

# Sunset Beach

## People and Place

### Location

Sunset Beach is located in Orange County, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles and 97 miles north of San Diego. The geographic coordinates of Sunset Beach are lat 33°42'59"N, long 118°04'05"W.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Sunset Beach was 1,097. The gender composition was 45.4% female and 54.6% male. The median age was 39.5, higher than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 97.9% had a high school education or higher, 47.2% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 14.7% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

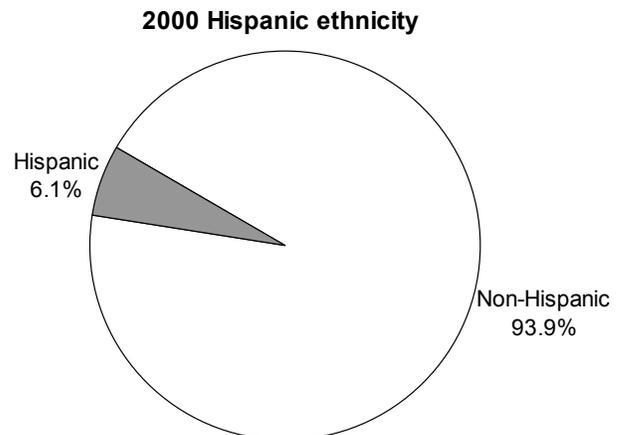
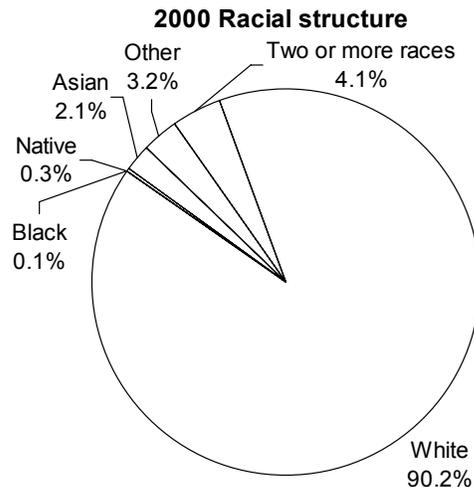
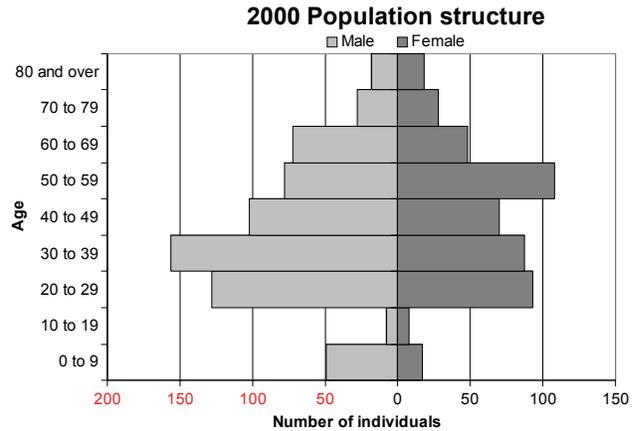
The majority of the racial structure was white (90.2%), followed by individuals who identified with two or more races (4.1%), individuals who identified with some other race (3.2%), Asian (2.1%), American Indian and Alaska Native (0.3%) and black (0.1%). Ethnicity data indicate 6.1% identified as Hispanic. About 2.7% of the population were foreign-born with 50% from Sweden.

In 2000 59.7% of the population lived in family households.

### History

During the early 1900s the Pacific Electric Railway ran north-south through what is now Sunset Beach and played an important role in the development of Orange County. Homes and businesses sprang up alongside the railroad tracks as residents in smaller towns could more conveniently commute to larger population centers such as Los Angeles. Sunset Beach became a popular recreation destination and residential community during the early and mid-1900s.

In 1968 the Orange County Parks Board of Supervisors recognized the need to improve and maintain the beachfront area and began a series of infrastructure improvement projects. One such project, completed in 1974, redeveloped the right-of-way of the former rail line to create larger parking facilities for the growing number of visitors. Sunset Beach Park is a major visitor attraction. Another popular site between the U.S. Naval Weapons Station and Sunset-Huntington Harbor is the Anaheim Bay National Wildlife Refuge, a protected area



home to diverse marine and bird life. Sunset Beach is an unincorporated community known for surfing and beach sports.<sup>1</sup>

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 74.3% of Sunset Beach's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 4% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 5.1% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 21.8% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were education, health, and social services (14.6%), manufacturing (11.6%), local, state, or federal government (11.8%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (10.8%). No one was employed in natural resource jobs such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, but this may be misleading because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Sunset Beach's per capita income in 1999 was \$53,507 and the median household income was \$65,990, both well above the respective national averages. Only 6.6% lived below the poverty level compared to the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 Sunset Beach had 685 housing units, of which 83.1% were occupied and 16.9% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 40.1% were by owner and 59.9% were by renter. About 54.3% of the vacant housing was due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

