

# Bodega Bay

## People and Place

### Location

Bodega Bay is in Northern California's Sonoma County, 67 miles north of San Francisco on California Highway 1, also known as the Pacific Coast Highway. The city covers an area of 8.4 square miles of land. The geographic coordinates of Bodega Bay are lat 38°20'00"N and long 123°02'49"W.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Bodega Bay's population was 1,423. The gender composition was 48.1% female and 51.9% male. The median age was 50.9, substantially higher than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 85.9% had a high school education or higher, 45.6% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 23.7% had graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

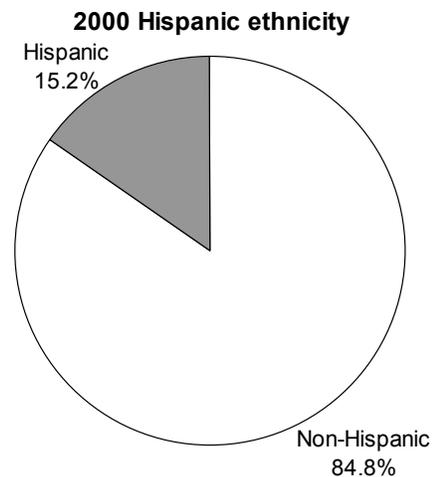
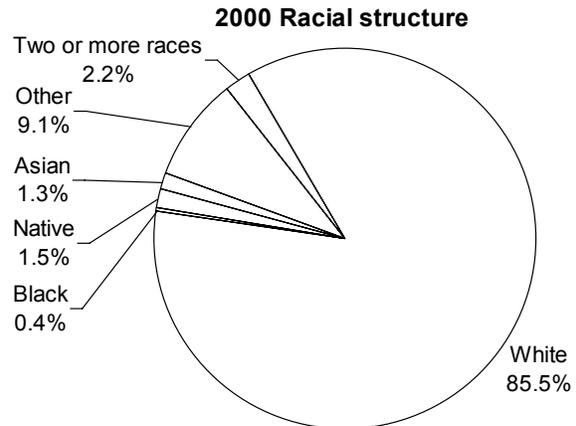
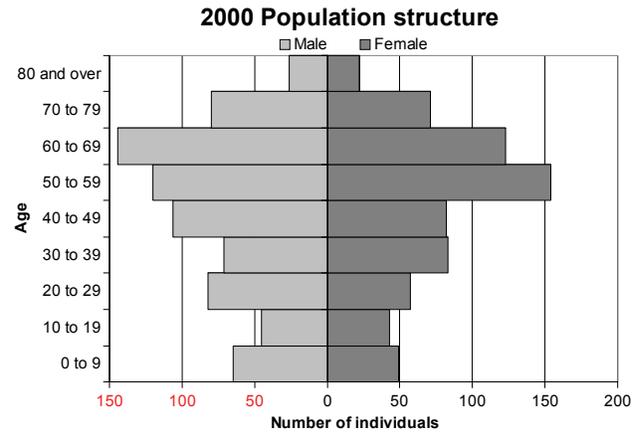
The majority of the racial composition of Bodega Bay was white (85.5%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (9.1%), individuals who identified with two or more races (2.2%), American Indian and Alaska Native (1.5%), Asian (1.3%), and black (0.4%). Ethnicity data indicate 15.2% identified as Hispanic and approximately 19% of the population was foreign-born.

In 2000 77.7% of the population lived in family households.

### History

Long before Euro-Americans came to the Bodega Bay area, the Miwok and Pomo Indians lived throughout what is now Sonoma County. They had a close relationship with the environment. The Coastal Miwok fished, hunted, and gathered on a seasonal basis in the coastal areas in and around Bodega Bay. During the summers, the Pomo harvested clams, seals, and bird eggs, and fished in coastal waters. The first European to visit Bodega Bay was Sebastian Vizcaino in 1603, however, the area's name comes from the Spanish mariner Francisco Bodega y Cuadra, who anchored his schooner in the bay in 1775.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

The first Euro-American settlers in the area were Russian fur traders from Alaska in 1812. They sought otters and seals, as well as a warmer climate to grow food for their northern outposts. The Russians built Fort Ross, 24 miles north of Bodega Bay, with the help of local



Indians. The Russians enslaved the Pomo and exploited the area's natural resources. Spanish missionaries began inhabiting coastal California in the late 1700s, setting up missions on Indian and non-Indian land.

