

# Pelican

## People and Place

### Location

Pelican lies on the northwest coast of Chichagof Island in Lisianski Inlet. Most of the community is built on pilings over the tidelands. The Island is part of the world’s largest coastal temperate rainforest, the Tongass National Forest. The area encompasses 0.6 square miles of land and 0.1 square miles of water.

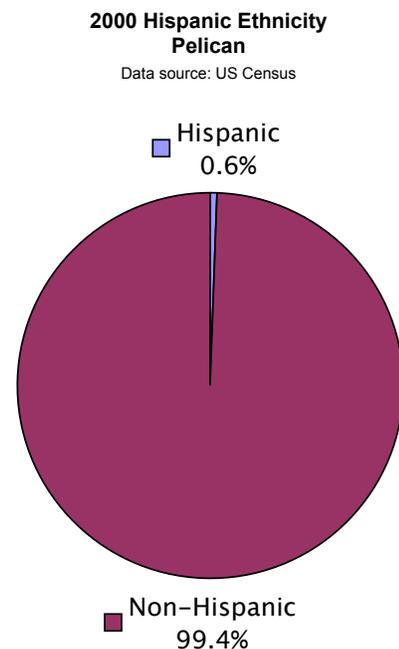
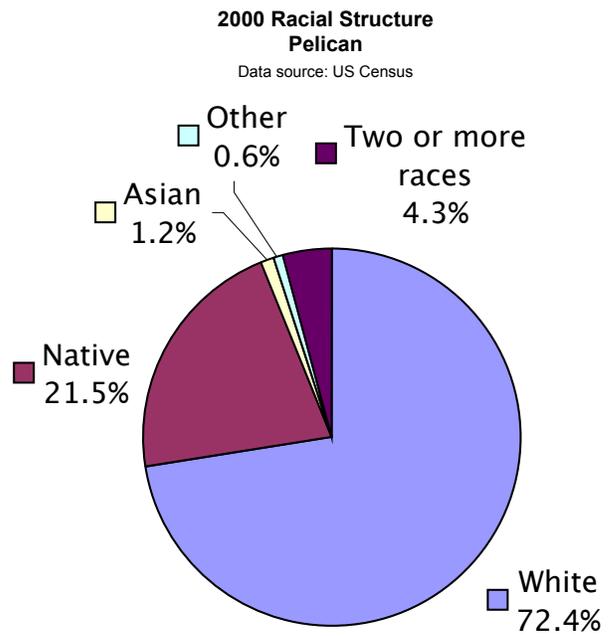
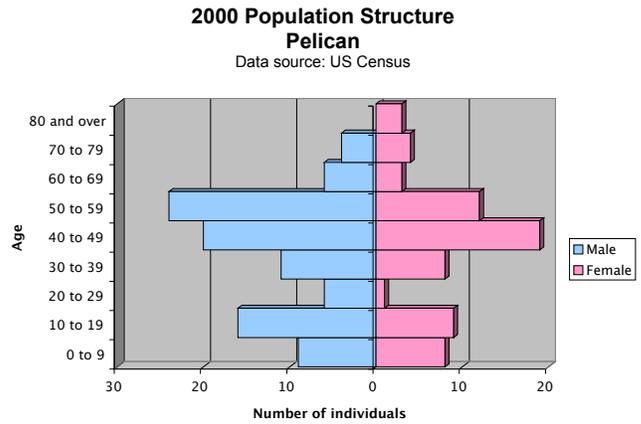
### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Pelican was 163. The initial community population was just over 100 in the 1960s. Total population numbers for Pelican were at a maximum in the 1990s when there were over 200 residents, a steady increase since the early 1900s. There were more males (58.9%) than females (41.1%) in Pelican according to Census data. The racial composition of the population in 2000 was 72.4% White, 21.5% Alaska Native or American Indian, 1.2% Asian, and 0.6% classified themselves as ‘other.’ Overall, 4.3% of the population identified with two or more races. A total of 25.8% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. Only 0.6% of the population identified as Hispanic. The median age was 42.5 years, considerably higher than the national median age of 35.3 years for the same year. According to Census data, 25.8% of the population was under 19 years of age while 20.3% of the population was over 55 years of age.

There were 94 housing units in Pelican—48 permanent dwellings, 13 dwellings used seasonally, and 33 vacant dwellings. At the time of the 2000 Census, only 1.2% of the population lived in group quarters. About 87.1% of the population over 25 years of age had a high school diploma or higher, while 21.6% held a bachelor’s degree or higher.

### History

Previously a Russian settlement and then a gold mining community, the town of ‘Pelican’ was named after the vessel that transported fish from the area to Sitka when a cold storage plant was developed in 1938. A store, office, sawmill, post office, and sauna had been erected by 1939. A school and cannery were developed in the 1940s. A boardwalk serves as the town’s main thoroughfare, due to the lack of flat land.



