

# Oxnard, California

## People and Place

### *Location*

The City of Oxnard, Ventura County's largest city, is situated 62 miles northwest of Los Angeles, 37 miles southeast of Santa Barbara, and approximately 375 miles south of San Francisco. The city lies in a rich fertile delta plain south of the Santa Clara River. Oxnard covers approximately 25.3 square miles of land and 11.3 square miles of water. The City of Oxnard lies at 34°11'N, 119°10'W.

### *Demographic Profile*

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census Oxnard's population was 170,358. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. Census reports that the population of Oxnard increased 19.8%. In 2000 the percentage of males and females was 51.1% and 48.9% respectively. The racial composition of the population was 20.6% White, followed by Asian (7.2%), Black or African American (3.5%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.4%), and Pacific Islander (0.3%). A small percentage, 0.1%, identified themselves as belonging to some other race and 1.7% classified themselves as belonging to two or more races. Overall, 66.2% of the population recognize themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

The median age of the population in 2000 was 28.9, which was lower than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. In 2000 a total of 31.8% of the population of Oxnard was under 18 years of age. Of the foreign-born population, 36.9%, approximately 80% were born in Mexico. A total of 91.1% of the population of Oxnard were living in family households in 2000. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 59% of the population of Oxnard over 18 years of age had received a high school degree or higher, 11.7% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 3.8% received a graduate or professional degree; as compared to the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

### *History*

The 250 miles of shoreline between present-day San Luis Obispo and Oxnard were once home to numerous coastal Chumash villages; "Chumash" means "islander" in the language of mainland Chumash peoples. The Chumash people, settling along the Southern California coast approximately 8000 years before present, made extensive use of their marine, estuarine, and river environments. Traditionally they made a living by hunting, fishing, and utilizing shellfish resources along the coast and on the Channel Islands. Chumash ocean and river fishermen "used a variety of nets, traps, baskets, hooks, spears, and plant poisons to catch or stun fish, and catch seals and sea otters."<sup>1</sup> On the shore the Chumash gathered mussels and abalone. The Chumash are well known for their redwood-planked canoes, called *tomols*, which enabled them to fish and trade with other coastal villages.

To avoid relocation during the mission period, 1772-1808, many Chumash adopted Spanish surnames.<sup>2</sup> "Since the Chumash have no written language, there are few birth records or written documents identifying Chumash people, and as a result, many Latino residents in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties today, unknowingly have a Chumash heritage."<sup>3</sup> Today, over 5000 people identify themselves as Chumash Indians.<sup>4</sup>

In 1854, the Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed into Point Mugu lagoon and called the area the “land of everlasting summers.”<sup>5</sup> Several years later Spain appointed Father Junípero Serra to head missions in Alta California. In the years that followed several pueblos and ranchos were established surrounding the missions. In 1897, Albert Maulhardt invited Henry and Robert Oxnard of San Francisco to look into the possibility of establishing a sugar beet factory in the area. Southern Pacific Railroad established rail service directly to the sugar beet factory and it soon became the second largest sugar beet factory in the region. With the factory came the construction of several houses and saloons and then in 1903 the City of Oxnard was incorporated and named after the founders of the sugar beet factory. The population of Oxnard diversified with the construction of the factory as workers came in from China, Japan, and Mexico. Since its incorporation the city has transitioned from cattle grazing, to sugar beet and bean cultivation and intensive agriculture. Oxnard became home to the Lima Bean Growers Association, the Walnut Growers Association, the Sierra Oil and Refinery Company, and several dairy businesses. The city’s population increased dramatically during the 1940s when military bases were established at Port Hueneme and Point Mugu during World War II. Today the city is known for its industrial, housing, and commercial development.<sup>6</sup>

Oxnard hosts several festivals that draw tourists to the area, including: the Channel Islands Harbor Seafood Festival, the Salsa Festival, Channel Islands Indie Film Festival, Oxnard’s Multicultural Festival, and many others. At the Seafood Festival mid-September visitors enjoy seafood from local restaurants, purchase fresh seafood from fishing boats, and can browse educational displays from local marine agencies.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the top three occupations in Oxnard for the eligible labor force 16 years of age and over were “sales and office occupations” (24.9%), “management, professional and related occupations” (21.6%), and “production, transportation, and material moving occupations” (19.6%). At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 14% of the city’s eligible labor force was employed within local, state, or federal governments. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 10.4% of Oxnard’s population was employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting. In 2000 a total of 0.8% of the population over 16 years of age were registered in the armed forces. According to the Economic Development Corporation of Oxnard the top five employers in Oxnard are: St. John’s Regional Medical Center (1363), Oxnard Union High School District (1201), the City of Oxnard (1000), Haas Automation (900) - manufacturing milling machines, and Verizon (860).<sup>7</sup>

