

Oxnard

People and Place

Location

Oxnard, Ventura County's largest city, is 62 miles northwest of Los Angeles, 37 miles southeast of Santa Barbara, and 375 miles south of San Francisco. The city lies in a rich fertile delta plain south of the Santa Clara River. Oxnard encompasses 25.3 square miles of land and 11.3 square miles of water. Its geographic coordinates are lat 34°11'29"N, long 119°10'57"W.

Demographic Profile

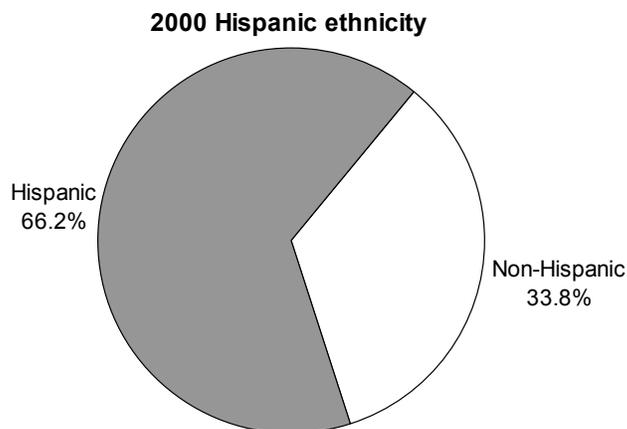
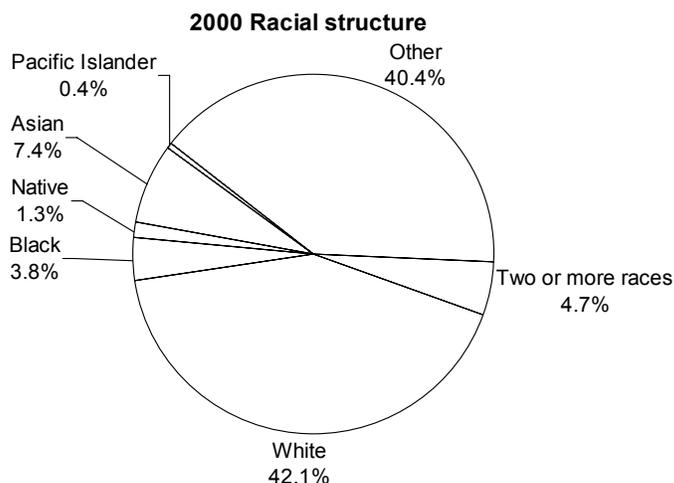
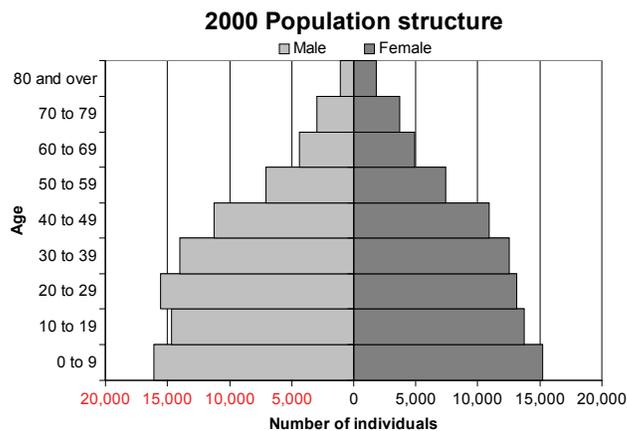
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Oxnard was 170,358, a 19.8% increase from 1990. The gender composition was 48.9% female and 51.1% male. The median age in 2000 was 28.9, lower than the national median of 35.3. In 2000 31.8% of the population of Oxnard was under 18 years of age. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 59% had a high school education or higher, 11.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 3.8% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The racial structure of Oxnard was white (42.1%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (40.4%), Asian (7.4%), individuals who identified with two or more races (4.7%), black (3.8%), American Indian and Alaska Native (1.3%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.4%). Ethnicity data indicate 66.2% identified as Hispanic. About 36.9% were foreign born, of which 80% were from Mexico.