After having been on the increase for a couple decades, the population has declined since 1995. This can again be attributed to changes in the commercial fishing industry and the impact on fisherman and processing plant operations. In addition, during late 1995, the Pelican Seafoods plant shut down and ownership changed, causing several months of great uncertainty over the plant and town's future.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

Commercial fishing, including crabbing and seafood processing, are the mainstays of Pelican's economy. Fishing vessels deliver fish to be sold at Pelican Seafoods, the local fish processing and cold storage plant. Most employment is at Pelican Seafoods, which also owns the electric utility, a fuel company, and the store. The plant processes black cod, halibut, lingcod, rockfish, and salmon. The City and school provide some employment. A total of 100 commercial fishing permits were held by 41 permit holders in 2000 according to the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (ACFEC).

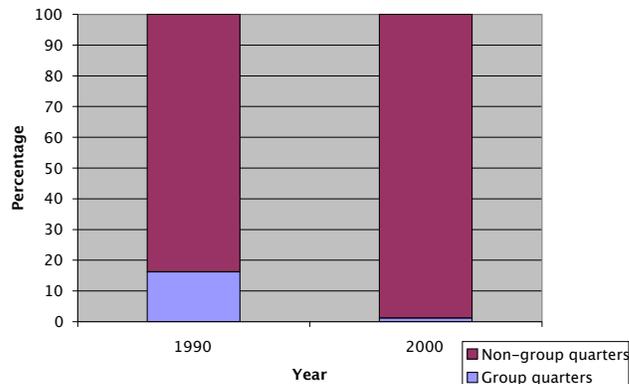
At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 70.9% of the potential labor force was employed and there was an unemployment rate of 5.5%. A seemingly high 29.1% of the population over 16 years of age was not in the labor force, though this may be explained by the intensely seasonal nature of the fishing and tourism industries – 4.7% of the population lived below the poverty level. The median household income in the same year was \$57,083 and the per capita income was \$29,347.

### Governance

The City of Pelican was incorporated as a second-class city in 1943 but was reclassified by the State Local Boundary Commission as a first-class city in 1974. The City of Pelican has a Council-mayor form of government. The mayor and six council members are elected officials. Pelican is not located within an organized borough; therefore, the city is responsible for many services. The City of Pelican implements a 4% sales tax and a 6.0 mills property tax. Pelican Traditional council is the village council. Pelican belongs to the regional Native non-profit organization Central Council Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska. The community was not included in the Alaska Native

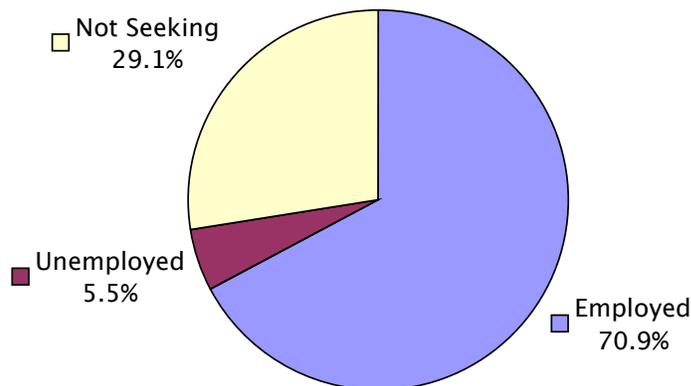
**% Group Quarters  
Pelican**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Employment Structure  
Pelican**

Data source: US Census



Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and is therefore not federally recognized as a Native village. Consequently it is not allotted land under ANCSA.

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) office is in Juneau, as is the nearest office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). The nearest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is located in Haines.

### Facilities

Pelican is accessible only by sea and air and is essentially dependent on floatplanes and the Alaska State Ferry for transportation. Daily scheduled air taxi services are available from Juneau and Sitka. Facilities include a State-owned seaplane base, a small boat harbor, dock, and State ferry terminal. Pelican is on the route of the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system. The ferry provides two monthly departures during summer months, and one monthly departure during winter.

Cargo barges deliver goods on a similar schedule.

The City of Pelican owns and operates a piped water system in the community. Water is derived from a dam and reservoir on Pelican Creek, and is treated. The City has obtained funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to replace the disinfectant system and transmission lines for the water system. About two-thirds of area residents are connected to the piped system. The City completed a piped sewage system with ocean outfall in 1989. Four large septic tanks are used in Pelican and the City hires a disposal truck from Juneau to pump sludge about four times a year. The City provides garbage collection services, recycling, and incinerates the refuse at the landfill.

Pelican Utility Company supplies the community with hydro- and diesel-powered electricity. Health services are provided by the Pelican Health Clinic owned by the city. There is no local police force, but a volunteer fire department provides emergency services. Pelican is within the Pelican City School District and there is one school with 2.5 full-time teachers and 11 students. Pelican is developing its tourism industry and there are already many businesses including at least five accommodation providers which cater to visitors.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing is important to the economy of Pelican. According to the ADF&G and reported by the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (ACFEC), 100 permits were held by 41 permit holders in Pelican in 2000 (59 fished). There were 16 vessel owners in the federal fisheries, 21 vessel owners in the salmon fishery, and 25 crew members claiming residence in 2000. The commercial vessel fleet delivering landings to Pelican was involved in halibut (29 vessels), sablefish (19 vessels), other groundfish (26 vessels), and salmon (95 vessels) fisheries in 2000 (in accordance with confidentiality regulations, landings data for the community are unavailable).

