

Newtok

People and Place

Location

Newtok is located on the Ninglick River, north of Nelson Island, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region. It is 94 miles northwest of Bethel. The area encompasses 1.0 square mile of land and 0.1 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

Newtok is a predominantly Yup'ik Eskimo village. In 2000 there were 321 residents in 63 households. The racial composition of the community was as follows: American Indian and Alaska Native (95.3%), White (3.1%), and two or more races (1.6%). A total of 96.9% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. The gender makeup of the community was significantly skewed, at 54.2% male and 45.8% female. The median age of Newtok was 20.7 years, significantly younger than the U.S. national average of 35.3 years. In terms of educational attainment, 71.1% of residents aged 25 and over held a high school degree or higher level of education.

History

The people of Newtok, together with Native communities on Nelson Island, are known as Qaluyaarmiut, or "dip net people." Their ancestors have lived on the Bering Sea coast for at least 2,000 years. Newtok's contact with the outside world has traditionally been limited; until as recently as the 1980s, high school students had to travel outside the community for an education. Village leaders are currently suggesting a land trade with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which would allow them to relocate their village to a new site called Taqikcaq in order to avoid erosion.

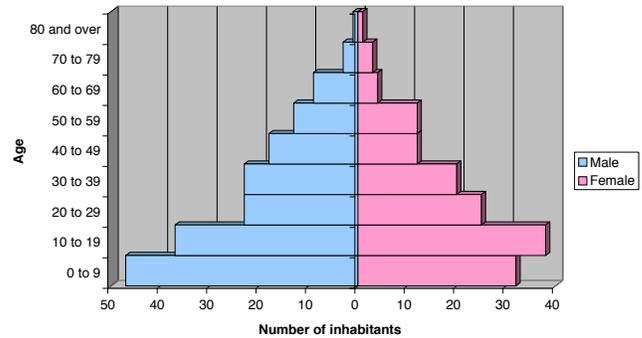
Infrastructure

Current Economy

The economy of Newtok depends largely on commercial fishing. Many residents hold commercial permits. Other employment sources include the school, the health clinic, and village organizations. In addition, almost all Newtok residents rely on subsistence hunting and fishing to supplement their incomes.

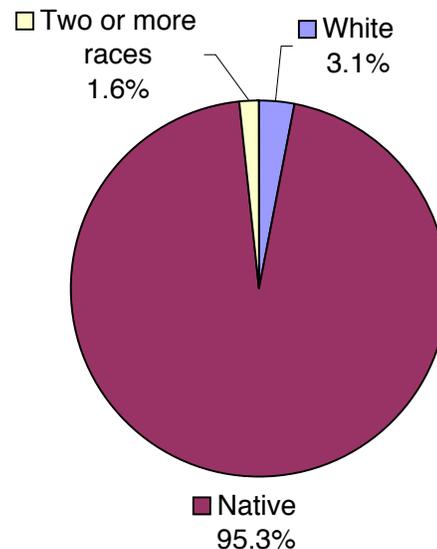
2000 Population Structure Newtok

Data source: US Census



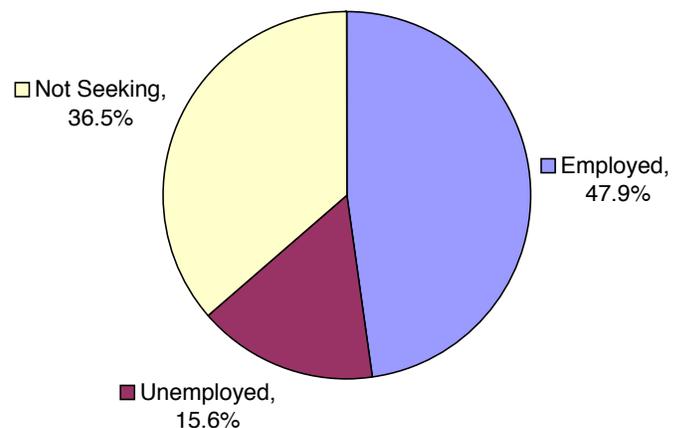
2000 Racial Structure Newtok

Data source: US Census



2000 Employment Structure Newtok

Data source: US Census



In 2000, the per capita income was \$9,514 and the median household income was \$32,188. The unemployment rate was 15.6%, and 36.5% of residents aged 16 and older were not in the labor force (i.e. not working and not seeking work). Approximately 31% of residents lived below the poverty level.

Governance

The city of Newtok was incorporated in 1976, but disbanded in 1997 in favor of a traditional village council form of government. Newtok is not located within an organized borough, but is under the jurisdiction of the Bethel Recording District. There is also a village corporation, the Newtok Corporation. The village is a member of the Coastal Villages Region Fund, a Community Development Quota (CDQ) group that promotes employment opportunities for residents as well as participation in the Bering Sea crab and groundfish fisheries.

The closest office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to the community is located in Bethel. A National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) field office is located in Bethel and a main office is located in Anchorage. The nearest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is located in Anchorage.

Facilities

Access to Newtok is by airplane, seaplane, or boat. The state owns a 2,180 foot airstrip in the community. Roundtrip airfare from Newtok to Anchorage, via Bethel, is approximately \$421. Household water comes from a lake via a water treatment plant. Houses are not plumbed. The Ungusraq Power Company, operated by the village council, provides electricity to the community. Power comes from a diesel generator. There is a local health clinic that is owned by the village council and operated in conjunction with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. There is one school in the community that offers instruction to students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The school has eight teachers and 107 students.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 eight vessel owners with operations in federal fisheries resided in the community, along with

five vessel owners with operations in state-managed fisheries. There are 28 registered crew members. Twenty-six local residents held a total of 39 commercial fishing permits, primarily in the herring and halibut fisheries. This section contains a detailed description of commercial permits issued to Newtok residents in 2000.

Halibut: Seventeen local residents held a total of 19 commercial permits in the halibut fishery. These permits consisted of: nine halibut hand troll permits for statewide waters (three fished), nine halibut longline permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (four fished), and one halibut mechanical jig permit for statewide waters (not fished).

Herring: Fourteen local residents held a total of 15 commercial permits in the herring fishery. These permits consisted of: 13 herring roe gillnet permits for Nelson Island (8 fished), one herring roe gillnet permit for Security Cove (none fished), and one herring roe gillnet permit for Bristol Bay (none fished).

Salmon: Five local residents held a total of five commercial permits in the salmon fishery. These permits consisted of: three salmon drift gillnet permits for Bristol Bay (three fished), one salmon set gillnet permit for Bristol Bay (one fished), and one salmon set gillnet permit for the Lower Yukon (not fished).

In 2000 there were no commercial fish processors and no registered landings for Newtok.

Sport Fishing

Because of its geographic isolation and its reliance upon subsistence hunting and fishing, sport fishing activities in Newtok are limited.

Subsistence Fishing

Most residents in Newtok depend on subsistence resources for a major part of their livelihoods. However, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game gives only limited information about subsistence harvesting and use in Newtok. They report that, in 1990, all residents used herring for subsistence, and the average per capita harvest of herring for that year was 77.4 pounds. Although most residents of Newtok also use other fishery resources—particularly salmon—detailed information on these resources is not available. In addition, in 2003 Newtok held a Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC), which allows residents to harvest halibut for subsistence purposes.