In 2000 91.1% of the population lived in family households.

History

The 250 miles of shoreline between present-day San Luis Obispo and Oxnard were once home to numerous coastal Chumash villages; Chumash means "islander." The Chumash people settled along the southern California coast approximately 8,000 years ago and made extensive use of the marine, estuarine, and river environments along the coast and on the Channel Islands. Their fishermen used a variety of nets, traps, baskets, hooks, spears, and plant poisons to catch or stun fish, and catch seals and sea otters.¹ On shore they gathered mussels and abalone. The Chumash are well known for their redwood-planked canoes, called "tomols," which enabled them to fish and trade with other coastal villages.



To avoid relocation during the mission period, 1772–1808, many Chumash adopted Spanish surnames.² Because the Chumash had no written language, there are few birth records or written documents identifying them. As a result many Hispanic residents in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties today unknowingly have a Chumash heritage.³ Today more than 5,000 identify as Chumash Indians.⁴

In 1854 the Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed into Point Mugu lagoon and called the area the “land of everlasting summers.”⁵ Several years later Spain appointed Father Junípero Serra to head missions in Alta (upper) California. Several pueblos and ranchos were established around the missions. In 1897 Albert Maulhardt invited Henry and Robert Oxnard of San Francisco to look into establishing a sugar beet factory in the area. The Southern Pacific Railroad established service directly to the sugar beet factory and it soon became the second largest sugar beet factory in the region. With the factory came construction of several houses and saloons. In 1903 Oxnard incorporated, named after the founders of the sugar beet factory.

Oxnard’s population grew as workers came from China, Japan, and Mexico. Since its incorporation, the city has transitioned from cattle grazing to sugar beet and bean cultivation and intensive agriculture. Oxnard became home to the Lima Bean Growers Association, the Walnut Growers Association, the Sierra Oil and Refinery Company, and several dairy businesses. The city’s population increased dramatically when military bases were established at Port Hueneme and Point Mugu during World War II. Today the city is known for its housing, industrial, and commercial development.⁶

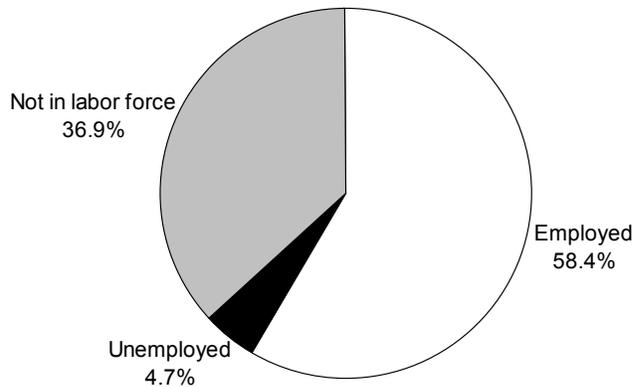
Oxnard hosts several festivals that draw tourists to the area, including the Channel Islands Harbor Seafood Festival, the Salsa Festival, Channel Islands Indie Film Festival, and the Oxnard Multicultural Festival, among others. At the mid-September Seafood Festival, visitors enjoy seafood from local restaurants, purchase fresh seafood from fishing boats, and can browse educational displays from local marine agencies.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to 2000 U.S. Census, 58.4% of Oxnard’s potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 4.7% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 7.4% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 36.9% were not in the labor force compared to the national average of 36.1%. The top employment sectors were sales and office occupations (24.9%), management,

2000 Employment structure



professional, and related occupations (21.6%), production, transportation, and material moving occupations (19.6%), and local, state, or federal government (14%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 10.4%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

According to the Economic Development Corporation of Oxnard, the top five employers in Oxnard are St. John’s Regional Medical Center (1,363), Oxnard Union High School District (1,201), the City of Oxnard (1,000), Haas Automation (900), and Verizon (860).⁷

