

# Depoe Bay

## People and Place

### Location

Depoe Bay, defined by tough basalt formations, is located on U.S. Highway 101 on central Oregon's coastline. The town, in Lincoln County, lies approximately 117 miles southwest of Portland and 13 miles north of Newport. It encompasses 1.8 square miles of land and has the smallest natural navigable harbor in the world, consisting of 6 square acres. Depoe Bay's geographic coordinates are lat 44°48'31"N, long 124°03'43"W.

### Demographic Profile

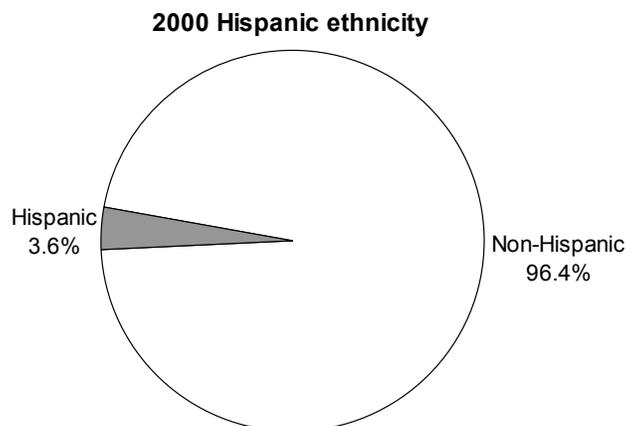
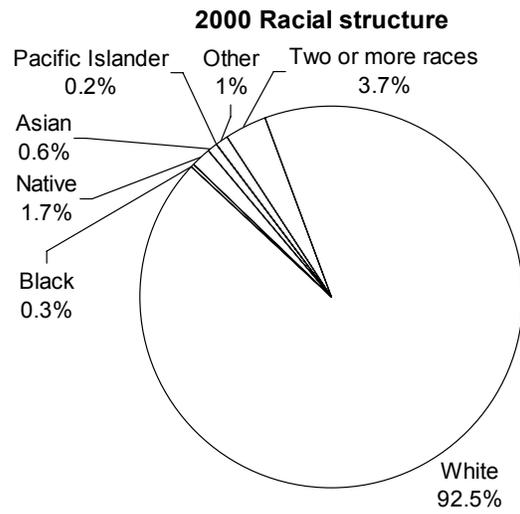
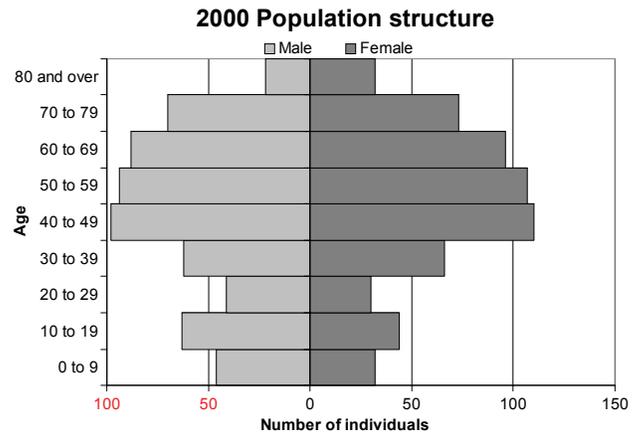
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Depoe Bay's population was 1,174, an increase of 34.9% over 1990. The gender composition was 50.3% female and 49.7% male. The median age in 2000 was 49.8, compared to the national median of 35.3. Depoe Bay had a relatively even age distribution in 2000. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 86.8% had a high school education or higher, 21.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 9.9% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of the population recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was white (92.5%), followed by people who identified themselves as belonging to two or more races (3.7%), American Indian and Alaska Native (1.7%), people who classified themselves as belonging to some other race (1.0%), Asian (0.6%), black (0.3%), and Pacific Islander (0.2%). Ethnicity data indicate 3.6% identified as Hispanic. A total of 2.4% of the population was foreign-born.

Approximately 76.5% of the population lived in family households in 2000.

