

Akutan

People and Place

Location

Akutan is a second-class city located in the Aleutians East Borough. It is on the Bering Sea side of Akutan Island, one of the Krenitzin Islands of the Fox Island Group, 35 miles east of Unalaska and 766 miles southwest of Anchorage by air. The land area of Akutan is 14 square miles, and the water area is 4.9 square miles.

Demographic Profile

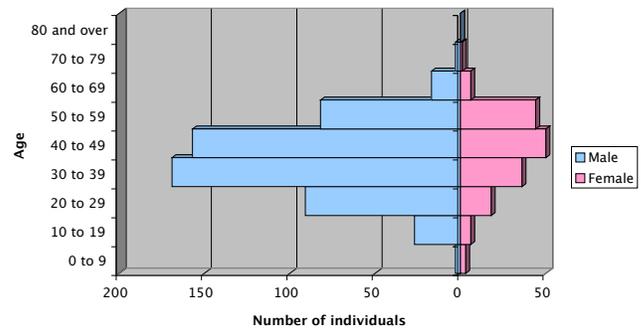
Akutan has only about 75 permanent year-round residents in 34 households. The 2000 census, however, reports a total population of 713, and the majority of these (638, or 89.5%) are fish processing workers that live in group quarters. Fish processing has a huge impact on the demographic makeup of the community: 77.0% of residents are male, and 78.4% are between the ages of 25 and 54. The median age is 40.2 years old, whereas the national age median is 35.3 years of age. The current racial makeup of Akutan is as follows: White (23.6%), Alaska Native or American Indian (15.7%), Black (2.1%), Asian (38.6%), Hawaiian Native (0.03%), other (18.2%), and two or more races (1.5%). A total of 16.4% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. Residents of Hispanic origin make up 20.8% of the population. Among the community's population as a whole, 48.5% of residents 25 years old and over have a high school diploma, and 19.3% have some college education.

History

Archaeological evidence, though scarce, suggests that Akutan has been the site of a traditional Unangan (Aleut) village since prehistory (Black et. al 1999:35). In 1878 the Western Fur and Trading Company started a fur storage and trading port there, and a Russian Orthodox church and school were built during that year. A commercial cod fishing and processing business was started shortly thereafter. The Pacific Whaling Company built a whale processing station across the bay from Akutan in 1912 which operated until 1939. After the Japanese attacked Unalaska in June 1942, the U.S. government evacuated Akutan residents, along with many other Aleuts, to the Ketchikan area, and many residents never returned, even after the re-

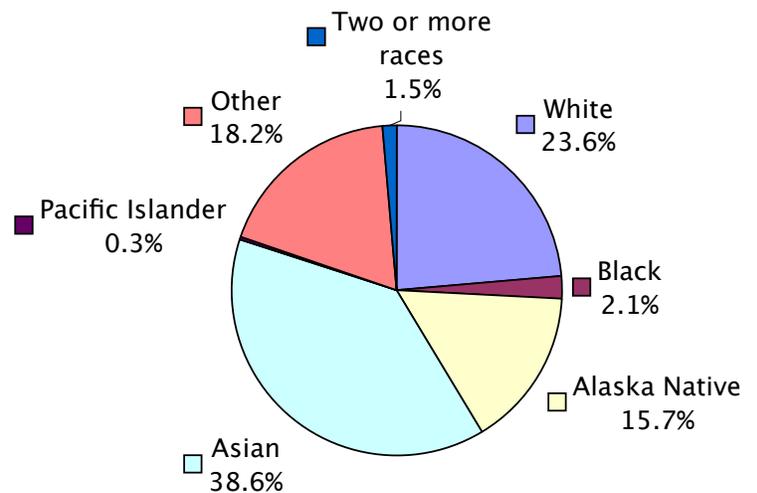
2000 Population Structure Akutan

Data source: US Census



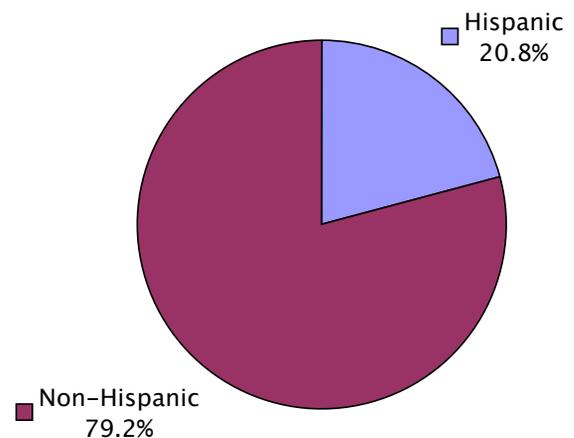
2000 Racial Structure Akutan

Data source: US Census



2000 Hispanic Ethnicity Akutan

Data source: US Census



establishment of the village in 1944.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

In addition to the subsistence economy, Akutan depends heavily upon commercial fishing. The median annual per capita income is \$12,259, and the median household income is \$33,750. Given the extremely transient nature of the workforce in Akutan, it is difficult to obtain an accurate picture of employment. The 2000 U.S. Census, for instance, reported that 78.9% of residents were unemployed, and 5.9% were not in the labor force (i.e. not working and not seeking work). Approximately 45.5% lived below the poverty level. A more likely interpretation is that labor opportunities are highly uncertain and depend upon the season, catch, and other variables. Residents and transient workers go through frequent periods of temporary unemployment.