Port Hueneme plays a significant role in the local community and the greater Ventura County area. Approximately 3,500 jobs are directly tied to port activities.⁸ The port serves as an import/export platform for break-bulk, neo-bulk, and dry-bulk cargo. It is utilized by offshore oil operations in the Santa Barbara Channel, by local sport and commercial fishing fleets, and is home to a large dockside refrigeration facility. It also serves as a U.S. Customs Port of Entry and a Foreign Trade Zone. The U.S. Naval Base Ventura County, which shares its military wharfs with the adjacent deep water harbor, occupies more than half of the total land area of the port. Direct and induced activity from the port and Navy account for more than 28,070 jobs and \$1.123 billion in combined economic impact throughout Ventura County.⁹

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Oxnard’s per capita income in 1999 was \$15,288 and the median household income was \$48,603. About 15.1% lived below the poverty level, compared to the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 45,166 housing units in Oxnard, of which 96.5% were occupied and 3.5% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 57.3% were by owner and 42.7% were by renter. Of the vacant units,

44.6% were due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Oxnard is one of 10 incorporated cities in Ventura County, originally named San Buenaventura County by early Spanish settlers, meaning “good fortune.”¹⁰ The city has a council-manager government with an elected mayor who serves a two-year term and four council members elected at large to four-year terms. Residents pay a 7.25% sales and use tax and Ventura County levies an 8% transient lodging tax.^{11, 12} See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in California.

There is a National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office 80 miles south of Oxnard in Long Beach and a California Department of Fish and Game office 185 miles south in San Diego. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office is 60 miles south in Los Angeles. Oxnard is within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Marine Safety Office/Group Lost Angeles-Long Beach. The USCG Channel Islands Station is located in Oxnard; the station has three boats at its disposal.

Facilities

Oxnard is accessible by U.S. Highway 101 northwest to Ventura and Santa Barbara and southeast to Los Angeles. Oxnard Airport, with a 6,000 foot runway, offers charter planes, helicopter transport, and commuter service to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and other destinations. LAX is Oxnard’s closest international airport, 60 miles southeast. Metrolink provides commuter service to Los Angeles, and Greyhound bus and Amtrak rail services serve Oxnard.

Oxnard encompasses six school districts and one community college. The city has 26 elementary schools, 3 intermediate schools, 2 junior high schools, 9 high schools, 1 adult school, and 1 alternative school. Oxnard Community College has an enrollment of more than 7,000. Southern California Edison supplies electricity, and the City of Oxnard provides water and wastewater services. The Oxnard Police Department administers public safety. St. John’s Regional Medical Center was constructed in Oxnard in 1992 and the next year merged with Pleasant Valley Hospital to become Ventura County’s largest acute-care health organization. Tourism is on the rise with about 10 hotels located in the city. Additional facilities include a public golf course, Gull Wings Children’s Museum, Oxnard Public Library, Performing Arts and Convention Center, Heritage Square and the Henry T. Oxnard Historic District.

Port Hueneme and Oxnard have the largest commercial deep water harbor between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The boundary of the Oxnard Harbor District, which owns and operates the Port of Hueneme, also encompasses the greater Oxnard area. According to the port, niche markets served include automobile imports and exports, fresh fruit and produce, fertilizer, and forest products. The port has no public facilities for small boats and leisure craft. One aquaculture facility, Proteus Seafarms International Inc., is nearby at Oxnard Harbor District’s S Terminal.¹³ Its produces abalone, kelp and algae, shellfish, and bottomfish, among others.

Channel Islands Harbor, 5 miles southwest of Oxnard, has more than 2,400 berths for pleasure and sportfishing boats. The Ventura County Harbor County Department administers the harbor district. Two marine repair yards are on the east side of the channel; their lifts can handle craft up to 60 tons.¹⁴

The Ventura County Commercial Fishermen’s Association is in Oxnard and is active in commercial fishing issues in the area, particularly concerning the Channel Islands.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Oxnard is primarily involved in West Coast fisheries, including groundfish, coastal pelagic, and highly migratory species. In southern California, in the five years prior to 2000, squid, albacore/other tuna, sea urchin, coastal pelagic, shark/swordfish, lobster, and groundfish combined for 90% of the total landing value.

