

Dutch Harbor / Unalaska

People and Place

Location

Unalaska is a town located on Unalaska Island in the western Aleutian Islands. The Dutch Harbor portion of the community is located on Amaknak Island and is mainly an industrial port area, connected by a bridge to Unalaska Island, where most of the population is concentrated. Unalaska and Dutch Harbor are treated as a single community here, in accordance with their inseparability in certain data sets and an underlying socioeconomic interconnectivity.

Demographic Profile

Unalaska is a town of 4,283 people in 988 housing units (Census 2000). During peak fishing seasons the population of the city can swell to over ten thousand. The size of Unalaska’s temporary population is illustrated by the fact that 51.2% of the population lives in group housing quarters.

Though few non-Natives lived in the community before WWII, 7.7% of the population recorded by the Census in 2000 was Alaska Native or American Indian in race. Approximately 3.7% was Black, 44.2% percent was White, 30.6% percent was Asian (Filipinos, in particularly, make up a large portion of the Asian population), 9.3% consisted of other races, 0.6% was Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander, and 3.9% was two or more races. A total of 9.3% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. Residents of Hispanic origin made up 12.9% of the population.

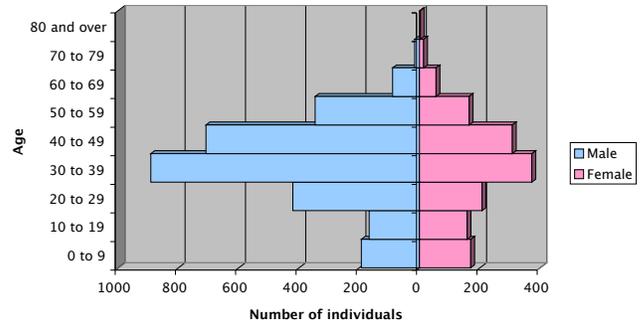
Male residents comprise 66.1% of the local population, and females 33.9%. The median age of Unalaska, at 36.5 years, is similar to the U.S. national average of 35.3 years. Approximately 78.1% of the adult population has an educational level of high school or higher.

History

The Aleutian Islands have been populated for 3000-6000 years by Aleut (Unangan) people. The Aleuts of Unalaska and Umnak Island are known as Qawalangin, which means “sons of sea lions.” In 1759 there were estimated to be more than 3,000 Unangan in 24 settlements on Unalaska and Amaknak.