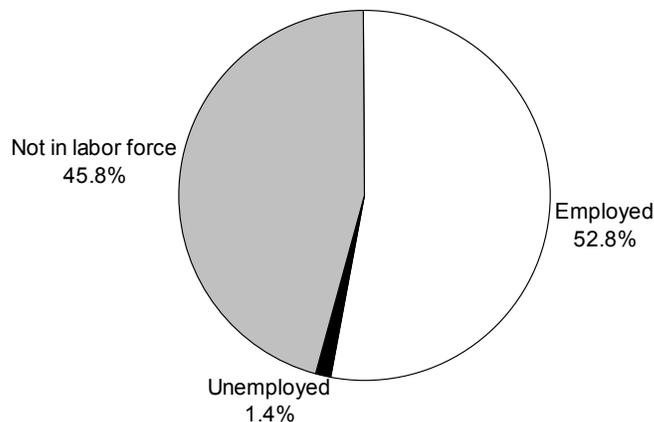
By the 1800s, the Spanish were using the local Miwok and Pomo Indians as laborers. California came under Mexican control during this time and plots were granted to Mexican citizens, who built ranchos along the Sonoma coast. Most of the Russians left the area in 1841. Many of the area's Indians went into servitude to Mexicans who, through state confiscation, controlled much of the land previously occupied by Native Americans. By 1850 those Native Americans who were not working as farm laborers engaged in fishing to earn a livelihood.<sup>4,5</sup>

Bodega Bay eventually grew into a thriving fishing center and commercial port. In 1842 Stephen Smith, a New England sea captain turned Mexican citizen, established Rancho Bodega in the area. Smith started a saw mill and a hotel, and his efforts helped establish a shipping center on the bay. It was around this time that Firman Camelot founded a town. Although he named the town "Bay" it was later changed to Bodega Bay. The area's fishing industry received a boost when rail lines were constructed between Sonoma County and San Francisco in the 1870s. The rail lines opened up a large market to area fishermen.<sup>6</sup>

Bodega Bay's commercial fishing industry took off during World War I. The industry, which focused on salmon, drove the local economy and structured local life. The industry's sustainability was threatened by silt on the bay floor in the late 1930s and early 1940s. It was dredged in 1943 and the industry bounced back. By the early 1980s the fishing fleet had grown to 300 boats and the value of commercial landings reached more than \$15 million. After record catches in the late 1980s, the salmon industry fell on hard times as the number and volume of landings plummeted. Human induced landscape changes in the area and regional drought are thought to have contributed to habitat degradation and resultant low spawning numbers of salmon. During this period many fishermen left the industry.<sup>7,8</sup>

Bodega Bay remains home to families who have fished commercially in the area for generations. Salmon populations began to rebound in the mid-1990s. Contemporary commercial fishermen harvest albacore tuna, Chinook salmon, halibut, rockfish, Dungeness crab, sole, and more recently sea urchin. In recent years, silting has become a recurring problem. The depth of the bay's channel has decreased to five feet in some areas and numerous vessels have run aground in the shallow waters. The siltation problem is paramount to the community because Bodega Bay is the only port between

**2000 Employment structure**



San Francisco and Fort Bragg large enough to accommodate many of today's ocean-going vessels. The channel was dredged under a project begun in 2004 and closed out in 2005.<sup>9</sup>

Commercial fishing remains a major component of Bodega Bay's economy, however, tourism and a sportfishing industry have developed in recent years. During the 1980s, the number of guest rooms in the area grew by 150%. The area has a range of tourist attractions including beaches, parks, sportfishing (primarily tuna and salmon), a golf course, wineries, and many historical sites.<sup>10</sup> Several annual festivals demonstrate the economic and cultural significance of fishing. The two-day Fisherman's Festival in April is a major event, featuring a boat parade and a blessing of the fleet for the approaching salmon season. The Seafood, Art, and Wine Festival occurs in August and features live music, wine and beer tasting, and seafood.

Currently the Coast Miwok and the Pomo are dispersed throughout the bay area. The Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo banded together in the 1990s and were recognized as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria in 2000. Native fishermen harvest salmon and various other species. Salmon holds cultural significance for the Miwok and Pomo as an historic staple of their diet. In recent decades, native fishermen have reported a decline in salmon populations, although the number of coho salmon seems to have risen in the last few years.<sup>11</sup>

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 52.8% of Bodega Bay's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 1.4% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 2.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition,

45.8% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (26.5%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (16.9%), education, health, and social services (16.8%), and local, state, or federal government (10.9%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, fishing, forestry, and hunting employed 5.5%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

A phone survey by Coldwell Banker, a real estate company, in October 1999 identified six major employers in the Bodega Bay area: The Tides Wharf (150 employees during the peak season), The University of California Marine Lab (125 during peak), Inn at the Tides (80 during peak), Bodega Bay Lodge (65), Bodega Harbor (62), and the U.S. Coast Guard (25). Fieldwork indicated Lucas Wharf employs approximately 75 persons.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Bodega Bay's per capita income in 1999 was \$37,226, significantly higher than the national average of \$21,587. The median household income of \$56,818 also was higher than the national median of \$41,994. Four percent lived below the poverty level in 1999. In 2000 Bodega Bay had 1,144 housing units, of which 58.5% were occupied and 41.5% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 72.2% were by owner and 27.8% were by renter. Most of the vacancies (88.4%) were due to seasonal use.

## Governance

Bodega Bay is an unincorporated area, governed by Sonoma County. Residents pay a 7.5% sales and use tax rate and visitors pay a 9% transient lodging tax. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fishermen and processors in California.

