

# Point Arena

## People and Place

### Location

Point Arena is a small coastal community encompassing 1.36 square miles of land in Mendocino County along California Highway 1. It is approximately 178 miles northwest of Sacramento and 129 miles north of San Francisco. The geographic coordinates of Point Arena are lat 38°54'32"N, long 123°41'31"W.

### Demographic Profile

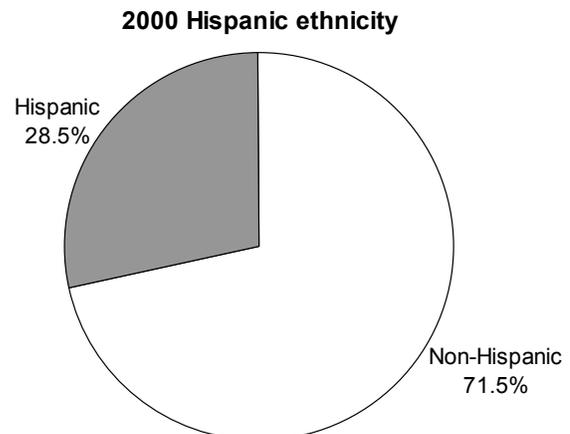
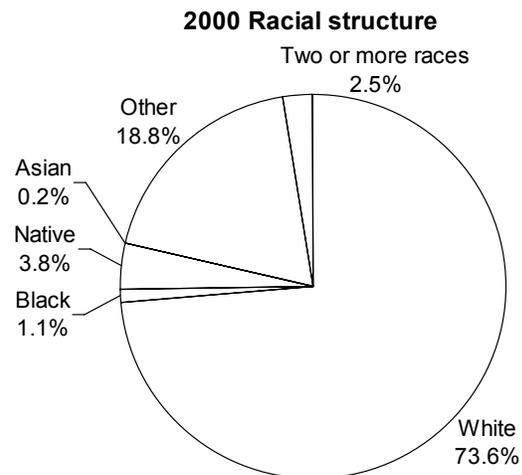
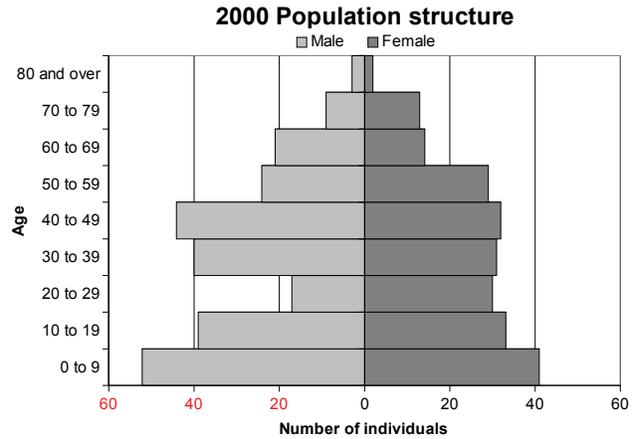
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Point Arena was 474, a 16.5% increase from 1990. The gender composition was 47.5% female and 52.5% male. The median age was 33.3, compared to the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 75.6% had a high school education or higher, 17.2% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 3.4% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school education for 24.1% of the population and 30.3% reported having some college but no degree.

The majority of the racial structure was white (73.6%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (18.8%), American Indian and Alaska Native (3.8%), individuals who identified with two or more races (2.5%), black (1.1%), and Asian (0.2%). Ethnicity data indicate 28.5% identified as Hispanic. About 22.8% were foreign-born, of which 85.6% were born in Mexico.

In 2000 77.2% of the population lived in family households.

### History

Archaeological findings suggest this area of the California coast has been inhabited by Native American groups for at least 10,000 years. Point Arena is in Mendocino County, the original home of the Central and Western Pomo Indians and other groups prior to European contact. The Pomo were known for their expertise in basket making and lived a subsistence lifestyle focused on marine resources.<sup>1</sup> The name "Mendocino" comes from Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a famous sixteenth century Spanish navigator, who led a voyage along the Pacific coast in 1542 and named the area in honor of his patron, Don Antonio de Mendoza, the first Viceroy of New Spain (Mexico). Even after such an early expedition, the area had no permanent



European settlements for nearly three centuries after contact.<sup>2</sup>

On July 25, 1850, the merchant ship *The Frolic* ran aground near present day Mendocino. The ship and its captain, Edward Horatio Faucon, had sailed 6,000 miles from China hoping to deliver a valuable cargo of silks, jewelry, and furniture to the growing city of San Francisco. An expedition organized to salvage some of the goods from the shipwreck found little cargo but discovered huge redwood trees, which became one of the most symbolic and valuable commodities of this region. Shortly after the expedition, Henry Meiggs bought a steam-powered sawmill to cut and process redwood timber, and established the first settled town in the area, which he named Meigsville. The town, and later the county, were renamed Mendocino.<sup>3</sup>

The Point Arena Lighthouse, a local historic landmark, was constructed in 1870 and nearly destroyed in the 1906 earthquake that devastated San Francisco. The damage to the lighthouse was so extensive that it was later condemned. The 115-foot lighthouse that now stands on the site was constructed in 1908.<sup>4</sup> Point Arena remains a small community, thanks to its location on a scenic stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway, however, the community is visited frequently by tourists and outdoor enthusiasts.