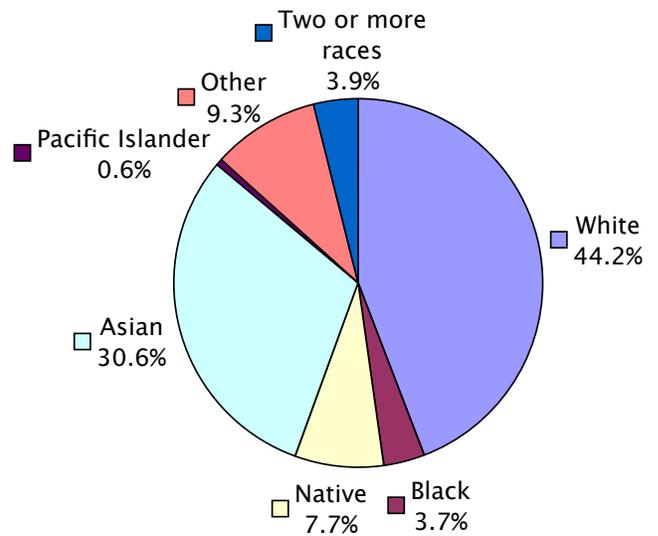
2000 Population Structure Unalaska

Data source: US Census



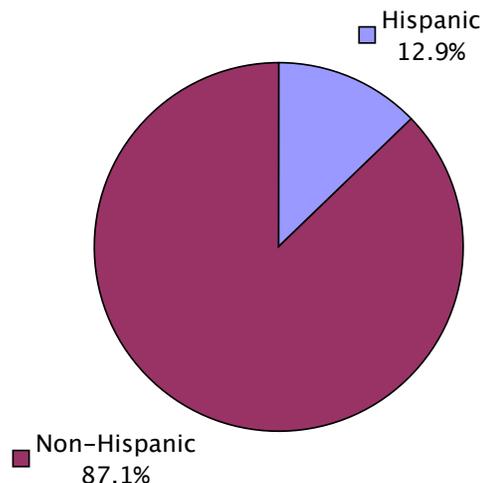
2000 Racial Structure Unalaska

Data source: US Census



2000 Hispanic Ethnicity Unalaska

Data source: US Census



Russian traders and explorers began visiting the Aleutian Islands in 1741, and established a permanent fur-trading post at Unalaska in 1774. The Russian period brought forced labor in the fur trade for the Russian American Company, depletion of local fur-bearing animals, epidemic disease outbreaks, the Russian Orthodox religion, and an alphabet for the Aleut language. The 1867 purchase of Alaska by the U.S. introduced different forms of commerce, including the establishment of the Alaska Commercial Company, a fishing outfit.

The U.S. military presence on the island began gradually with a naval radio command station in 1911. However, in the years leading up to the U.S. entrance into WWII, the strategic importance of the Aleutians prompted an intense build-up of bases and personnel, with the population reaching a staggering 50-70,000 by 1943 (AWCRSA Profile, 2002). The Japanese bombed Dutch Harbor on June 3, 1942, resulting in 43 deaths, and, on July 19, of that year, the Aleuts of Unalaska were forcibly evacuated and interned at an abandoned cannery at Burnett Inlet, near Wrangell in southeast Alaska. By 1951 the military presence was all but gone from the city. By 1960 Unalaska was the only surviving settlement out of the 24 that had existed on Unalaska and Amaknak Islands at the beginning of Russian contact (Veltre, 1980). In the recent past, Unalaska was heavily involved in the cod, herring, salmon, King crab, and snow crab commercial fisheries. Today Unalaska/Dutch Harbor is the center of the Bering Sea groundfish fishery.

Infrastructure

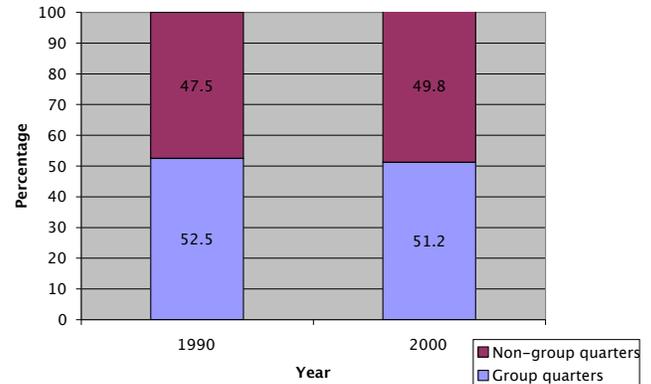
Current Economy

The Unalaska/Dutch Harbor economy is based almost entirely on commercial fishing. It is the major source of employment, accounting for over 90% of jobs. Employment occurs in the harvest and processing sectors, and in fishing-related services such as fuel, vessel maintenance, trade, and transportation (Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development). A nascent tourism industry is present in the community, with cruise ship stopovers, sport fishing, kayaking, and bird-watching attracting visitors. The subsistence economy is also still important in the community.

The median per capita income in 2000 was \$24,676, and the median household income was

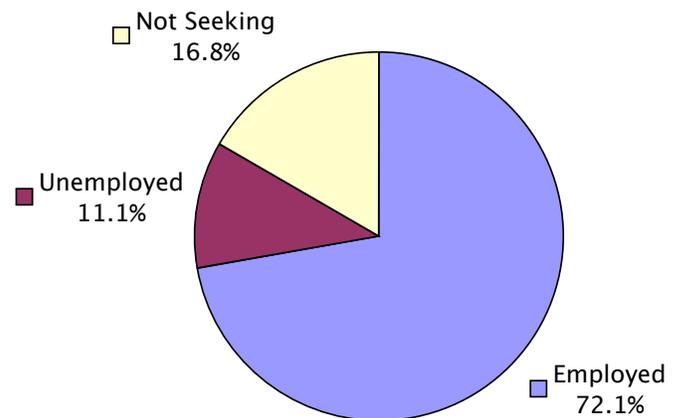
% Group Quarters Unalaska

Data source: US Census



2000 Employment Structure Unalaska

Data source: US Census



\$69,539. Approximately 12.5% of the population was below the poverty level. In 2000, 11.1% of residents were unemployed and seeking work, and 16.8% were unemployed and not seeking work (not in the total potential labor force).

