

Eureka, California

People and Place

Location

Eureka is the County Seat of Humboldt County, located in northern California at 40°48'08"N and 124°09'45"W. It is situated on Humboldt Bay south of Redwood National Park. The nearest major metropolitan area is San Francisco, which is 272.3 miles to the south. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the community encompasses a total area of 14.5 square miles, including 5 square miles of water and 9.5 square miles of land.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Eureka had a total population of 26,128. The population density was 2764.5 people per square mile of land. About 82.5% of the inhabitants were White, 1.6% African American, 4.2% Native American, 3.6% Asian, and 0.3% Pacific Islander. A total of 2.7% identified with some other race and 5.1% with two or more races. Another 7.8% of the population identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino origins. The community includes a relatively small foreign-born population, making up 5.5% of the inhabitants as compared to the national average of 11.1%.

In 2000, the community was composed of 49.5% males and 50.5% females. The median age of Eureka was 36.6 years compared to the national average of 35.3 years. The U.S. Census stated that 22.5% of the population 18 years and older received a high school degree as their highest educational attainment. A total of 80.8% of the population had received a high school degree or higher. Only 14.6% received a bachelor's degree or higher and 4.6% received a graduate degree or higher in 2000, whereas the national averages for the same year are 22.3% and 7.8% respectively.

In 1990, Eureka had a population of 27,025 revealing a 3.3% gross population decrease from the year 1990 to 2000. The community experienced a significant change from 1990 in its ethnic composition, during which there was a net percentage increase of 62.5% for inhabitants who identified themselves as having Hispanic origins.

History

Before the arrival of European settlers, the area now known as Humboldt County was occupied by several diverse nations. The Wiyot, Yurok, Hupa, Karuk, Chilula, Whilkut, and the southern Athabascans occupied specific territories, spoke individual languages, and shared similar, yet distinct cultural systems.¹ Eureka is within the originally territory of the Wiyot nation. Just as they continue to do today, the Wiyot people utilized the surrounding resources for food, medicine, and basketry, including wildlife, salmon, and roots. Across the bay from town is Indian Island, "the center of the Wiyot People's world" and home of the ancient village of Tuluwat.² Beneath the village site is a large clamshell midden that is over 6 acres in size and estimated to be 1000 years old. It contains the remains of meals, tools, ceremonies, and burial sites. Today, many of the Wiyot people live on 88 acres called the Table Bluff Reservation, located 16 miles south of Eureka. Earlier this year, the Eureka City Council formally transferred a part of Indian Island to the Wiyot Tribe.³ A portion of the land had been a shipyard repair facility from 1870 to the 1980s. The Tribe plans to clean up the debris and pollution left from the old shipyard, restore the natural waterways of the area, and construct a cultural center.⁴

The first recorded entrance into Humboldt Bay was in 1806 by employees of a Russian-American Company out of Sitka. The Gregg-Wood party arrived by land in 1849 and by 1850 the first ships came to the Bay bringing men looking for gold. Eureka was founded in 1856 and was settled as a point of arrival and a supply center for the gold mines. As the Gold Rush subsided, the economy shifted to the use of the surrounding natural resources, mainly timber, salmon, and agricultural land. The area was a prime exporter of agricultural products from 1857 to 1900.⁵

Development around the Bay led to the displacement of the Wiyot and increased tensions between groups. During the 1860 World Renewal Ceremony on Indian Island, a group of armed settlers paddled to the Island during the night and killed the sleeping Wiyot. Two other village sites were raided that same night. The few remaining Wiyot people were moved to Fort Humboldt for their protection and then on to a series of reservations. The fort was built in 1853 to assist in resolving conflicts between American Indians and settlers. An Indian Candlelight Vigil is held every February to remember the 200 lives lost in the massacre.⁶

In the 1880s, docks were built in Eureka for shipping redwood and other timber. When the Northwestern Pacific Railroad was extended into the Bay area in 1900, it functioned as a dike and allowed the tidal marshes to be converted into agricultural lands. The construction of U.S. 101 in 1927 also created more fill, allowing most of the marshes to be drained and diked.⁷

After World War II, a new Douglas fir and plywood industry brought in many out-of-state loggers and mill workers. The timber industry continued to dominate life in the community into the 1970s. The next era brought a fresh perspective regarding resource use and a more diverse economy was developed. New groups of people began to arrive, namely Hispanic workers and families and refugees from the Vietnam War.⁸ A large town revitalization project began in the 1960s to revive Eureka's Old Town and restore many of the old commercial buildings.⁹

Humboldt Bay is found to be one of the largest bays on the West Coast. Diking, drainage, and filling reduced the historic 27,000 acres of Bay and wetlands to around 13,000 acres. The Bay includes a variety of complex habitats that support 95 species of fish, at least 180 species of invertebrates, and thirty species of clams, oysters, and mussels. The economic health of Eureka continues to be "tied to the Bay, the resources it provides, and the natural resources around it."¹⁰