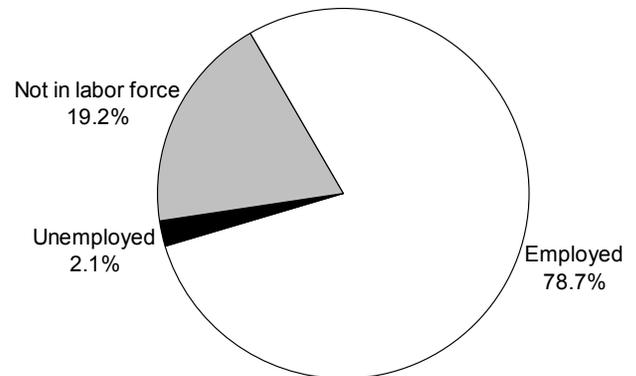
## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 78.7% of Point Arena's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 2.1% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 2.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 19.2% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were accommodation and food services (16.7%), local, state, or federal government (14.4%), education, health, and social services (14.1%), and retail trade (13.3%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining employed 7.9%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Point Arena's per capita income in 1999 was \$12,591 and the median household income was \$27,083. About 26% lived below the poverty level, more than twice the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 218 housing units in Point Arena, of which 87.6% were occupied and 12.4% were vacant. Of the occupied, 38.7% were by owner and 61.3% were by renter. About 44.4% of the vacant units were due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

2000 Employment structure



### Governance

Point Arena is an incorporated city governed by a five-member council, which includes a mayor and vice-mayor. City revenue is generated from property taxes, a transient occupancy tax, and taxes on pier facility services and products.<sup>5</sup> The sales tax is 7.75%, 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 nearest National Marine Fisheries Service office is in Ukiah, 51 miles east. Point Arena is in California Department of Fish and Game Central Coast Region 3, which has its headquarters in Yountville, 122 miles south. The U.S. Coast Guard has its nearest installation in Bodega Bay, 62 miles south. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office is in San Francisco. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held 150 miles south in Foster City. North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held 592 miles north in Portland, Oregon.

### Facilities

Point Arena is accessible by California Highway 1, also known as the Pacific Coast Highway. The nearest airports available for public use are in Little River (Mendocino County Airport) and Gualala (Ocean Ridge Airport). The closest major airport is at San Francisco.

Local schools include an elementary school, a school with grades kindergarten through twelfth, and a high school. A privately owned company supplies water. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office administers public safety and several officers from the sheriff's office also provide contract law enforcement services. The Redwood Coast Fire District, headquartered in Manchester, provides fire and emergency services.<sup>6</sup>

Point Arena has a medical and dental clinic, and a regional hospital is in Ukiah, the seat of Mendocino County. Local lodging accommodations include three small bed and breakfasts. There are a number of hotels in Gualala.

The Arena Fishing Pier, located in Arena Cove, has a small wharf building where fishing vessels deliver commercial fish landings. The pier is a popular sportfishing destination. Recreational facilities and attractions in the vicinity include Schooner Gulch State Beach and Manchester State Park.

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

There were no seafood processors in Point Arena in 2000. In 2000 46 vessels delivered commercial landings to Point Arena in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): crab 7.1 t/\$39,950/7; groundfish 6.6 t/\$64,640/16; highly migratory species confidential/confidential/2; salmon 4.4 t/\$21,916/6; and other species 552.6 t/\$1,109,974/confidential.

Point Arena residents owned 12 commercial vessels in 2000, but none participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/3, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/0.<sup>7</sup>

The number of Point Arena residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/2, crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/5, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/7, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/1/14.<sup>8</sup>

In 2000 residents held at least 39 commercial fishing permits, all state registered. The number of state permits held by Point Arena residents in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/3, crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/6, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/11, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/2/15.<sup>9</sup>

### Sportfishing

Point Arena has a relatively small (330 feet long) public fishing pier. A number of charter vessels operate out of the area, targeting albacore tuna, rock cod, salmon, and other species. In 2002 at least eight charter businesses served sport fishermen and tourists. No license agents sold sportfishing licenses in Point Arena. In 2000 vendors in Mendocino County sold 8,838 resident sportfishing licenses, 64 nonresident sportfishing

licenses, 382 sport salmon punch cards, and 8,864 abalone report cards.

### Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Point Arena is not discussed in detail in this community profile due to the lack of available data. Some subsistence fishing is conducted by area residents from local public piers. Licenses are not required to fish from public piers.<sup>10</sup> 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 is captured to some degree in the sportfishing data.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Point Arena residents had no involvement in North Pacific commercial fisheries.

### Sportfishing

Six Point Arena residents purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

## Notes

1. A. Kroeber. 1953. Handbook of the Indians of California: The Pomo. California Book Company, Berkeley.
2. County of Mendocino. No date. History of Mendocino County. Online at <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/history.htm> [accessed 6 March 2007].
3. Mendocino.com. 2005. Picturesque Victorian village by the sea. Online at <http://www.mendocino.com/> [accessed 6 March 2007].
4. Point Arena Lighthouse Keepers. 2005. Point Arena lighthouse. Online at <http://www.pointarenalighthouse.com/> [accessed 6 March 2007].
5. City of Point Arena. 2005. City of Point Arena. Online at <http://www.cityofpointarena.com/> [accessed 6 March 2007].
6. Mendocino County. 2002. Mendocino County grand jury final report: Point Arena city government. Online at [http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury/01-02/08-Point\\_Arena\\_City\\_Government.pdf](http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury/01-02/08-Point_Arena_City_Government.pdf) [accessed 6 March 2007].
7. 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.
8. See note 7.
9. See note 7.
10. Field notes, City of Point Arena, CA, 30 April 2006.