

Aleutians

Overview:

The Aleutians are a chain of small islands, extending from mainland Alaska in a six hundred-mile long chain, almost to Japan. They are part of the U.S. State of Alaska.

Territory:

The archipelago consists of 14 large islands, some 55 smaller islands, and innumerable islets. The major island groups from east to west are the Fox Islands, the Islands of the Four Mountains, and the Andreanof, Rat, and Near islands. The Komandor Islands near the Kamchatka Peninsula (Russia) are geographically part of the Aleutians. The Aleutian Islands form a segment of the Circum-Pacific chain of volcanoes (often called the Ring of Fire) and represent a partially submerged continuation of Alaska's Aleutian Range. Most of the islands bear marks of volcanic origin; some volcanoes remain active. The shores are rocky and worn by the surf, and the approaches are dangerous; the land rises abruptly from the coasts to steep, bold mountains. The main navigational lanes through the chain are the Unimak, Umnak, Amukta, and Segum passes.

Location:

Pacific Ocean, between Alaska and Japan. The chain separates the Bering Sea (north) from the main portion of the Pacific Ocean (south) and extends in an arc southwest, then northwest, for about 1,100 miles (1,800 km) from the tip of the Alaska Peninsula to Attu Island, Alaska, U.S.

Latitude and Longitude:

Aleutians East Borough is located at 57° North and -162° West. Aleutians West Borough located between 52 degrees and 55 degrees North latitude and 172 degrees East and 163 degrees West longitude.

Time Zone:

GMT -10

Total Land Area:

6

EEZ:

Climate:

Relatively moderate temperatures lead to heavy rains and constant fog. Temperatures range from -9 to 76 degrees Fahrenheit. Annual precipitation is 33 inches and annual snowfall is 52 inches. The mean annual temperature for Unalaska, the most populated island of the group, is about 38 degrees Fahrenheit (3.4 degrees Celsius), being about 30 °F (-1.1 °C) for January and about 52 °F (11.1 °C) for August. The highest and lowest temperatures recorded on the islands are 78 °F (26 °C) and 5 °F (-15 °C), respectively. The average annual amount of rainfall is about 80 in (2,030 mm), and Unalaska, with about 250 rainy days per year, is said to be the rainiest place within the territory of the United States.

Natural Resources:

Commercial gas potential exists in the offshore North Aleutian Basin along the north shore of the Aleutians East Borough. However, the basin is under a presidential moratorium, which prohibits leasing, exploration and development until 2012.

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2003	251,756,890.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
30845	2,003.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:		
Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

% of Population Employed by Sector		
Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

External Aid/Remittances:

Growth:

Hunting and fishing are the main occupations of the Aleut population. Commercial fishing and seafood processing are the driving force of the region's economy.

Labour Force:	
2005	2,537

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2005	11.9%

	(Mwh)			(Mwh)			(Mwh)		(Mwh)
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Official Currency:
American Dollar (USD)

Banking and Insurance:
Number of Banks and Credit Unions:
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
Number of Insurance Companies:

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:

Public Ownership:

Land Use:
Most of the Aleutian Islands are within the Aleutian National Wildlife Reserve. Sheep and reindeer are raised. The Aleutian Islands are likely be an important part of the National Missile Defense system proposed to defend the United States from small ballistic missile attacks.

Agriculture/Forestry:
The Aleutians are practically devoid of trees but are covered with a luxuriant growth of grasses, sedges, and many flowering plants. The growing season lasts about 135 days, from early in May till late in September, but agriculture is limited to the raising of a few vegetables.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:
The Aleutians contain the largest fishing port in the United States in terms of volume, and the second largest in terms of volume. Commercial, subsistence, and recreational fisheries target 450 marine species. The region's Pollock fishery is the largest in the world in terms of volume. Salmon, crab, pollock, halibut, and rockfish are the most abundant species of fish. Much of the Pollock harvest is converted to surimi and marketed as imitation crab.

Marine Life:
The region supports 25 species of marine mammals and the largest and most diverse populations of seabirds of any similarly sized region in the Northern Hemisphere.

Critical Issues:
The gray whale makes one of the longest of all mammalian migrations, averaging 10,000-14,000 miles round trip. In October, the whales begin to leave their feeding grounds in the Bering and Chukchi Seas and head south for their mating and calving lagoons in Baja California, Mexico. The Aleutian Islands possess some of the most diverse birdlife in Alaska. The Aleutian Tern and Red-legged Kittiwake nest here, as does the Aleutian Canada Goose, an endangered bird. The Aleutian Islands are particularly prone to earthquakes. The earthquakes result from slipping along the contact zone of the Pacific and Alaska plates. These earthquakes typically cause very strong shaking which last several minutes; significant, permanent uplift or subsidence over very large areas; very large seismic sea waves or tsunamis; extremely high wave runup of a few to more than 90 feet locally; and many landslides, snow avalanches, and submarine slope failures at distances out to 160 miles from the epicentre. The general effects of these events include structural damages to bridges, buildings, port and harbour facilities, airport facilities, utilities, and communications systems. The Aleutian Islands could get a tsunami generated by remote source earthquakes.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:
The largest town is Dutch Harbor, but it isn't officially referred to as the region's capital, as the Aleutians are part of the Alaskan state.

