

Kotlik

People and Place

Location

Kotlik is situated 35 miles northeast of Emmonak in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. The community is on the east bank of the Kotlik Slough and is in the Wade Hampton Census Area. It is 165 air miles northwest of Bethel and 460 miles from Anchorage. Kotlik makes up 3.8 square miles of land and 0.8 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

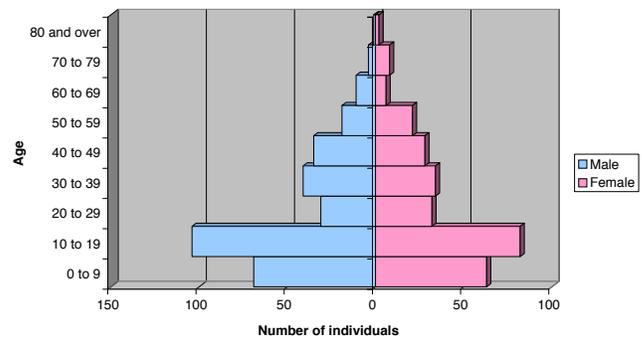
There were a total of 591 inhabitants in the community of Kotlik according to the 2000 U.S. Census, and of those, 53.3% were male and 46.7% were female. In 1920 the population of the community was 83, dropping to 14 by 1930. Since 1930 the population of Kotlik has continued to rise. The racial composition of the community in 2000 was as follows: 93.6% American Indian and Alaska Native, 3.6% White, and 2.9% of two or more races. A total of 96.1% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. Approximately 0.3% of the population was Hispanic. The median age of the community in 2000 was 18.5 years, whereas the national age median was 35.3 years. There were a total of 139 housing units and of those 22 were vacant due to seasonal use. No one in the population lived in group quarters. Of the population age 25 years and over, 66.4% had graduated from high school or gone on to higher schooling and 6.9% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

History

According to the National Park Service “one of the most distinctive and widespread Arctic cultural traditions appeared around 4000 BP,” the Arctic Small Tool tradition, which is significant because “some investigators feel that the Arctic Small Tool tradition marks the arrival of the ancestral Eskimo cultures” to the Arctic area (National Park Service 2003). Historically, the Native Eskimo people in the area of Kotlik have been the Yup'ik peoples. Because “southwestern Alaska lacked significant amounts of any of the commercially valuable resources that first drew non-Natives to other parts of the state,” the Native people of the southwest region did not experience continual contact with the outside world

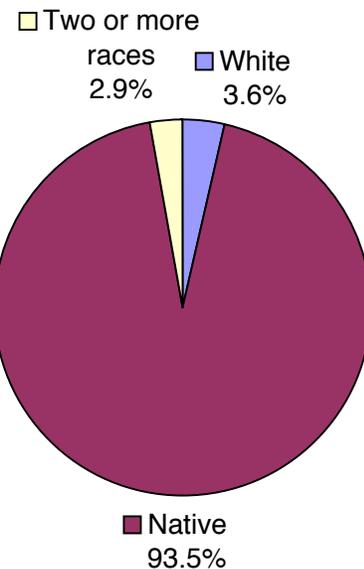
**2000 Population Structure
Kotlik**

Data source: US Census



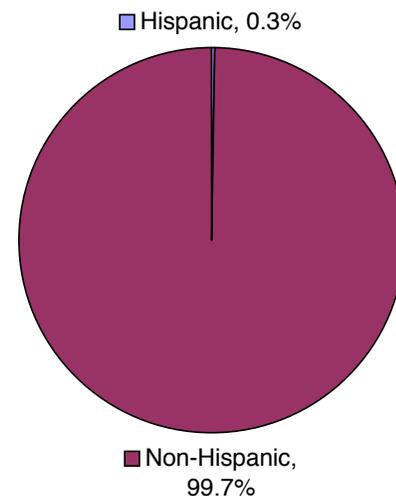
**2000 Racial Structure
Kotlik**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Hispanic Ethnicity
Kotlik**

Data source: US Census



until missionaries settled in the area beginning in the mid-1800's: initially the Russian Orthodox, then the Moravians, and finally the Jesuits (Fienup-Riordan 2000, p. 115).

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council reports that “the Eskimo word kotlik refers to breeches, according to 19th century explorer R.L. Faris, who documented the name of the Kotlik River” (1994, p. 59 – Western Alaska). Russian traders settled in the area surrounding Saint Michael after 1867 and many current residents of Kotlik are descendants of those traders. The Saint Joseph parish was established in the community in the early 1930s by a priest who was stationed at Saint Michael, Fr. Martin Lonneux, S.J. (Diocese of Fairbanks 2003). The community of Kotlik grew when a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school was constructed in the mid-1960s and the inhabitants of many nearby villages including Channiliut, Hamilton, Bill Moore’s Slough, and Pastolaik relocated to Kotlik. It became one of the bigger ports and commercial centers of the lower Yukon River because of its location, providing easy access for barges and large river boats. The city was incorporated in 1970. The sale, importation, and possession of alcohol are not allowed in the city. Residents of the summer fish camp of Hamilton also live in Kotlik.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