Infrastructure

Current Economy

The economic base of Eureka was originally founded on fishing and timber. The commercial fishing industry experienced a downsizing in recent years and, today, the major industries are tourism and timber.¹¹ Major employers in Eureka include the College of the Redwoods, Humboldt County, Humboldt County Office of Education, and St. Joseph Hospital. The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 3.2% of the employed civilian population 16 years and over worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries. This percentage may not be indicative of the actual number of people in these professions as many are self-employed, especially in the fishing industry. The 2000 U.S. Census reported that 17.5% of the community worked in health care and social assistance. Another 18.5% were employed by the government. The unemployment rate in 2000 was 9.7% compared to the national average of 5.7% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). For the population 16 years and older, 42.7% were not in the labor force, while 51.8% were employed.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, in 1999 the median household income was \$25,849 and the per capita income was \$16,174. Inhabitants whose income was below poverty level in 1999 were 23.7% of the population. Of the 11,637 housing units in 2000, 94.2% of the housing units were occupied, while 5.8% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 46.5% were owner occupied and 53.5% were renter occupied.

Governance

Eureka is an incorporated city that operates under a Council-Manager charter. Sales taxes are 7.25% based on the standard statewide rate. Humboldt County has no district tax in effect. The County transient lodging tax rate is 10%. The annual property tax for Humboldt County is approximately 1% of the property's assessed value, plus bonded indebtedness, assessment districts, and voter approved fees.

California state law assesses commercial fishing vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value for tax purposes. Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage. Humboldt Bay Harbor District charges a general tariff called the Harbor Improvement Surcharge for both vessels and cargo. The charge is \$5 per foot of sailing draft for vessels and \$0.08265 per metric ton of cargo for those using the Bar and Entrance Channel. An additional \$5 per foot of draft and \$0.08265 per metric ton is charged for use of the North Bay and Samoa Channels. California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes are calculated per pound of fish landed and vary by species. The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.

Eureka is 586.6 miles from the Northwest Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle. The community houses a California Fish and Game Field Office and is only 5 miles from the closest U.S. Coast Guard Station in Humboldt Bay. Eureka is 272.3 miles from the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Center in San Francisco. The closest possible Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are held in Foster City, located 293.8 miles from Eureka. The nearest North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting is 413.7 miles away in Portland.

Facilities

Eureka is accessible by a number of transportation options. Amtrak and Greyhound provide rail and bus service respectively to nearby communities and to greater metropolitan areas throughout the country. The community is also located 272.3 miles from the San Francisco International Airport. The major highway that intersects Eureka is U.S. Highway 101.

Local schools include eleven elementary schools, three middle schools, and three private primary schools. The community includes seven high schools, five of which are alternative schools and one of which is a private school. The main electric supply is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric. Water and sewer services are supplied by Cal-American Water Company. The Eureka Police Department provides local law enforcement. The closest health care facility is St.

Joseph Hospital. Eureka accommodations include bed-and-breakfasts, a recreational vehicle park, and several hotels and motels. Additional lodging is available in nearby communities.¹²

Eureka is located within the Port of Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District and the Port of Humboldt. Humboldt Bay is the only deep water port between Coos Bay, Oregon, and San Francisco. Four shipping terminals operate out of Eureka: Fairhaven Terminal includes one berth with a 500-foot wooden pile dock; Fields Landing Terminal includes one berth with a 900-foot dock; Schneider Dock has one berth with a 400-foot concrete, unlimited load dock; and Sierra Pacific Industries, Eureka Dock has one berth with a 475-foot wooden dock.¹³ The Woodley Island Marina is located in Eureka and is the home base for the Port of Humboldt District. The Marina provides 237 slips.¹⁴

Two marine aquaculture businesses are located in Eureka. They have growing areas in Crescent City, Harbor, and Arcata Bay. Products include bay and sea mussels; Eastern, European, Kumamoto, and Pacific oysters; littlenecks, Manila, and Quahog clams; rock scallops; ulva; nori; tube worms; gracillaria; and blood worms.¹⁵

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, of the 159 vessels that delivered landings to Eureka, all were commercially registered. The community had at least one processor plant in 2000 however specific data on the pounds of fish processed and revenue generated is confidential. Landings in the community were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (2 t/\$909/8), crab (391 t/\$1,784,671/92), groundfish (2522 t/\$3,287,433/73), highly migratory species (355 t/\$693,107/32), salmon (240 t/\$618,440/66), shellfish (4 t/\$6734/4), shrimp (90 t/\$84,713/12), and other species (417 t/\$329,382/39).