### History

The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, a federally recognized group of 27 bands, originally ranged from northern California to southern Washington. The Tillamook, Alsea, Siuslaw, Coos, Coquille, Takelma Six, Joshua, Tutuini, Mackanotni, Shastacosta, and Chetco tribes are some that make up the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz.<sup>1</sup> The discovery of gold in the Rogue River Valley in 1851 brought thousands of miners to the area. In 1853, to curb fighting between the Indians and the miners, the federal government forced the Indians onto the Siletz and Grand Ronde reservations. The Siletz Reservation extended from Cape Lookout in Tillamook



County on the north to the mouth of the Umpqua River to the south.<sup>2</sup> In 1956 the federal government passed the Western Oregon Termination Act, terminating the Siletz Tribe and reducing its reservation from more than 1 million acres to a 36-acre tribal cemetery. In 1977, after years of effort, the Siletz was the first tribe in Oregon to be restored to federal recognition.<sup>3</sup>

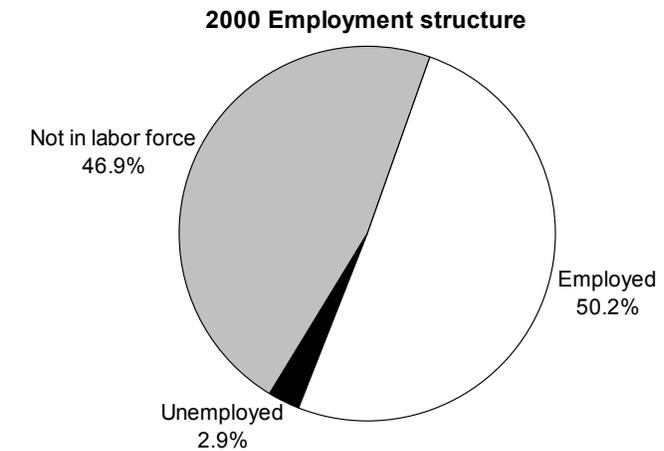
Today the Siletz Indian Reservation is situated in the central portion of Lincoln County and contains 39 acres known as the Government Hill parcel, the tribal cemetery parcel, 3,630 acres of timberlands, and several parcels of land purchased by the tribe.<sup>4</sup> The Siletz Tribe received the right to self-govern through congressional legislation in 1992, giving it control and accountability over tribal programs and funding. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the reservation had a population of 274. For more information on the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, see the Newport and Siletz community profiles.

Fred W. Vincent and his father sailed up the Oregon Coast in 1878, discovered the small harbor, and named it Wreckers Cove. In 1894 the U.S. government allotted lands around Depoe Bay to Charles Depot, a local Siletz Indian chief and tribal judge.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Depot was given the name because he worked at the military train depot near Toledo, Oregon.<sup>6</sup> Prior to the arrival of the Roosevelt Highway in 1927, the area was occupied primarily by several members of the Siletz Tribe; however, in 1927, the Sunset Investment Company of Portland platted a modern townsite and named it in honor of Mr. Depot.<sup>7</sup>

Agriculture, timber, fishing, and tourism have been important industries throughout Lincoln County's history. Depoe Bay is known as the "Whale Watching Capital of the World," partly due to a resident pod of grey whales that frequents area waters 10 months out of the year.<sup>8</sup> Depoe Bay is also popular for ocean charter fishing, boating, hiking, and biking. The city is known for Depoe Bay City Park, its harbor, Rocky Creek State Park, Fogarty Creek Beach, and Boiler Bay. A large sea wall runs the length of the downtown area, enabling visitors to shop and dine always within view of the ocean.

The community hosts a number of festivals and events throughout the year. In April the city holds a Classic Wooden Boat Show, Crab Feed, and Ducky Derby. One of the first events in Depoe Bay was the first Free Fish Fry, which took place in the 1930s and is held each September as a Salmon Bake. Proceeds make up a major portion of the funding for Chamber of Commerce and town events throughout the year.<sup>9</sup>

The Fleet of Flowers takes place on Memorial Day and originated in 1936 to honor two Depoe Bay fishermen who died attempting to rescue fellow



fishermen caught in a storm. The ceremony has expanded to include not only those who have died at sea but also "anyone who has found pleasure, beauty, solace, or adventure upon it, or those who have expressed a desire to have their ashes placed into the ocean."<sup>10</sup>

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 50.2% of Depoe Bay's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 2.9% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 5.4% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 46.9% of the population were not in the labor force compared to the national average of 36.1%. The top employment sectors were sales and office occupations (28.4%), management, professional, and related occupations (24.7%), service occupations (23.7%), and local, state, or federal governments (9.8%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 4.4% of the population in 2000, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

Lincoln County's top four industries are lumber, fishing, tourism and recreation, and food products. The top five employers in 2002 were the City of Depoe Bay, Sea Hag Restaurant, Spouting Horn Restaurant, Tidal Raves Restaurant, and Ainslee's Salt Water Taffy. Tourism in Depoe Bay is well developed with more than 12 hotels located in the city.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, per capita income in 1999 was \$24,994 and the median household income was \$35,417. In 1999 8% lived below the poverty level. In 2000 Depoe Bay had 911 housing units, of which 64.1% were occupied and 35.9% were vacant.