The Port Hueneme plays a significant role in the local community and the greater Ventura County area. Approximately 3500 jobs in Ventura County are directly tied to the Port’s activities.<sup>8</sup> The Port serves as an import/export platform for break-bulk, neo-bulk, and dry-bulk cargo. Additionally, the port is utilized by offshore oil operations in nearby Santa Barbara Channel, local sport and commercial fishing fleets, and is home to a large dockside refrigeration facility. The Port also serves as a U.S. Customs Port of Entry and Foreign Trade Zone. The Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC), which shares its military wharfs with the adjacent deep-water harbor, occupies more than half of the total land area of the Port. Direct and induced activity from the Port and Navy account for more than 28,070 jobs and \$1.123 billion in combined economic impact throughout Ventura County.<sup>9</sup>

According to 2000 U.S. Census a total of 58.4% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 7.4% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). A total of 36.9% of the Oxnard population over 16 years of age was not in the labor force, which is slightly more than the national average of 36.1%. For whom poverty status was determined, 15.1% of the city's population was living below the poverty line in 1999. The median household income in 1999 was \$48,603 and the per capita income was \$15,288. There were 45,166 housing units according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The percentage of occupied housing units that were owner versus renter occupied were 57.3% and 42.7% respectively. The percent of vacant housing units was 3.5% of which 44.6% were vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

### *Governance*

The City of Oxnard is one of 10 incorporated cities located in Ventura County, originally named San Buenaventura County by early Spanish settlers, meaning "good fortune."<sup>10</sup> The city has a Council-Manager form of government with an elected Mayor that serves a two-year term and four Council members elected at large that serve four-year terms. Oxnard levies a 7.25% sale and use tax on regular purchases and an 8% transient lodging tax.<sup>11,12</sup> The property tax rate range for Ventura County is 1.06-1.14%.<sup>13</sup>

By California state law commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels are assessed at 4% of their full cash value.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.<sup>16</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>17</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>18</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>19</sup>

There is a National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office located approximately 80 miles south of Oxnard in Long Beach and a California Department of Fish and Game office 185 miles south in San Diego. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is 60 miles south in Los Angeles. Oxnard falls under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Marine Safety Office/Group Lost Angeles-Long Beach. The USCG Channel Islands Station is located in Oxnard; the station has three boats at their disposal.

### *Facilities*

Oxnard is accessible by ground via U.S. Interstate 101 northwest to Ventura and Santa Barbara and southeast to Los Angeles. Oxnard Airport, with a 6000 foot runway, offers charter planes, helicopter transport, and commuter service to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and other destinations. LAX is Oxnard's closest international airport, located approximately 60 miles southeast of the city. Metrolink provides commuter service to Los Angeles, and Grayhound bus and Amtrak rail services connect in Oxnard.

The City of Oxnard encompasses six school districts and one community college. The city is served by 26 elementary schools, 3 intermediate schools, 2 junior high schools, 9 high schools, 1 adult school, and 1 alternative school. Oxnard Community College is located within the city and has an enrollment of over 7000 students. Electricity in Oxnard is supplied to area residents by Southern California Edison and the City of Oxnard provides water and sewer services. Public safety in Oxnard is administered by the Oxnard Police Department. St. John's Regional Medical Center was constructed in Oxnard in 1992 and the next year merged with Pleasant Valley Hospital to become Ventura County's largest acute-care health organization. The tourism industry in Oxnard is on the rise with approximately 10 hotels located in the city. Additional local facilities include a public golf course, Gull Wings Children's Museum, Oxnard Public Library, the Performing Arts and Convention Center, Heritage Square and the Henry T. Oxnard Historic District, and several places of worship.

Port Hueneme and Oxnard are home to the largest commercial deep-water harbor between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The boundary of the Oxnard Harbor District, which owns and operates the Port of Hueneme, also encompasses the greater City of Oxnard area. According to the Port, the niche markets served include: the import and export of automobiles, fresh fruit and produce, and forest products. There are no public facilities for small boats and leisure craft in the Port.

The Channel Islands Harbor, located 5 miles southwest of the city, provides over 2400 berthing facilities for pleasure and sportfishing vessels. Additionally, the harbor maintains guest berths for 70 craft. The Channel Islands Harbor is a No-Discharge Zone, meaning the discharge of sewage, whether treated or untreated, is prohibited. The harbor is administered by the Harbor County Department, Ventura County. Two marine repair yards are based on the east side of the channel and lifts can handle crafts up to 60 tons.<sup>20</sup>

The Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association is located in Oxnard and is active in commercial fishing issues in the area, particularly concerning the Channel Islands. Oxnard is home to one aquaculture facility, Proteus Seafarms International Inc., whose products range from abalone, to kelp and algae, shellfish, bottomfish, and others.

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

Oxnard is primarily involved in West Coast fisheries, including groundfish, coastal pelagics, and highly migratory species. In southern California, in the five years prior to 2000, 90% of the total landing value was contributed by squid, albacore/other tuna, sea urchin, coastal pelagics, shark/swordfish, lobster, and groundfish.

In 2000 a total of 140 vessels, all commercially registered, delivered landings to Oxnard. Landings in the community were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (1 t/\$1053/7), crab (44 t/\$129,855/34), groundfish (107 t/\$472,821/74), highly migratory species (11 t/\$34,086/19), shellfish (confidential/confidential/2), shrimp (80 t/\$495,078/16), and other species (1124 t/\$3,052,237/142).