Governance

Akutan was incorporated as a second-class city in 1979 and has a “strong mayor” form of government. Government revenues come entirely from a 1% raw fish tax imposed by the city and a 2% raw fish tax imposed by the Aleutians East Borough. There is no sales tax or property tax in Akutan. In terms of tribal governance, the city is under the jurisdiction of the Aleut Corporation, a regional Native corporation created in 1971 by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Akutan is also a member of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, a regional Native non-profit organization, and the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Community Development Association, which is responsible for allocating proceeds from community development quotas and investing in infrastructural development.

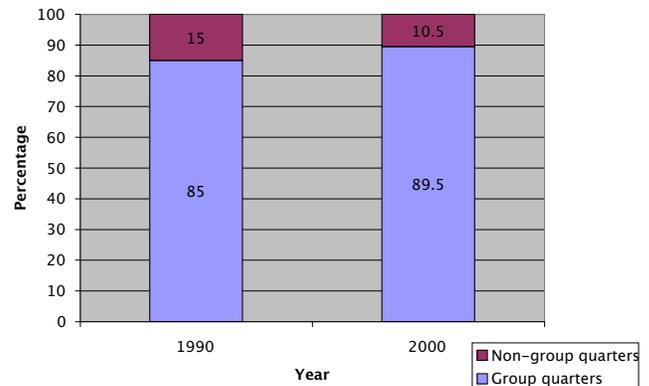
The nearest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) offices are all located in Dutch Harbor.

Facilities

Major utilities, including water, sewer, and garbage, are operated by the city. Electricity is generated at a hydroelectric facility managed by Akutan Electric Utility. A plan to develop two new water catchment dams and construct a new 125,000 gallon water

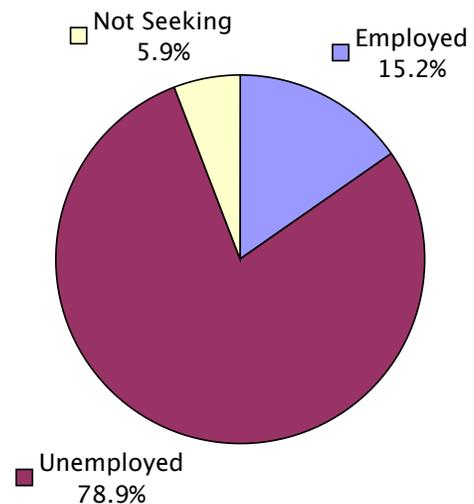
**% Group Quarters
Akutan**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Employment Structure
Akutan**

Data source: US Census



storage tank and treatment plant is currently under consideration. In addition to public utilities, the city’s primary employer, Trident Seafoods, operates its own water, sewer and electric facilities, and its own vessel dock. The following public services are also provided: health care (Anesia Kudrin Memorial Clinic), police (public security office), city public library, and youth center.

Transportation to and from Akutan is limited because of its rugged topography. An airport construction plan is being considered, but access is currently only by boat and amphibious craft. Roundtrip airfare from Akutan to Anchorage, via Dutch Harbor, is approximately \$952 (Travelocity 2003). Privately operated businesses include one grocery store, two hotels, and an automobile repair shop. The Akutan

School, under the jurisdiction of the Aleutians East School District, offers instruction to students in grades K-12. There are two teachers and 18 students.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Akutan is located in the middle of the world's most productive groundfish fishery. In 2000, 7 residents held a total of 10 commercial fishing permits for the following fisheries: halibut, king crab, and various groundfish. In 2000, there were 4 vessel owners for federal fisheries and 18 registered crew members residing in the community. The following is a detailed description of commercial permits in Akutan.

There were five total commercial permits in the groundfish fishery, including four miscellaneous finfish hand troll permits (one fished), and one miscellaneous finfish pair trawl permit (none fished). In the halibut fishery, four longline permits for vessels under 60 feet were issued (four fished). In the crab fishery, one king crab pot gear permit for vessels over 60 feet in Bristol Bay fishery was issued (one fished).

Akutan's main role in the commercial fishery is as the home of a Trident Seafood processing plant, the largest such facility in North America (Kenai Peninsula Online 2003). In 2000, there were vessels delivering the following species to Akutan for processing: crab (73 vessels), halibut (56 vessels), other groundfish (75 vessels), herring (41 vessels), salmon (40 vessels), and sablefish (7 vessels). In accordance with confidentiality regulations, data for fish landings in Akutan are unavailable.

In 2003, the Aleutians East Borough was granted \$1,101,638 in federal disaster funds to compensate for

falling salmon prices. A portion of this sum will likely be used for programs that affect Akutan. In 2002, the city of Akutan was granted \$147,417 in federal funds to compensate the community for fisheries losses related to the protection of Steller sea lion habitat under the Endangered Species Act. The Aleutians East Borough as a whole was granted \$140,063 in Steller sea lion funds. The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Community Development Association, the local CDQ group, was granted \$57,163 in Steller sea lion funds.

Sport Fishing

Sport fishing in Akutan is limited, with only 2 licenses sold in the community in 2000, both to Alaska residents.

Subsistence Fishing

Subsistence fishing is a major part of the economy for Akutan residents. The ADF&G's Division of Subsistence reported that, in 1990, 100% of Akutan households used subsistence resources. Ninety-six percent of Akutan households used subsistence salmon (all five Pacific species, with coho, pink, and sockeye being particularly important), and 100% used non-salmon subsistence fish (including cod, flounder, greenling, halibut, rockfish, sablefish, sculpin, sole, char, and trout). Ninety-two percent of households used marine mammals for subsistence, and 88% used marine invertebrates.

The annual per capita harvest of subsistence foods for Akutan in 1990 was 466.1 lbs, and was comprised of the following resources: salmon (26.0%), non-salmon fish (30.8%), land mammals (5.9%), marine mammals (22.7%), birds and bird eggs (6.1%), marine invertebrates (6.0%), and vegetation (2.4%).