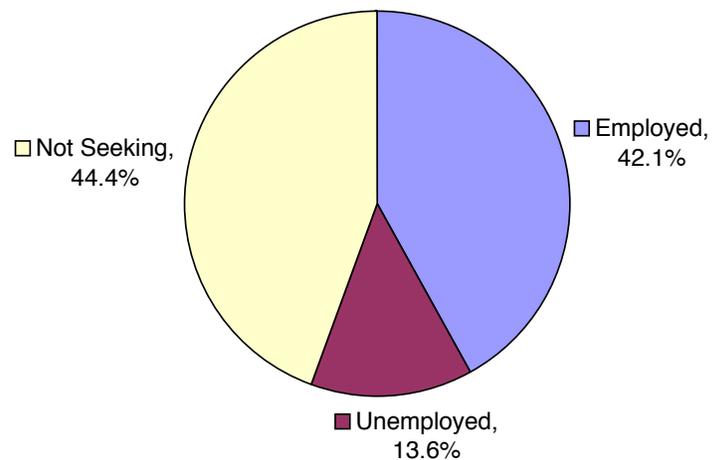
The economy of Kotlik is based for the most part on fishing and fish processing. It is very seasonal with the residents relying heavily on subsistence harvesting. In 2000, 91 commercial fishing permits were issued to residents of the community and there were a total of 92 resident licensed crew members. Residents are interested in developing a seafood processing facility and an arts and crafts project. Income is also earned from trapping. Of those in the community that were age 16 and over in 2000, 42.1% were employed, 13.6% were unemployed, and 44.4% were not in the labor force. Of those which were employed about 51.0% were classified as government workers. The per capita income was \$7,707 and the median household income was \$37,750. About 21.1% of residents lived below the poverty level.

Governance

Kotlik is a second-class city incorporated in 1970

**2000 Employment Structure
Kotlik**

Data source: US Census



and has a Manager form of government including a mayor, six person city council, five person advisory school board, and various municipal employees. There is a 3% sales tax. The city is not part of any organized borough. The Native regional corporation for the area is the Calista Corporation and the Native village corporation is the Kotlik Yupik Corporation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recognized village council is the Kotlik Traditional Council. The Community Development Quota (CDQ) group for the area is the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association. The nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office is located in the city of Emmonak, but is a seasonal office which is open from June 1st to August 31st. The closest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is also located in Nome. A National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) field office is located in Bethel.

Facilities

Kotlik is reachable by both air and water. A State-owned 4,400 foot gravel airstrip is present in the community which provides cargo and mail service as well as passenger transportation. The approximate cost, according to Travelocity and Expedia, to travel by air roundtrip to Anchorage from Kotlik is \$710 on a rural airline (price given for date as close to September 1, 2003 as possible). The community is accessible by barge and there are no roads which lead to the city. There are about 50 commercial and private boats which are owned by residents. Accommodations in the city

are available at the City Lodge. There is one school, the Kotlik School, which teaches grades K-12 and had 204 students and 14 teachers in 2000. The school gym is accessible for community members. Health care is available at the Kotlik Health Clinic, which is owned by the Kotlik Traditional Council and operated by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC), although the clinic currently needs to be expanded and is in need of new equipment. Police services are provided by City VPSO and fire service is provided by volunteers. The electric utility is Kotlik Electric Services which is operated by the City with diesel as the main power source. In 2000, about 90.2% of households heated using kerosene and 9.8% heated using wood. A piped vacuum sewer and circulating water utilidor is being constructed in Kotlik, although 19 facilities and households are not yet served and those residents must take care of their own hauling of water and sewage. The washeteria operator is the City and the sewer system is operated by both the City and individuals. Individuals must collect their own refuse. The City operates the landfill, although it is difficult to bury and trench in the area so an incinerator and recycling program are being considered.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

There were a total of 91 commercial fishing permits issued to residents of Kotlik in 2000 and 92 resident licensed crew members. No vessel-owner residents of Kotlik participated in either the federal fisheries or the salmon fishery.

Of the 91 commercial fishing permits issued to residents of the community, a total of 69 were fished in 2000. Three permits were issued for king crab using pot gear on a vessel under 60 feet in Norton Sound (none fished). A total of 13 permits were issued for harvesting herring: one was issued for herring roe gillnet in Cape Romanzof (not fished) and 12 were issued for herring roe gillnets in Norton Sound (6 fished). A total of 75 permits were issued for salmon using set gillnets in the Lower Yukon and of those 63 were fished.

No vessels delivered landings to the community of Kotlik in 2000 because no processors were in operation

in the community. The CDQ group for the community, the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA), was recently granted \$50,017 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 does not seem to be much of a source of income for the community with no obvious businesses which draw in tourists for this purpose. In 2000 there were 89 sport fishing licenses sold in Kotlik to residents of the State of Alaska and a total of 91 which were sold to non-residents. According to the ADF&G, there was no sport fishing guide businesses in Kotlik which were registered in 2002.

Subsistence Fishing

Inhabitants of the community of Kotlik rely heavily on subsistence harvesting and many have fish camps which are located on the Yukon River. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) for the most representative year of 1980 in the community of Kotlik a total of 100.0% of the households used all subsistence resources, 85.7% used salmon, 100.0% used marine mammals, and the total percent was not available for non-salmon fish, although the species used included smelt, cod, blackfish, burbot, pike, sheefish, and whitefish. The per capita subsistence harvest for residents of Kotlik was 502.60 lbs and of this harvest 28.67% was salmon, 30.08% was non-salmon fish, 20.07% was marine mammals, and 7.88% was made-up by birds and eggs. Also according to ADF&G in 1999 there were 90 household subsistence salmon permits which were issued to those from Kotlik for an estimated 7,053 harvested salmon. Residents of the community are eligible to apply for subsistence halibut 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.