Of the occupied units, 66.1% were by owner and 33.9% were by renter. Of the vacant housing, 65.4% were due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

## Governance

Depoe Bay, incorporated in 1973, operates under a council-mayor government with six city council members. The state of Oregon has no general sales tax but levies a 1% overnight lodging tax that funds the Oregon Tourism Commission. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fishermen and processors in Oregon.

The National Marine Fisheries Service has a Northwest Fisheries Science Center field station 13 miles south of Depoe Bay in Newport, which also has an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife field office and its Marine Resources Program. The U.S. Coast Guard Motor Lifeboat Station Depoe Bay was established in 1940. The Coast Guard maintains a presence in the harbor due to its heavy use as a recreational port and as a harbor for refuge.<sup>11</sup> The station's area of responsibility is bounded by Cape Kiwanda to the north and Spence Creek to the south, covering 1,500 square miles. Depoe Bay is 117 miles from the closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office in Portland. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are also held in Portland.

## Facilities

Depoe Bay is accessible by land, sea and air. The community is connected to neighboring cities by U.S. Highway 101, which runs north and south from Washington to California. Lincoln County Transit provides local bus service. The Newport Municipal Airport provides air taxi service to Portland International Airport, the closest airport offering international service. Private planes use the Siletz Bay Airport, 5 miles north of Depoe Bay.

Depoe Bay does not have a local school district. Students attend kindergarten through twelfth grade in the Lincoln County School District, 13 miles south in Newport. The district serves more than 6,000 students and has 11 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 1 alternative school. The Oregon Coast Community College, located in Newport, has an enrollment of more than 3,500 students.

Central Lincoln Public Utility District and Northwest Natural Gas are the primary electricity and gas suppliers. The city's Glender Sanitary Department administers wastewater treatment facilities, and the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department provides public safety. The City of Depoe Bay supplies water from

Rocky Creek and North Depoe and South Depoe creeks. Depoe Bay is home to the Samaritan Depoe Bay Medical Clinic. The nearest hospital, Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital, is 13 miles north in Lincoln City, and Samaritan Pacific Community Hospital is in Newport. Attractions in Depoe Bay include a public library, the "spouting horns"—geyser-like plumes that occur along the coast—Boiler Bay State Scenic Viewpoint, and Fogarty Creek State Recreation Area, among others.

Depoe Bay Harbor has moorage for 137 boats (5% commercial and 95% recreational).<sup>12</sup> The harbor provides landings and floats to accommodate excursion and commercial fishing vessels as well as dry storage space. The entrance to the harbor is 30 feet across with a depth of approximately 8 feet. In January 2004 the Oregon State Marine Board approved funding for a new marine fuel station at Depoe Bay. The new station will have storage capacity for 2,000 gallons of gasoline and 4,000 gallons of diesel.<sup>13</sup> Federal funds were granted in June 2004 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the harbor.<sup>14</sup>

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians has partnered with Oregon Smoked Foods, Inc. to form Siletz Tribal Smokehouse Smoked Salmon, located on U.S. Highway 101 south of the Depoe Bay Bridge. The tribe receives a portion of all sales.

A total of 14 vessels, all commercially registered, delivered landings to Depoe Bay in 2000. Landings in the community were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): crab 43 t/\$206,976/7; groundfish 1 t/\$4,609/5; salmon confidential/confidential/2; and other species confidential/confidential/3.

Depoe Bay residents owned 15 vessels in 2000, including 6 vessels that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. According to recorded data, the number of vessels owned by Depoe Bay residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/11/0, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/17/0, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/0.<sup>15</sup>

In 2000 the number of Depoe Bay residents that held permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/1/0, crab 0/10/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/13/0, and shellfish 0/0/NA.<sup>16</sup>

According to available data, 36 state permits were registered to Depoe Bay residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates the number of permits held by community

members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/1/0, crab 0/20/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/15/0, and shellfish 0/0/NA.<sup>17</sup>

The City of Depoe Bay has adopted an ordinance allowing the storage of fishing gear at the gear owner's dwelling or adjacent lot under the same ownership.<sup>18</sup> The ordinance ended more than seven years of debate between fishermen and some city residents who were concerned about potential odors and the sight of stacks of crab pots near their homes. The rule, passed unanimously, defines commercial fishing gear to include "traps/fish traps/fishing lures; ropes or lines pertaining to crab or fish traps, including buoys and floats; plastic totes or tubs used for storage or line and longline gear; rigging, which includes poles, extensions, stays and/or booms, or mast gear from salmon or tuna fishing; and pools and winches (girdies, power blocks and occasional gill net reel), excluding drag nets or gear."<sup>19</sup>