Bodega Bay has a U.S. Coast Guard Station. The nearest office of the National Marine Fisheries Service is 23 miles away in Santa Rosa, and the closest California Fish and Game office is 60 miles away in Yountville. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Office is in San Francisco. The Pacific Fishery Management Council also holds meetings in San Francisco.

## Facilities

Bodega Bay is accessible by California Highway 1 and smaller county roads, and by air at the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport, 21 miles from the community. The nearest major airport is San Francisco International Airport.

Bodega Bay lies in the Shoreline Unified School District. Students may attend primary school in Bodega Bay, and a middle school and a high school are in neighboring Tomales. Pacific Gas and Electric provides electricity. Bodega Bay Public Utilities District provides water and sewage treatment. The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office and the California State Highway Patrol administer law enforcement. Bodega Bay has no hospital, however the community of Sebastopol (16 miles away) has a hospital with emergency services. Bodega Bay has 18 businesses offering overnight accommodations including inns, hotels, bed and breakfasts, vacation rentals, and a recreational vehicle park.

There are four marinas in the area. Spud Point has 244 berths (80% allocated to commercial fishing), shower facilities, laundromat, and a service dock. Mason's Marina has 115 berths, a hoist, several docks, fuel, and a small store. Porto Bodega has 95 berths, several boat docks, a launch, and trailer hookups. The Golden Hinde Inn has an adjacent marina, and Sonoma County provides boat launching at Doran and Westside parks. The nearest boat yard is 20 miles south in Marshall, a small community on Tomales Bay.

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Bodega Bay had one processing plant in 2000, and 317 vessels, all commercially registered, delivered fish there. Landings data for Bodega Bay also include Timber Cove. In 2000 residents of Bodega Bay and Timber Cove landed fish in the following West Coast Fisheries (data shown represents landings in tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic 22 t/\$21,133/5; crab 191 t/\$1,047,625/66; groundfish 35.7 t/\$247,021/65; highly migratory species 59 t/\$144,711/32; salmon 300.6 t/\$1,245,430/210; and other species 283 t/\$560,426/39.

Community members owned 58 vessels that participated in the region's fisheries in 2000, of which 34 took part in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by residents of Bodega Bay that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/1, crab 0/0/30, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/1/43, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/1, and other species 1/0/2.<sup>12</sup>

In 2000 residents held three federal groundfish fishery permits. The number of residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) in 2000 was: coastal pelagic 0/0/24, crab 0/0/31, groundfish 0/0/14, highly migratory species NA/0/3, salmon 0/1/66,

shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/6, and other species 1/0/18.<sup>13</sup>

Community members held at least 245 commercial fishing permits in 2000, including 242 state registered permits. The number of permits held by community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/41, crab 0/0/33, groundfish 0/0/17, highly migratory species NA/0/2, salmon 0/1/117, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/12, and other species 1/0/21.<sup>14</sup>

Local fishermen have experienced an increase in ocean Chinook salmon since 2000. During the same period however, fishermen have not been allowed to take coho salmon due to declining numbers.<sup>15</sup>

## Sportfishing

Bodega Bay is part of the Princeton-Bodega Bay port complex, which received 147,926 commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) landings in 2000 by 27,274 anglers. The top five species landed were unspecified rockfishes, Chinook salmon, lingcod, cabezon, and albacore tuna. In 2002 and 2003 there were four licensed sportfishing businesses in Bodega Bay. Two of these were CPFVs with shrimp vessel permits.

## Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Bodega Bay is not discussed in detail in this community profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” for fishermen who do not earn revenue from their catch, but fish for pleasure or to provide food for personal consumption. Information on subsistence fishing in California is captured to some degree in the sportfishing data.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

According to available data, the community of Bodega Bay did not participate in the North Pacific commercial fisheries in 2000.

### Sportfishing

One Bodega Bay resident purchased an Alaska sportfishing license in 2000.

## Notes

1. Bodega Bay.com. 2004. Bodega Bay area history—200 years of change. Online at [http://www.bodegabay.com/visitor\\_info/overviewmap.html](http://www.bodegabay.com/visitor_info/overviewmap.html) [accessed 9 February 2007].

2. Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. No date. Historical background. Online at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federated\\_Indians\\_of\\_Graton\\_Rancheria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federated_Indians_of_Graton_Rancheria) [accessed 9 February 2007].

3. Go Boating America. 2004. Windswept getaway. Online at <http://goboatingmag.com/main/article.asp?id=528> [accessed 9 February 2007].

4. See note 1.

5. See note 2.

6. See note 1.

7. Coldwell Banker. 2002. Bodega Bay area profile: Economy. Online at <http://www.bodegabayhomes.com/economy.html> [accessed September 2004].

8. See note 3.

9. C. Benfell. 2004. Channel dredging to begin. Online at <http://www.pressdemocrat.com> [accessed 9 February 2007].

10. See note 7.

11. T. Colombo, Tribal Representative for the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Bodega Bay, CA. Pers. commun., 28 September 2004.

12. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

13. See note 12.

14. See note 12.

15. Fisherman, Bodega Bay, CA. Pers. commun., 20 April 2006.