Oxnard residents owned 39 vessels in 2000, including 22 that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Oxnard residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/4), crab (0/1/0), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/0/5), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/1/4).<sup>21</sup>

Two Oxnard residents held a total of two Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permits in 2000. In the same year recorded data indicates that the number of Oxnard residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (1/0/12), crab (0/1/0), groundfish (0/0/46), highly migratory species (NA/0/19), salmon (0/0/6), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/1/12), and other species (0/0/105).<sup>22</sup>

According to available data, 338 state and federal permits were registered to Oxnard 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: coastal pelagic (1/0/18), crab (0/2/0), groundfish (0/0/56), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/12), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/2/18), and other species (0/0/227).<sup>23</sup>

In 2000 at least two seafood processors were operating in Oxnard. Sun Coast Calamari, an Affiliate of Lund's Fisheries based in New Jersey, is capable of producing up to 200 metric tons of frozen California squid per day.<sup>24</sup> Tradewind Seafood Inc., specializing in sea urchin processing, transports them by air to Japan and generates sales of \$3-5 million annually.<sup>25</sup>

### *Sportfishing*

The sportfishing industry in southern California is well developed. In Oxnard sport fishermen are involved in both West Coast and Alaskan fisheries. There are ten licensed agents selling fishing permits in Oxnard. In the port group consisting of Port Hueneme, Oxnard, Ventura, and Santa Barbara, a total of 35 commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFV) or "party boats" reported 352,260 fish landings belonging to over 26 species in 2000. The number of anglers reported on those vessels totaled 77,345. In 2002 there were three CPFVs licensed in Oxnard and each vessel purchased an ocean enhancement stamp allowing anglers to fish in ocean waters south of Point Arguello in Santa Barbara County. In 2003 there were four licensed CPFVs, each with ocean enhancement stamps.

Several charter fishing businesses are located in Oxnard, including Channel Island's Sportfishing Center and Captain Hook's Sportfishing, offering one half to full day trips and overnight excursions. Popular sportfishing destinations include the islands of: Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel. The majority of the charter businesses also provide opportunities for whale watching and marine life trips.

### *Subsistence*

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

Oxnard residents made zero landings in North Pacific fisheries in 2000. In the same year a total of 10 Oxnard residents worked as crewmembers aboard vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries. In 2000 one state permit was registered to an individual in Oxnard. In 2000 Oxnard

residents held one Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits.

### *Sportfishing*

While the majority of the charter boats in Oxnard target West Coast fisheries, 76 Alaska sportfishing licenses were purchased by Oxnard community members in 2000.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Encyclopedia of North American Indians. No date. Chumash, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na\\_007400\\_chumash.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_007400_chumash.htm) (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>2</sup> Wishtoyo Project. No date. Chumash history, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.wishtoyo.org/projects-cultural-chumash-history.html> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>3</sup> Wishtoyo Project. No date. Chumash history, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.wishtoyo.org/projects-cultural-chumash-history.html> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>4</sup> Encyclopedia of North American Indians. No date. Chumash, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na\\_007400\\_chumash.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_007400_chumash.htm) (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>5</sup> Oxnard Convention and Visitors Bureau. 2004. History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.visitoxnard.com/history.html> (access date - September 2004).
  - <sup>6</sup> The City of Oxnard, California. No date. Welcome, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.ci.oxnard.ca.us/about\\_oxnard/welcome.html](http://www.ci.oxnard.ca.us/about_oxnard/welcome.html) (access date - September 2004).
  - <sup>7</sup> Economic Development Corporation of Oxnard. No date. Top Employers, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.oxnardedc.com/> (access date - September 2004).
  - <sup>8</sup> The Port of Hueneme. No date. Port of Hueneme: history, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.portofhueneme.org> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>9</sup> Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce. No date. Business and Employment, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.huenemechamber.com/employme.htm> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>10</sup> County of Ventura. 2002. Visitor center [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.countyofventura.org/visitor/visitor.asp> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>11</sup> California State Board of Equalization. 2004. California City and County Sales and Use Tax Rates, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/pub71.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>12</sup> California State Board of Equalization. 2001. California Counties Transient Lodging Tax Revenue, Rate and Date for the Fiscal Year 2000-01, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locrep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>13</sup> County of Ventura. No date. 2003-2004 property tax rates, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://auditor.countyofventura.org/taxrate/statistics.asp> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>14</sup> 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).
  - <sup>15</sup> 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).
  - <sup>16</sup> 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).

- 
- <sup>17</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>18</sup> 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).
- <sup>19</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>20</sup> The Log. 2004. Navigation Information: Channel Islands Harbor, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.thelog.com/special/specialview.asp?c=116486> (access date - September 2004).
- <sup>21</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>22</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>23</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>24</sup> Lund’s Fisheries, Inc. 2004. Affiliate Companies, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.lundsfish.com/affiliates.html> (access date - September 2004).
- <sup>25</sup> IRION Enterprises Facilities Management. 1999. Three Articles on Ventura County, California’s Business Connections with Japan, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.wirion.com/star.html> (access date - September 2004).