Dillingham

People and Place

Location

Dillingham is situated on the very northern end of Nushagak Bay at the junction of the Nushagak and Wood Rivers. It is in northern Bristol Bay in the Dillingham Census Area and is 327 miles southwest of Anchorage. The community includes 33.6 square miles of land and 2.1 square miles of water.

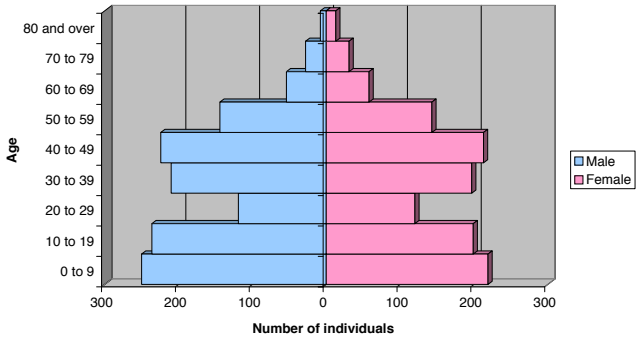
Demographic Profile

There were a total of 2,466 inhabitants in the community of Dillingham at the time of the 2000 U.S. Census. The gender breakdown was 51.6% male and 48.4% female. The population of Dillingham shrunk between 1920 and 1930, but since then has continued to rise to the 2,475 inhabitants counted by a state demographer in 2002. The population of the community doubles during spring and summer due to the seasonality of commercial fishing and the operation of fish processing plants. In 2000 about 52.6% of the population of Dillingham was American Indian and Alaska Native, 35.6% was White, 1.2% was Asian, 0.6% was Black or African American, 0.6% was some other race, and 9.4% was of two or more races. When race alone or in combination with one or more other races is taken into account, about 60.9% of the population was American Indian and Alaska Native, and 43.1% was White. About 3.5% of the population was Hispanic. The median age of Dillingham was 32.8 years, significantly lower than the national median of 35.3 years. There were a total of 1,000 housing units in the community of which 116 were vacant, and of those, 39 were vacant due to seasonal use. About 1.3% of the population lived in group quarters at the time of the 2000 Census. About 83.5% of the population of the community age 25 and over had graduated from high school or higher, and 21.9% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

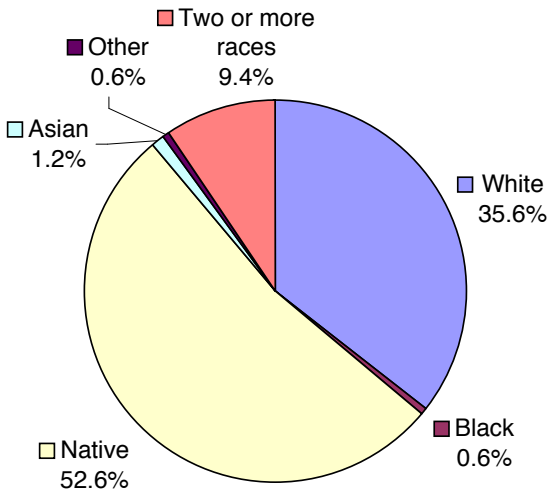
History

According to inAlaska.com "Yup'ik and Athabascan people settled the region, known as Naugeik, more than 6,000 years ago." Historically, an Eskimo and Athabascan village was situated at the north end of Nushagak Bay and was known as "Aleknuguk" or "Chogium" (North Pacific Fishery Management Council, p. 143). In 1818 the Russians

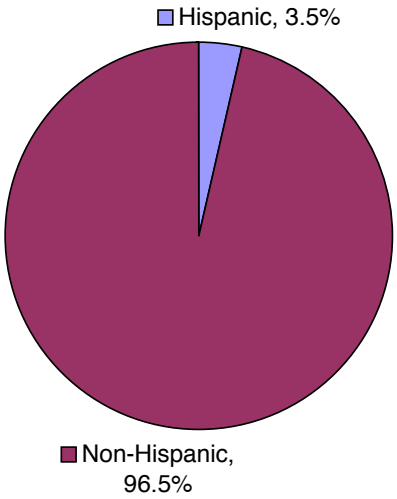
2000 Population Structure
Dillingham
Data source: US Census