### Sportfishing

According to available data, 12 Depoe Bay residents held charter boat licenses in 2000 and there were at least 19 charter vessels operating out of Depoe Bay; 16 registered to Depoe Bay residents, and one each to a resident of Lincoln City, Clatskanie, and Salem. Depoe Bay had at least one outfitter guide business in 2003. Tradewinds, a local charter fishing business, offers fishing, whale watching, and charter excursions year round. Other charter businesses include Dockside Charters, Joan-E Charters, and Zodiac Adventures.

Depoe Bay has nine sportfishing license vendors, however there were no license sales reported in 2000. The 2000 recreational salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was 448 Chinook and 3,171 coho salmon. The recreational nonsalmonid catch in that fishery totaled 101,757 fish. The top species landed include black rockfish, blue rockfish, canary rockfish, kelp greenling, and lingcod.

### Subsistence

Nontribal and tribal fishermen, including members of the Confederated Tribe of the Siletz, utilize marine and stream resources for subsistence means from the areas within and surrounding Depoe Bay. 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. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Depoe Bay is not discussed in detail in this community profile due to a lack of available data on state and federal levels.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Depoe Bay residents owned three vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries. Residents landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/ number of vessels landing): crab confidential/confidential/1; Bering Strait Aleutian Island (BSAI) groundfish confidential/confidential/1; Gulf of Alaska groundfish confidential/confidential/2; halibut confidential/confidential/3; salmon confidential/confidential/1; and other finfish confidential/confidential/2.

Two residents held registered state permits and five held registered federal permits. Ten state and federal permits were registered to individuals in Depoe Bay in 2000, and residents held one crab and two groundfish License Limitation Program permits. In 2000 residents also held three BSAI groundfish, one halibut, one shellfish, and one other finfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. The halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota shares for residents were 1,028,518 and 110,450 respectively.

In 2000 six Depoe Bay residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

### Sportfishing

Depoe Bay community members purchased 16 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

## Notes

1. Oregon State University. No date. Confederated tribes of Siletz: History, tradition, and culture. Online at <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/soc204/plazad/native2/marya/marya.htm> [accessed 12 January 2007].

2. Confederated Tribes of the Siletz. 2003. About the tribe. Online at [http://www.npaihb.org/profiles/tribal\\_profiles/Oregon/Confederated%20Tribes%20of%20Siletz%20Indians%20Tribal%20Profile.htm](http://www.npaihb.org/profiles/tribal_profiles/Oregon/Confederated%20Tribes%20of%20Siletz%20Indians%20Tribal%20Profile.htm) [accessed 12 January 2007].

3. See note 1.

4. See note 2.

5. Lincoln County place names. 2001. Depoe Bay. Online at <http://users.wi.net/~census/lesson19.html> [accessed 12 January 2007].

6. On this day in Oregon. 2003. How Depoe Bay was named. Online at [http://www.onthisdayinoregon.com/09\\_09.html](http://www.onthisdayinoregon.com/09_09.html) [accessed 12 January 2007].

7. See note 5.

8. See note 5.

9. StateofOregon.com. 2001. City history: Annual salmon bake. Online at <http://www.stateoforegon.com/cgi-bin/cities/history.pl?&city=depoebay> [accessed 12 January 2007].

10. StateofOregon.com. 2001. City history: Fleet of flowers. Online at <http://www.stateoforegon.com/cgi-bin/cities/history.pl?&city=depoe+bay&history=2> [accessed 12 January 2007].
11. Congresswoman Hooley. 2004. Oregon water projects slated for over \$14 million in federal funding. Online at [http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/or05\\_hooley/WaterProject061604.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/or05_hooley/WaterProject061604.html) [accessed November 2004].
12. Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2004. West coast marine fishing community descriptions. Online at [http://www.psmfc.org/efin/docs/communities\\_2004/](http://www.psmfc.org/efin/docs/communities_2004/) [accessed 12 January 2007].
13. Oregon State Marine Board. 2004. Depoe Bay marine fuel funding approved. Online at <http://www.marinebd.osmb.state.or.us/News/2004/Jan16News.html> [accessed 12 January 2007].
14. See note 11.
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. Newport News Times. 2004. Depoe Bay concludes change in crab pot storage rules. Online at <http://www.newportnewstimes.com/articles/2004/11/05/news/news17.txt> [accessed 12 January 2007].
19. See note 18.