Commercial fishing permits are issued according to specifications of species, vessel size, gear type, and fishing area. Permits issued in Pelican in 2000 related to halibut, herring, sablefish, other groundfish, crab, other shellfish, and salmon.

*Halibut:* There were a total of 20 permits issued for halibut in Pelican in 2000 (15 fished). Permits for

halibut pertained to three mechanical jigs (one fished), 12 longline vessels under 60 feet (9 permits fished), and 5 longline vessels over 60 feet. All permits designated for halibut were for statewide waters.

*Herring:* There was one permit issued for the herring fishery in Pelican for a purse seine in southeast waters (not fished).

*Sablefish:* A total of 12 sablefish permits were issued in 2000, all of which were fished. Permits pertained to 8 longline vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters, 2 longline vessels over 60 feet restricted to northern southeast waters, 2 longline vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters, and 2 longline vessels over 60 feet in southern southeast waters.

*Other Groundfish:* A total of 24 permits were issued in 2000 for other groundfish (7 fished). Permits pertained to one lingcod longline vessel under 60 feet in statewide waters (not fished), one lingcod dinglebar troll in statewide waters (not fished), one lingcod mechanical jig in statewide waters, 2 miscellaneous saltwater finfish hand troll in statewide waters (none fished), 8 miscellaneous saltwater finfish longline vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (3 fished), 3 miscellaneous saltwater finfish mechanical jigs in statewide waters (one permit fished), one miscellaneous saltwater finfish longline vessel over 60 feet in statewide waters, one demersal shelf rockfish hand troll in southeast waters (not fished), 2 demersal shelf rockfish longline vessels under 60 feet in southeast waters (not fished), one demersal shelf rockfish dinglebar troll in southeast waters (not fished), one demersal shelf rockfish mechanical jig in southeast waters (not fished), and one demersal shelf rockfish longline vessels over 60 feet in southeast waters (not fished).

*Crab:* One permit was issued for crab in 2000, which was fished and pertained to Tanner crab pot gear in southeast waters.

*Other shellfish:* Five permits were issued for other shellfish in Pelican in 2000 (one fished). Permits pertained to 3 octopi/squid pot gear vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (no permits fished), one shrimp pot gear in southeast waters (not fished), and one sea cucumber diving gear in southeast waters.

*Salmon:* A total of 37 permits were issued for the salmon fishery (22 fished). Salmon permits pertained to 15 hand trolls in statewide waters (6 fished) and 22 power gurdy trolls in statewide waters.

Two seafood processing plants were in operation in Pelican in 2000 and filed 'Intent to Operate' for 2003. Pelican Seafoods has the capability to process groundfish, halibut, high-seas salmon, salmon, and sablefish. The plant also has harbor facilities used by the community.

It was announced in July 2003 that Pelican would receive \$92,641 worth of federal salmon disaster funds to be distributed to several municipalities statewide which have been affected by low salmon prices in order to compensate for consequent losses of salmon taxes or raw fish taxes. The disbursement of these disaster funds illustrates state and federal responses to communities and boroughs affected by depleted salmon resources. Communities and boroughs are ultimately responsible for the allocation of the funds. Further disbursements are expected in the future to offset the costs of basic public services when fish taxes become insufficient.

### **Sport Fishing**

There were nine saltwater sport fishing businesses registered in Pelican in 2002 and seven businesses licensed to provide freshwater recreational fishing according to the ADF&G. There was a total of 249 sport fishing licenses sold in Pelican in 2000, 53 of which were sold to Alaska residents.

### **Subsistence Fishing**

Data from 1987 compiled on behalf of the ADF&G's Division of Subsistence provides useful information about subsistence practices in Pelican. Records describe the subsistence patterns for 100% of households which participated in the use of subsistence resources, including harvesting, sharing,

and consuming resources, illustrating the importance of subsistence to life in the community. Of the total population, 94.8% used salmon, 100% used non-salmon fish (herring, herring roe, smelt, cod, flounder, halibut, rockfish, and char), 27.1% used marine mammals and a high percentage, 92.3%, used marine invertebrates.

The average per capita harvest for the year 1987 was 355.13 lbs. The composition of the total subsistence harvest can be shown by the percentages of the resources which demonstrate the amount of each resource category used by the community relative to other resources categories. The total subsistence harvest was composed of 16.99% salmon, non-salmon fish made up 33.51%, 31.24% land mammals, 2.11% marine mammals, 0.4% birds and eggs, 13.12% marine invertebrates, and 2.64% vegetation. The wild food harvest in Pelican made up 229% of the recommended dietary allowance of protein in 1987 (corresponding to a daily allowance of 49 g of protein per day or 0.424 lbs of wild food per day) (Wolfe, Division of Subsistence, ADF&G).

A total of 13 permits were held by households in Pelican for subsistence fishing of salmon according to ADF&G's Division of Subsistence records from 1999. Sockeye was the main component of the salmon harvest. Residents of Pelican who hold a valid Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC) issued by NMFS, are eligible to harvest subsistence halibut. 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.