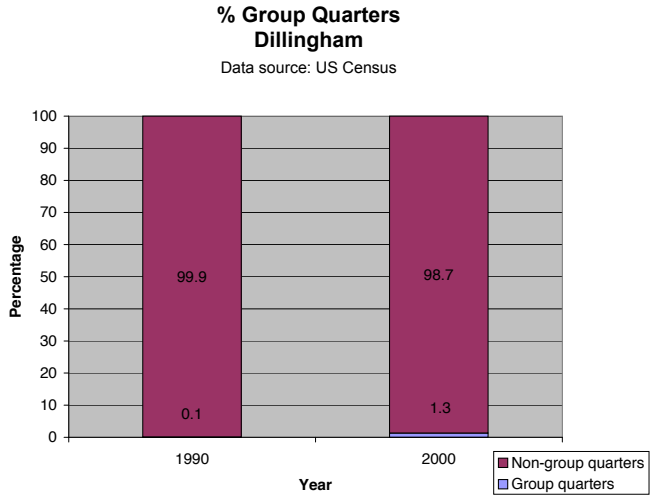
2000 Racial Structure
Dillingham
Data source: US Census

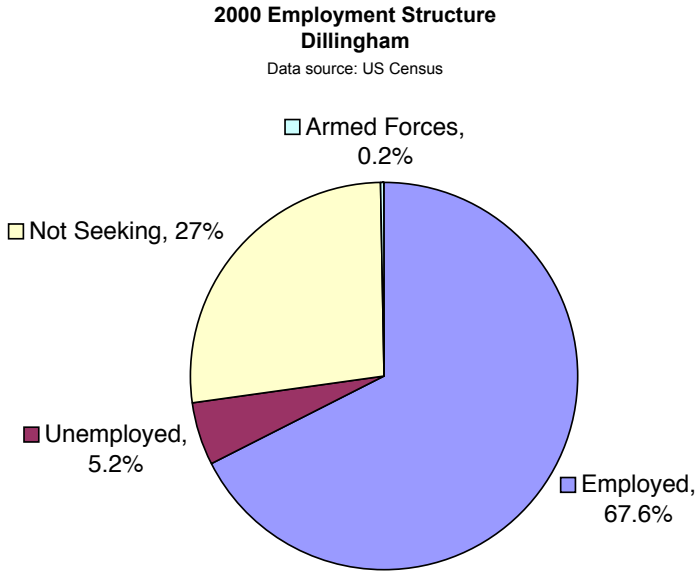


2000 Hispanic Ethnicity
Dillingham
Data source: US Census



established the fur trading post Alexandrovski Redoubt, and the area became a trade center. Native peoples from the Kuskokwim Region, Alaska Peninsula, and Cook Inlet came to the post to visit or live. In 1837 a Russian Orthodox mission was erected and at that time the village was known as Nushagak. The U.S. Signal Corps established a meteorological station in the community in 1881. The first salmon cannery in the Bristol Bay region was built east of the site of modern day Dillingham by Arctic Packing Co. in 1884. This "turned the community into a primarily fishing village that attracted Aleut, Eskimo and Athabascan Indian fishermen from all over the area" (North Pacific Fishery Management Council, p. 143). In the next 17 years, 10 more canneries were established. After U.S. Senator Paul Dillingham's 1903 tour of Alaska with his Senate subcommittee, the town and post office at Snag Point were named after him. The region was struck by the 1918-19 influenza epidemic and there were no more than 500 survivors, including no one under the age of two. After the epidemic, a hospital and orphanage were built in Kanakanak six miles from the center of present-day of Dillingham. The town site of Dillingham was first surveyed in 1947 and the City became incorporated in 1963.