### Governance

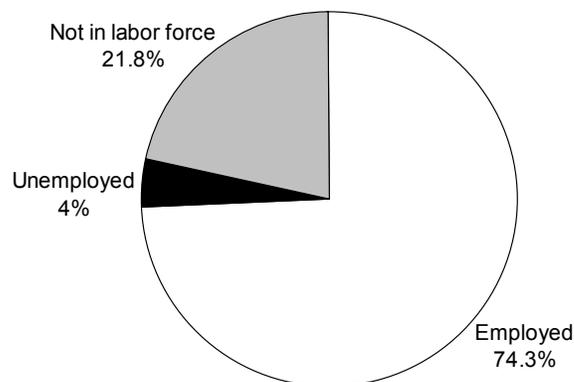
Sunset Beach is an unincorporated residential area within Orange County. The sales tax is 7.25% based on the standard statewide rate. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in California.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and U.S. Coast Guard have offices in Long Beach, 9 miles north of Sunset Beach. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services suboffice is in Santa Ana, 19 miles east. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held in Del Mar, 79 miles south. The nearest North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting location is Portland, Oregon, 997 miles north.

### Facilities

Sunset Beach is accessible by land, air, and sea. California Highway 1, also known as the Pacific Coast

**2000 Employment structure**



Highway, runs north and south through the community. Interstate highways 5 and 405 are also nearby. The John Wayne Orange County Airport in Santa Ana is east of Sunset Beach, and Los Angeles International Airport is about 31 miles north. Greyhound and Amtrak provide bus and rail service respectively to nearby communities and metropolitan areas throughout the country.

There are no schools in Sunset Beach. Students attend schools in nearby Huntington Beach and Westminster. The Huntington Beach Water Division provides water and wastewater services. Southern California Edison supplies electricity, and Southern California Gas Company provides natural gas. The Orange County Sheriff's office administers local law enforcement, and the Orange County Fire Authority provides fire and emergency response services. There are no hospitals in Sunset Beach, although a major hospital and a variety of medical clinics are located in Huntington Beach. Similarly, there are no lodging accommodations located in Sunset Beach, but there are hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts in Huntington Beach and Long Beach.

The Sunset-Huntington Harbor area has five marinas with capacity for more than 3,000 vessels. The main marine facility is the Sunset Beach County Park, operated and maintained by Orange County. The popular beachfront park has a 45-acre beach, a 627-space parking lot, and various visitor accommodations and amenities. The Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol, in cooperation with agencies including the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy, is responsible for patrolling the Sunset-Huntington marina area.

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

No vessels delivered landings to Sunset Beach in 2000, however, Sunset Beach residents owned two

commercial vessels. The number of vessels owned by residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 0/0/2.<sup>2</sup> No seafood processors operated in Sunset Beach in 2000.

In 2000, no community members held federal groundfish permits. The number of Sunset Beach residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: highly migratory species NA/0/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/0/1.<sup>3</sup>

Residents held at least two state-registered, commercial fishing permits in 2000. The number of state permits held by Sunset Beach residents in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: highly migratory species NA/0/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/0/2.<sup>4</sup>

### Sportfishing

A number of charter vessels operate out of the area targeting albacore and bluefin tuna, marlin, yellowtail, rock cod, salmon, shark, yellowfin tuna, and other species. Many also offer seasonal whale watching tours. In 2002 and 2003, no charter businesses served sport fishermen and tourists in Sunset Beach and no license agents sold sportfishing licenses. In 2000 vendors in Orange County sold 26,250 resident sportfishing licenses, 47 non-resident sportfishing licenses, 7 sport salmon punch cards, and 29 abalone report cards. Sunset Beach is near the port group consisting of Seal Beach, Long Beach, and San Pedro, where a total of 54 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 148,977 anglers in 2000. These vessels reported 883,806 landings consisting of more than two dozen species. Sea bass (various species), barracuda, flatfishes (unspecified), and rockfishes (unspecified) accounted for 47.6%, 14.1%, 10.4%, and 9.2% of the landings respectively.

### Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members may engage in subsistence fishing in the Sunset Beach area, however, specific information on subsistence fishing is not discussed in detail due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game terms “recreational” 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 there was no involvement in North Pacific commercial fisheries by Sunset Beach residents.

### Sportfishing

In 2000 10 Sunset Beach residents purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses.

### Notes

1. Orange County Parks Department. 2005. Sunset Beach. Online at <http://www.ocparks.com/sunsetbeach/> [accessed 30 March 2007].
2. 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.
3. See note 2.
4. See note 2.