Facilities

Unalaska is accessible only by air (800 air miles from Anchorage) or sea. Scheduled commercial flights provided by Alaska Airlines and Peninsula Airways are often cancelled due to weather, stranding passengers for days at a time. Roundtrip airfare from Unalaska/Dutch Harbor to Anchorage is approximately \$772 (Travelocity 2003) The State ferry service operates from April until October every year and commonly there is only one trip per month.

Dutch Harbor/Unalaska has ten major docks, three of which are managed by the city. These docks contain 5,200 feet of moorage and 1,232 feet of floating dock.

The city's small boat harbor has 238 moorage slips and 900 linear feet of dock space, but the boats are often crowded and moored three vessels out from the dock. Currently there are plans to build a new small boat harbor which would help to provide more space with 250 additional slips.

Two schools, both operated by the city, provide instruction for students: one primary school and one secondary school, with a combined total of 30 teachers and 390 students. The city also operates all major utilities, including electricity, sewer, and water. There are two health clinic facilities in Unalaska: the Iluliuk Family Health Clinic, which is operated by a non-profit board of directors, and the Wellness Clinic, which is operated by the Aleutian Pribilof Island Association. The city also provides police and fire services.

In terms of privately owned facilities, there are four hotels, two grocery stores, and a wide variety of businesses in the service sector.

Governance

Unalaska was incorporated in 1942. Because of its standing as a first-class city which has elected not to be included in a borough, it has greater taxation powers. It also has greater public administration responsibilities, such as the funding and operation of its public schools and utilities. The city government includes an elected mayor, a six-member City Council, and a staff that make up various departments. The City of Unalaska has a 3% sales tax, a 5% accommodations tax, and a 2% raw fish tax.

The Ounalashka Corporation, the Qawalangin Tribal Council, the Aleut Corporation, and the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association also provide services to the city's residents such as public functions, projects, or funding.

The Ounalashka Corporation (OC) is a for-profit corporation which was formed by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The corporation contributes to many community organizations, including but not limited to programs supporting traditional culture.

Located in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska are a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) office of Sustainable Fisheries and an Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Division of Commercial Fisheries office. There is also an officer of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) stationed in town.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Unalaska/Dutch Harbor is located at the center of the most productive groundfish fishery in the world. Pollock generates the most revenue of the commercially fished species in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska. Other species processed in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska include Pacific cod, black cod, halibut, flatfish, salmon, herring, opilio and Tanner crab, and king crab. In 2000 there were 50 residents who held a total of 103 commercial fishing permits. There were 17 resident vessel owners operating in federal fisheries and six vessel owners operating in non-federal fisheries. There were 200 registered crew members residing in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor in 2000. This section contains detailed information about commercial permits in 2000 for Unalaska and Dutch Harbor as a single entity.

Crab: Permits in the crab fishery totaled 16 (13 fished). A detailed breakdown of these permits was as follows: one Dungeness crab pot gear permit for vessels under 60 feet in the Aleutian Islands westward area (none fished), one king crab pot gear permit for vessels under 60 feet in Bristol Bay (one fished), two king crab pot gear permits for vessels over 60 feet in Dutch Harbor (one fished), one Dungeness crab pot gear permit for vessels over 60 feet in the Aleutian Islands westward region (one fished), one king crab pot gear permit for vessels under 60 feet in Norton Sound (one fished), four king crab pot gear permits for vessels over 60 feet in Bristol Bay (three fished), and six Tanner crab pot gear permits for vessels over 60 feet in the Bering Sea (six fished).

Other Shellfish: A total of four permits for other shellfish were issued, but none were fished. A detailed breakdown of these permits is as follows: one shrimp permit for vessels with otter trawl gear in Prince William Sound (none fished), two octopus/squid pot gear permits for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (none fished), and one sea urchin permit for individuals using diving gear in statewide waters, southeast Alaska (none fished).

Halibut: Permits in the halibut fishery totaled 25 (13 fished). A detailed breakdown of these permits is as follows: one halibut hand troll permit for statewide waters (none fished), 15 halibut longline permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (13 fished), 5 halibut mechanical jig permits in statewide waters (4

fished), and 4 halibut longline permits for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (3 fished).

Herring: There was only one permit issued in the herring fishery (none fished). This permit was for a vessel with purse seine gear in Bristol Bay.