Infrastructure

Current Economy

The economy of Dillingham is based primarily on the fishing industry. The main activities are commercial fishing, fish processing, cold storage, and support of the fishing industry. Revenue is also generated by the sport fishing industry. The community is the economic, transportation, and public service center for western Bristol Bay. The processors of Peter Pan Seafoods, Triton Fisheries, Icicle, and Unisea are present in Dillingham. In 2000, 457 commercial fishing permits were issued to residents of Dillingham and there were a total of 481 licensed crew members which were residents. Each year the population doubles during spring and summer because of seasonal workers in the commercial fishing sector. Seasonal employment is aided in stabilizing by the city's role as the regional center for government and services. Many residents are dependent on subsistence activities. Of the population age 16 years and over in 2000, about 67.6% were employed, 5.2% were unemployed, 0.2% were in the armed forces, and 27.0% were not in the labor force. Of those employed, about 37.9% were classified as having been government workers. In 2000, the per capita income of Dillingham was $21,537 with the median household income was $51,458.

Governance

Dillingham is a first-class city which was incorporated in 1963. It has a manager form of government which includes a mayor, seven-person city council, five person school board, five person planning commission, and various municipal employees, including a police chief. The city is not part of any organized borough. A 6% sales tax is imposed as well as an 11.0 mills property tax, 10% liquor tax, 6% gaming tax, and a 10% accommodations tax. The regional Native corporation in which Dillingham is

included is the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, and the regional non-profit for the area is the Bristol Bay Native Association. The Native village corporations are Choggiung Ltd. (a merged corporation of Dillingham, Ekuk, and Portage Creek) and Olsonville, Inc. which is a Native village corporation and an ANCSA Native Group. The Community Development Quota (CDQ) group in which the city is included is the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC). The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recognized Traditional Council is the Curyung Native Village Council, also known as the Native Village of Dillingham. The closest office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is located within Dillingham. A National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) field office is located in Bethel, an office is located in Homer, and a main office is located in Anchorage. The nearest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is located in Anchorage.

Facilities

The city of Dillingham is accessible by both air and sea. A 6,404 foot paved runway and flight service station is owned by the state and regular jet flights are available from Anchorage. The approximate cost of a roundtrip flight to Anchorage from Dillingham, according to Travelocity and Expedia, is $319 (price given for date as close to September 1, 2003 as possible). There is a seaplane base owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Division of Lands and a heliport is available at Kanakanak Hospital. The small boat harbor is a tidal harbor for seasonal use with 320 slips, a dock, barge landing, boat launch, and haul-out facilities and it is City-operated. There are two barge lines which make trips from Seattle to the community. There is a gravel road connecting the community of Aleknagik to Dillingham. Accommodations are available at five different inns, lodges, and B&Bs. There are two schools in the community; Dillingham Elementary School which teaches preschool through 5th grade, and Dillingham Middle/High School which teaches grades 6 through 12. In 2000 there were a total of 526 students at both schools and a total of 40 teachers. Health care is available at Kanakanak Hospital, Dillingham Medical Clinic, and Dillingham Health Clinic which are owned and operated by the U.S. Public Health Service. The Kanakanak Hospital is an Acute Care facility. Police services are available from the City Department of Public Safety and from the State Troopers Post. The electric utility is the Nushugak Electric Cooperative which is operated by REA Co-op with the main power source being diesel. This plant also supplies power to Aleknagik. The City operates a piped water system, but there are also individual wells as well for the 60% of the homes which are not served by the piped system. The sewer system is also operated by the City, although about 75% of the residents have septic systems. The refuse collector is Dillingham Refuse Inc. and the landfill is operated by the City.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing*

The community of Dillingham is very involved in commercial fishing which forms the economic base of the community. In fact, the population of the community doubles during the fishing season. There were a total of 457 commercial fishing permits issued to residents of Dillingham in 2000 and 481 licensed crew members which were residents. Ten resident vessel owners participated in the federal fisheries in 2000 and 147 vessel owner residents participated in the salmon fishery. Out of the total of 457 commercial fishing permits issued to residents of the community, a total of 294 were fished in 2000.

Halibut: Forty-four permits were issued for the commercial fishing of halibut: 40 were issued using longline on a vessel under 60 feet statewide (13 fished) and 4 were issued using longline on a vessel over 60 feet statewide (one fished).

