and grants to Koniag shareholders

and their descendants for college, graduate school, vocational training, or career development courses (Koniag Inc. 2003).

The non-profit corporation for the area is the Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) which provides a variety of services such as health services, education, employment and training, youth prevention, and tribal operations. According to their website, KANA serves about 3,500 Alaska Native/American Indians annually in their medical clinic. KANA received a grant from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council and was able to open the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository in 1995, a “state-of-the-art repository and regional research facility” (Kodiak Area Native Association 2003).

Commercial, Sport, and Subsistence Fisheries

Kodiak has a very diverse commercial fishing sector with both large and small vessels working with almost all species and gear types represented in the Alaskan fishing industries. There were quite a few processors on the island, 11 processors are located in the City of Kodiak which processed federal species in the year 2000 and a few additional processors are located in the city as well. One processor, Wards Cove Packing, located at Alitak Bay near Akhiok, recently shut down the operations of its salmon processing plants, along with other Wards Cove facilities across the state. The plant was recently purchased by Ocean Beauty Seafoods and is still in operation in Alitak Bay (James 2003). The employees of the processors on Kodiak Island are for the most part residents of the communities on the island, with the exception of the former Wards Cove Packing facility. Many of the facilities are in operation year round and this may explain the high amount of resident workers.

Sport fishing is a big attraction for visitors to Kodiak Island, also known as the ‘Emerald Isle.’ Many sport fishing activities are available in the city of Kodiak, and a variety of sport fishing services are available in other communities around the island. The main species of interest to sport fishers on Kodiak Island are salmon and halibut, but trout and Dolly Varden are fished as well.

Subsistence fishing is very important to residents of Kodiak Island. The use of all subsistence resources ranges from 96.2% of all households in Larsen Bay at the lowest and 100% for Akhiok, Karluk, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions at the highest. The per capita use of subsistence resources for the most representative year in the city of Kodiak was about 151.05 lbs per year; the communities of Akhiok, Karluk, Ouzinkie, Old Harbor, Port Lions, and Larsen Bay ranged from 263.95 lbs per capita to 370.48 lbs. The subsistence harvesting of salmon plays a major role, making up a large percentage of the per capita harvest for each community.

Regional Challenges

The regional challenges for the Kodiak Island area have included problems brought on by the salmon market and low salmon prices. Recently the island communities of Akhiok, Kodiak, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, Port Lions, and the Kodiak Island Borough were each allotted federal salmon disaster funds for a total of \$688,867.73. The bulk of the money was awarded to the City of Kodiak and the Borough.

Steller sea lion regulations have also impacted the area as witnessed by the recent amounts allotted to both the City of Kodiak and the Borough by the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference as part of the Federal Steller Sea Lion Mitigation program.