Political System:
Republic

Political Parties:
Democratic Party, Republican Party, Green Party, Alaskan Independence Party

Important Legislation:
Alaska has no counties in the sense used in the rest of the country. Instead, the state is divided into 27 census areas and boroughs. The difference between boroughs and census areas is that boroughs have an organized area-wide government, while census areas are artificial divisions defined by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes only. Areas of the state not in organized boroughs compose what the government of Alaska calls the unorganized borough. Borough-level government services in the unorganized borough are provided by the state itself. Before 1990, the State of Alaska and the Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Game made all decisions regarding the management of subsistence resources and harvest rights. In 1990, however, the federal government became responsible for managing subsistence resources on public lands and waters. State regulations still apply to state and private lands.

Principal Taxes:
Sales: None; Property: None; Special: 2% Raw Fish Tax

Associated Power:
The United States of America

Citizenship:
American

Paradiplomacy:

HUMAN RESOURCES

2003			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population

The Aleut population declined drastically under Russian domination. When the Russians first arrived, there were about 25,000 Aleuts, but by the end of the 20th century they numbered only about 2,000.

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
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Migration:

Crude Birth Rate:	
1999	35%

Life Expedctancy:

67 years for Alaskan Natives; 73 years for Alaskan Non-Natives

Crude Death Rate:

Ethnicity:

The 2003 population of the Aleutians suggests that the region is composed of many ethnicities: Alaska Native/American Indian 27.9%; Asian 27.1%; Black/African American 2.8%; Hispanic 11.2%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0.80%; White 37.3%; Other 8.16%

Class Division:

Languages:

The Aleut language is one of the two main branches of the Eskimo-Aleut language family. This family is not known to be related to any others. Aleuts speak three mutually intelligible dialects and are closely related to the Eskimo in language, race, and culture.

Religion:

Animistic and Russian Orthodox

Literacy:

Major issues are the low rates of high school completion, a lack of locally trained teachers, and an inadequate educational infrastructure and material resources. %No High-School %With High-School %College Degree Aleutians East 25.3 49.0 4.9 Aleutians West 21.5 34.4 11.0

Education System:

Aleutian East: There are 7 schools in the borough, attended by 273 students. Aleutian West: There are 3 schools in the borough, attended by 43 students.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

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Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Total Pre-Schools: 0 Total Primary & Secondary Schools: 10 Total Professional Schools: 0 Universities: 0

Medical Services:

Clinics: Akutan, Cold Bay, False Pass, King Cove, Sand Point, Unalaska/Dutch Harbour

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

The main settlements are on Unalaska and Adak islands. The oldest and largest, settled 1760-75, is Unalaska, the former headquarters of a large U.S. Coast Guard fleet that patrolled the sealing grounds of the Pribilof Islands to the north. The next largest settlement, Adak Station, is the site of a naval station established in 1942. Shemya Station is the site of a U.S. Air Force installation. In 1741 the Russians sent out Vitus Bering, a Dane, and Aleksey Chirikov, a Russian, on a voyage of discovery. After their ships parted in a storm, Chirikov discovered several of the eastern islands, while Bering discovered several of the western islands. Upon learning of the abundance of fur-bearing animals, Siberian hunters flocked to the Komandor Islands and gradually moved eastward across the Aleutians to the mainland. In this manner, Russia gained a foothold in North America but nearly caused the extinction of the Aleuts as a consequence of slaughter and enslavement. Russia sold the islands, along with the rest of Alaska, to the United States in 1867. A chart of the coast line was prepared by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey office, and a stock of Blue Foxes were placed on several of the islands to provide the native Aleuts with a means of livelihood. In 1942 the Japanese invaded and occupied Attu and Kiska islands and relocated and interned the inhabitants. A year later, the United States recaptured Attu after 19 days of fighting. During the Cold War the military stations on the Aleutian Islands were vital links in the strategic defense of the North American continent. Pop. (1990) 11,942. The Aleuts are native to the Aleutian Islands and western portion of the Alaska Peninsula of northwest North America. Aleuts speak three mutually intelligible dialects and are closely related to the Eskimo in language, race, and culture. The earliest people, the Paleo-Aleuts, arrived in the Aleutian Islands from the Alaskan mainland about 2000 BC. The Aleuts hunted seals, sea otters, whales, sea lions, sometimes walrus, and, in some areas, caribou and bears. Fish, birds, and mollusks were also taken. One-man and two-man skin boats known as bidarkas, or kayaks, and large, open, skin boats (Eskimo umiaks) were used. Aleut women wove fine grass basketry; stone, bone, and ivory were also worked. Ancient Aleut villages were situated on the seashore near fresh water, with a good landing for boats and in a position safe from surprise attack from other Aleuts or neighbouring tribes. After the arrival of the Russians in the 18th and 19th centuries, internal warfare ceased, and villages were located at river mouths, where salmon were caught in the annual salmon runs. Villages were usually composed of related families. A chief might govern several villages or an island, but there was no chief over all Aleuts or even over several islands. The Aleut population declined drastically under Russian domination. When the Russians first arrived, there were about 25,000 Aleuts, but by the end of the 20th century they numbered only about 2,000. By the 1830s their traditional way of life was disrupted, and only vestiges have survived.

Referenda:

There have not been any major referenda in the last five years in the Aleutians.

Recent Significant Events:

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Sources:

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Useful Links:

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www.upei.ca
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