Herring: In regards to herring, 164 permits were issued to residents of Dillingham and of those 50 were fished. One permit was issued for herring roe using a purse seine in Prince William Sound (none fished), one for herring roe using a purse seine on the Alaska Peninsula (none fished), 15 for herring roe using a purse seine in Bristol Bay (3 fished), one for herring roe using a beach seine in Norton Sound (none fished), 38 for herring roe using a gillnet in Security Cove (4 fished), 74 for herring roe using a gillnet in Bristol Bay (43 fished), 2 for herring roe using a gillnet in Goodnews Bay (none fished), one for herring roe using a gillnet in Norton Sound (none fished), and 31

* Commercial fishing permit data presented here is from the CFEC and is for the communities of Dillingham and Portage Creek combined.

for herring spawn on kelp gathered by diving or hand picked in Bristol Bay (none fished).

Groundfish: A total of four permits were issued for other groundfish and of those none were fished in 2000. One permit was issued for miscellaneous salt water finfish using longline on a vessel under 60 feet statewide and three were issued for miscellaneous saltwater finfish using a mechanical jig statewide.

Salmon: Two hundred forty five permits were issued for salmon and of those 230 were fished. A total of 140 were issued for salmon using a drift gillnet in Bristol Bay (137 fished), 102 using a set gillnet in Bristol Bay (93 fished), one using a set gillnet in the Kuskokwim (not fished), and 2 using a set gillnet in the Lower Yukon (none fished).

Salmon landings were delivered to the community of Dillingham by 441 vessels in 2000. In accordance with confidentiality regulations, landings data for the community are unavailable. No landings were delivered to the community for any other fisheries. The processors of Icicle, Peter Pan, Trident, and Unisea all are present in the community.

The city of Dillingham was allocated $119,145 in federal salmon disaster funds in July of 2003 because of the recent drop in salmon prices and loss in taxes generated. The CDQ group in which Clark's Point is included, the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC), was recently granted $75,026 by the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference as part of the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation program "in recognition of the negative economic impacts of federal measures to protect the Steller sea lion" with money which had been allocated by the U.S. government (Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference 2003).

Sport Fishing

Sport fishing seems to play an important role in Dillingham. Many businesses in the community cater to this industry and a large number of licenses are sold each year. Many species of fish are fished for sport in and around Dillingham including but not limited to king salmon, chum, Coho, pink salmon, rainbow trout, arctic grayling, arctic char, northern pike, Dolly Varden, and the area "is home to the world's largest sockeye (red) salmon fishery" (Alaskaoutdoors.com 2003). According to the ADF&G, in 2000 there were 674 sport fishing licenses sold in Dillingham to Alaska State residents and a grand total of 2210 licenses sold to residents of non- residents. The ADF&G reported listings for sport fishing guide businesses in the year 2002: 2 listings for saltwater guide businesses, 20 for freshwater guide businesses, 14 for full service guiding services, 12 for lodge/resort services, and 5 for aircraft/fly-in services. These numbers attest to the fact that sport fishing is a major tourist attraction for the area.

Subsistence Fishing

Many community members are dependent on subsistence resources, apparently used by almost all households in Dillingham. The ADF&G report for the most representative year for Dillingham,1984, showed that 98.0% of households used all subsistence resources: 88.2% salmon, 75.0% non-salmon fish (herring, herring roe, smelt, cod, halibut, blackfish, burbot, char, grayling, pike, trout, and whitefish), 26.8% marine mammals, and 13.1% marine invertebrates. The per capita harvest for all subsistence resources by community members was 242.23 lbs: 58.37% salmon, 7.21% non-salmon fish, 1.23% marine mammals, 0.50% marine invertebrates, 2.19% birds and eggs, 27.20% land mammals, and 3.30% vegetation. The ADF&G reported that in 1999 there were 343 household subsistence salmon permits which were issued to residents of Dillingham. Residents are also eligible to apply for halibut subsistence certificates. These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003.