In 2000 140 vessels, all commercially registered, delivered landings to Oxnard. Landings were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic 1 t/\$1,053/7; crab 44 t/\$129,855/34; groundfish 107 t/\$472,821/74; highly migratory species 11 t/\$34,086/19; shellfish confidential/confidential/2; shrimp 80 t/\$495,078/16; and other species 1,124 t/\$3,052,237/142.

Oxnard residents owned 39 vessels in 2000, including 22 that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Oxnard residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/4, crab 0/1/0, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/5, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/1/4.¹⁵

Two Oxnard residents held two federal groundfish fishery permits in 2000. The number of Oxnard residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/12, crab 0/1/0, groundfish 0/0/46, highly migratory species NA/0/19, salmon 0/0/6,

shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/1/12, and other species 0/0/105.¹⁶

In 2000 Oxnard residents held 338 registered state and federal permits. The number of permits held by community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/18, crab 0/2/0, groundfish 0/0/56, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/12, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/2/18, and other species 0/0/227.¹⁷

In 2000 at least two seafood processors operated in Oxnard. Sun Coast Calamari, an affiliate of Lund's Fisheries based in New Jersey, can produce up to 200 metric tons of frozen squid per day.¹⁸ Tradewind Seafood Inc. specializes in sea urchin processing, transporting them by air to Japan and generating annual sales of \$3 million to \$5 million.¹⁹

Sportfishing

The sportfishing industry in southern California is well developed. In Oxnard sport fishermen are involved in both West Coast and Alaska fisheries. Ten licensed agents sell fishing permits in Oxnard. In the port group consisting of Port Hueneme, Oxnard, Ventura, and Santa Barbara, 35 commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFVs) or "party boats" reported serving 77,345 anglers who made 352,260 landings of more than 26 species in 2000. In 2002 three CPFVs were licensed in Oxnard and each vessel purchased an ocean enhancement stamp allowing anglers to fish in ocean waters south of Point Arguello in Santa Barbara County. In 2003 four CPFVs were licensed, each with ocean enhancement stamps.

Several charter fishing businesses are located in Oxnard, including Channel Island's Sportfishing Center and Captain Hook's Sportfishing, that offer half to full day trips and overnight excursions. Popular sportfishing destinations include the Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel islands. Most of the charter businesses also provide whale watching and marine life trips.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members may engage in subsistence fishing in the Oxnard area, however, specific information on subsistence fishing 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

In 2000 one Oxnard resident held a Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit. Ten residents held crew members licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

In 2000 Oxnard community members purchased 76 Alaska sportfishing licenses.

Notes

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3. See note 2.
4. See note 1.
5. Oxnard Convention and Visitors Bureau. 2004. History. Online at <http://www.visitoxnard.com/history.html> [accessed 2 March 2007].
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9. Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce. No date. Business and employment. Online at <http://www.huenemechamber.com/employe.htm> [accessed 2 March 2007].
10. County of Ventura. 2002. Visitor center. Online at <http://www.countyofventura.org/visitor/visitor.asp> [accessed 2 March 2007].
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13. Field notes, Oxnard Harbor District, Port Hueneme, CA, 4 April 2006.
14. The Log. 2004. Navigation Information: Channel islands harbor. Online at <http://www.thelog.com/special/specialview.asp?c=116486> [accessed 2 March 2007].
15. 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.
16. See note 15.
17. See note 15.
18. Lund's Fisheries Inc. 2004. Affiliate companies. Online at <http://www.lundsfish.com/affiliates.html> [accessed 2 March 2007].

19. IRION Enterprises Facilities Management. 1999. Three articles on Ventura County, California's business connections with Japan. Online at <http://www.wirion.com/star.html> [accessed 2 March 2007].