Other Groundfish: Permits in the groundfish fishery totaled 40 (18 fished). A detailed breakdown of these permits is as follows: one lingcod mechanical jig permit for statewide waters (none fished), 9 miscellaneous finfish longline permit for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (4 fished), 2 miscellaneous finfish pot gear permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (none fished), 18 miscellaneous finfish mechanical jig permits in statewide waters (7 fished), 4 miscellaneous finfish longline permits for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (2 fished), and 6 miscellaneous finfish pot gear permits for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (5 fished).

Sablefish: Permits in the sablefish fishery totaled seven (five fished). A detailed breakdown of these permits is as follows: four sablefish longline permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (three fished), and three sablefish longline permits for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (two fished).

Salmon: Permits in the salmon fishery totaled eight (five fished). A detailed breakdown of these permits is as follows: one salmon drift gillnet permit for vessels operating in Prince William Sound (one fished), one salmon purse seine permit for the Chignik fishery (one fished), one salmon purse seine permit for the Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands (none fished), one salmon drift gillnet permit for the Alaska Peninsula (none fished), three salmon drift gillnet permits for the Bristol Bay fishery (three fished), and one salmon hand troll permit for statewide waters (not fished).

Dutch Harbor/Unalaska is the busiest fishing port in the Nation in terms of landings; nine processors reported a total of 316,312.6 tons in landings for 2000. Of this, the vast majority of landings (305,394.8 tons, or 96.5%) were in the groundfish fishery. Vessels delivered landings to Dutch Harbor/Unalaska for the following species: groundfish (192 vessels), sablefish (56 vessels), halibut (197 vessels), BSAI crab (136 vessels), salmon (50 vessels), herring (46 vessels), and scallops (1 vessel).

The largest onshore processors in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska are Unisea, Westward Seafoods, and Alyeska Seafoods. Osterman Fish, Prime Alaska, and Royal

Aleutian also operated in Dutch Harbor. The off-shore processors in the area are the Bering Star, which is a floating processor that spends most of its time in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska, and the Fishing Company of Alaska (FCA), which is an at-sea processing company.

In 2002 the city of Unalaska was granted \$876,540 in federal funds to compensate for fisheries losses due to the protection of Steller sea lion habitat under the Endangered Species Act.

Sport Fishing

There are at least four charter boat companies that operate out of Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, taking customers on sport fishing cruises to catch sockeye salmon, coho salmon, pink salmon, halibut, and Dolly Varden. There are three registered fishing guides for fresh water and six for salt water. Sport fishing permit sales for Unalaska totaled 833 in 2000, including 485 to Alaska residents.

Some participants in the halibut charter fleet report a recent increase in competition on the local fishing grounds from commercial fishing boats which have responded to a decrease in the ex-vessel value of salmon by moving into halibut fisheries.

Subsistence Fishing

Many residents of Unalaska use subsistence resources. The ADF&G's Division of Subsistence reports that, in 1994, 96.8% of Unalaska households used subsistence resources. Approximately 91.9% of households used salmon, particularly coho and sockeye. Approximately 94.6% of households used non-salmon fish species, including cod, halibut, herring, rockfish, sablefish, and char. In addition, 13.8% used marine mammals for subsistence, and 86.5% used marine invertebrates.

The annual per capita harvest of subsistence foods for Unalaska in 1994 was 194.5 lbs, and was comprised of the following resources: salmon (27.7%), non-salmon fish (41.6%), land mammals (4.9%), marine mammals (4.9%), birds and bird eggs (0.8%), marine invertebrates (14.1%), and vegetation (6.0%). In 1999, 206 households in Unalaska and Dutch Harbor held subsistence salmon harvesting permits. The local Qawalingin Tribe of Unalaska holds a Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC), which allows them to harvest halibut for subsistence. 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.

Additional Information

The Unalaska Native Fisheries Association (UNFA) is a local fishing organization based in Unalaska which acquired a herring gill-net quota for the small boat fleet of the city as well as a 2% quota on cod in the Northern Pacific. The Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA) is an association made up of three of the processors in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska: Unisea, Westward Seafoods, and Alyeska Seafoods as well as

other corporate member processors and was designed to address the issues of its members. PSPA's office is in Seattle, but its members are located in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska.

Many different religions are practiced in the city of Unalaska and many religious organizations are present including Eastern Orthodox, United Methodist, Christian Fellowship, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Bahai, and the Aleutian Bible Church. Buddhism is also practiced by many Vietnamese and Japanese residents.