Eureka residents owned 68 vessels, of which 16 participated in the Groundfish Vessel Buyback Program. Community members owned 53 vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Eureka residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (2/0/56), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/6/40), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/2/11), and other species (1/0/0).¹⁶

Seventeen Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permits were held by 18 Eureka residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of individual community members holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (2/0/56), groundfish (0/0/14), highly migratory species (NA/0/1), salmon (0/5/65), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/2/16), and other species (1/0/20).¹⁷

According to available data, 268 permits were registered to Eureka residents in 2000, of which 251 were registered state permits. The number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/2), crab (4/0/60), groundfish (0/0/17), highly migratory species (NA/0/1), salmon (0/5/113), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/3/23), and other species (1/0/22).¹⁸

Sportfishing

Eureka had at least two sportfishing business vessel permits in 2003. The community, which belongs to the Fort Bragg, Eureka, Crescent City port complex, received a total of 49,983 commercial passenger fishing vessel landings in 2000, made by a total of 11,574 anglers. The

majority of landings were rockfishes, king (Chinook) salmon, Pacific mackerel, and Jack mackerel. Internet fishing guide sources indicate that there are at least two sportfishing businesses located within the community.¹⁹

Subsistence

The California Department of Fish and Games captures those fishermen that do not earn revenue from fishing, but use it to provide food for personal consumption, under their “recreational” data. Therefore, specific information on subsistence fishing in Eureka is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data.

Many local community members do engage in subsistence fishing. Both nontribal and tribal fishermen, including members of the Wiyot Tribe, utilize marine and stream resources for subsistence means from the areas within and surrounding Eureka. Under the trust doctrine, the federal government is charged to protect tribal resources and by constitutional mandate to protect natural resources. The government-to-government agreements made between tribal groups and the United States through treaties guarantee fishing rights on traditional grounds.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, Eureka residents owned five vessels that were involved in North Pacific fisheries. Inhabitants landed fish in the following fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): halibut (confidential/confidential/1), salmon (confidential/confidential/2), and scallop (confidential/confidential/3).

Twelve community members served as crewmembers in North Pacific fisheries in 2000. Four Eureka residents held registered state permits and four held registered federal permits in the same year.

A total of seven permits were registered to individuals in Eureka in 2000. Eureka community members held two groundfish License Limitation Program (LLP) permits. Residents also held one halibut and three salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits. The halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota shares for people residing in the community were 96,990 and 486, respectively.

Sportfishing

Residents purchased 106 sportfishing licenses for Alaskan fisheries in 2000.

¹ Van Kirk, S. 1999. Humboldt County: a briefest of histories, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.humboldthistory.org/> (access date - August 2004).

² Wiyot Tribe. No date. History and culture: Indian Island, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.wiyot.com/history.htm> (access date - July 2004).

³ City of Eureka. 2004. Eureka City Council and Wiyot Tribal Council, May 18, 2004, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.eurekaweb.com/cityhall/> (access date - July 2004).

⁴ Wiyot Tribe. 2004. Environmental restoration, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.wiyot.com/Island_environmental.html (access date - July 2004).

⁵ 2001. Humboldt Bay trails feasibility study: Humboldt Bay area history

⁶ Wiyot Tribe. No date. History and culture: Indian Island, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.wiyot.com/history.htm> (access date - July 2004).

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- ⁷ 2001. Humboldt Bay trails feasibility study: Humboldt Bay area history
- ⁸ Van Kirk, S. 1999. Humboldt County: a briefest of histories, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.humboldthistory.org/> (access date - August 2004).
- ⁹ Victorian Inn. No date. Sights and activities in Eureka, California, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.a-victorian-inn.com/eureka_california.html (access date - August 2004).
- ¹⁰ 2001. Humboldt Bay trails feasibility study: Humboldt Bay area history
- ¹¹ Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2004. California State counties, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.psmfc.org/efin/docs/communities_2004/communities_pages65_84.pdf (access date - August 2004).
- ¹² The Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce. 2003. Lodging, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://eurekachamber.com/Directory/index.cfm?Category=Lodging&dID=4> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹³ Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District. No date. Port of Humboldt Bay: shipping terminals, [Online]. Available: URL: http://humboldtbay.cnrs.humboldt.edu/about/shipping_terminals.htm (access date - August 2004).
- ¹⁴ Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District. No date. Woodley Island Marina: facilities, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://humboldtbay.cnrs.humboldt.edu/marina/facilities.html> (access date - August 2004).
- ¹⁵ State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2003. Registered Marine Aquaculture Facilities.
- ¹⁶ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
- ¹⁷ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
- ¹⁸ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
- ¹⁹ Sportsmen's Resource.Com. No date. Sportsmen's Resource.Com, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://humguide.com>; <http://www.sportsmansresource.com> (access date - September 2004).