

St. Paul, Alaska

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St. Paul (Aleut: Tama̋ Ami̋) is a city in Aleutians West Census Area, Alaska, United States. It is the main settlement of Saint Paul Island in the Pribilofs, a small island group in the Bering Sea. Saint Paul Island is well known as a birdwatching haven. The population was 479 at the 2010 census.

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Geography

St. Paul is located at 57°7′30″N 170°17′3″W﻿ / ﻿(57.133806, -170.266614)^[3]

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 295.5 square miles (765 km²), of which, 40.3 square miles (104 km²) of it is land and 255.2 square miles (661 km²) of it (86.36%) is water.

St. Paul

City



St. Paul, Alaska



Location in Alaska

Coordinates: 57°7′30″N 170°17′3″W﻿ / ﻿

Country	United States
State	Alaska
Census Area	Aleutians West

Founded	1943
Incorporated	June 29, 1971[1]

Government Mayor	Simeon Swetzof[2]
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Area Total Land Water	295.5 sq mi (765.4 km²) 40.3 sq mi (104.4 km²) 255.2 sq mi (661.0 km²)
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Elevation	23 ft (7 m)
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Population (2010) Total	479
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Demographics

As of the census^[6] of 2000, there were 532 people, 177 households, and 123 families residing in the city. The population density was 13.2 people per square mile (5.1/km²). There were 214 housing units at an average density of 5.3 per square mile (2.0/km²). The racial makeup of the city was 85.90% Native American, 12.97% White, 0.56% Pacific Islander, and 0.56% from two or more races.

There were 177 households out of which 38.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 40.1% were married couples living together, 22.0% had a female householder with no husband present, and 30.5% were non-families. 24.9% of all households were made up of individuals and 6.2% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.88 and the average family size was 3.44.

In the city the population was spread out with 29.5% under the age of 18, 9.6% from 18 to 24, 32.5% from 25 to 44, 22.9% from 45 to 64, and 5.5% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 32 years. For every 100 females there were 123.5 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 125.9 males.

The median income for a household in the city was \$50,750, and the median income for a family was \$51,750. Males had a median income of \$32,583 versus \$29,792 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$18,408. About 6.4% of families and 11.9% of the population were below the poverty line, including 18.9% of those under age 18 and none of those age 65 or over.

History and culture

The Pribilofs, named after the Russian navigator, Gavriil Pribylov, were discovered in 1786 by Russian fur traders; no Alaska Natives are known to have lived on the island prior to this point. They landed first on St. George and named the larger island to the north St. Peter and St. Paul Island. In 1788, the Russian-American Company enslaved and relocated Aleuts from Atka and Unalaska to the Pribilofs^[7] to hunt fur seals; their descendants live on the two islands today. In 1870, the now-American owned Alaska Commercial Company (formerly the Russian-American Company) was awarded a 20-year sealing lease by the U.S. Government, and provided housing, food and medical care to the Aleuts in exchange for seal harvesting. In 1890, a second 20-year lease was awarded to the North American Commercial Company, however, the fur seals had been severely over-harvested and only an estimated 200,000 fur seals remained. The 1910 Fur Seal Treaty ended private sealing on the islands and placed the community and fur seals under the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries. Food and clothing were scarce, social and racial segregation were practiced, and working conditions were poor.

During World War II, as the Imperial Japanese Army threatened the Aleutians, the 881 Aleuts on the Pribilof islands were forcibly removed, with no more than several hours notice, to internment in abandoned salmon canneries and mines in Southeast Alaska until May 1944. The Aleut men were brought back to the islands temporarily in the summer of 1943 to conduct the fur seal harvest for the federal government, seal

• Density	1.6/sq mi (0.63/km2)
Time zone • Summer (DST)	Alaskan (AKST) (UTC-9) AKDT (UTC-8)
ZIP code	99660
Area code	907
FIPS code	02-66470

Historical population

Census	Pop.	%±
1910	291	—
1950	359	—
1960	378	5.3%
1970	450	19.0%
1980	551	22.4%
1990	763	38.5%
2000	532	−30.3%
2010	479	−10.0%
Est. 2014	511 ^[4]	6.7%

U.S. Decennial Census^[5]

oil being used in the war effort.^[8] Most Aleuts from the Pribilofs were imprisoned at Funtier Bay on Admiralty Island in Southeast Alaska. In 1979, the Aleut people from the Pribilof islands received \$8.5 million in partial compensation for the unfair and unjust treatment they were subject to under federal administration between 1870 and 1946. In 1983, Congress passed the Fur Seal Act Amendments, which ended government control of the commercial seal harvest and most of the federal presence on the island. Responsibility for providing community services and management of the fur seals was left to local entities. USD\$20 million was provided to help develop and diversify the Island economy—USD\$12 million to St. Paul and USD\$8 million to St. George. Commercial harvesting on St. Paul ceased in 1985. Ownership of fur seal pelts is now prohibited except for subsistence purposes.

Nature and wildlife

Birds

No fewer than 287 species of birds have been recorded on the island. In spring (May through mid June) and fall (August through October), many rare birds, including Siberian vagrants, may be spotted on the island. The cliffs of Saint Paul, Saint George and Otter Island support large numbers of breeding seabirds, including critical nesting habitat for the very range-restricted Red-legged Kittiwake. The auk family is well represented here, with Horned and Tufted Puffin, Thick-billed and Common Murre, Parakeet, Crested and Least Auklets and Ancient Murrelet occurring as breeders, and several other species occurring as vagrants or seasonal visitors. Breeding ducks include Long-tailed Duck, Northern Pintail, and Green-winged Teal. Breeding shorebirds include Semipalmated Plover, the Pribilof subspecies of Rock Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper and Red-necked Phalarope. Breeding landbirds are few, but include insular subspecies of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch and Pacific Wren, Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, and the occasional Hoary or Common Redpoll, or Common Raven. Saint Paul Island Tours (part of the TDX Corp.) runs a natural history tourist program to the island of Saint Paul from May through early October, offering interested visitors the chance to explore the avifauna of the island.

Northern Fur Seals

One of the most notable sights on the island are the northern fur seal rookeries. The Pribilof Islands support about half of the global population, with some of the individual rookeries on Saint Paul Island containing over 100,000 seals. In late May, the male seals begin to arrive and stake out their territories in preparation for the arrival of the females, who typically arrive during the third week of June. The females give birth soon after making landfall, and by mid July there will be hundreds of young pups around the island. On June 1, the rookeries are closed and remain off limits until mid-October. During the summer these marine mammals may be viewed, by permit, from blinds at two rookeries.

Harbor seals, sea lions, walrus, whales

Harbor seals breed on Otter Island, several miles southwest of St. Paul Island, but nonetheless are often seen off St. Paul shores. Occasionally, Steller Sea Lions haul out on St. Paul, but usually take refuge in the rookery at Walrus Island, some 10 miles northeast of St. Paul. On extremely rare occasions, Grey whales, Orcas, and walrus are observed offshore.

Blue fox

Blue fox, a subspecies of the Arctic fox, is small. Endemic to the island, the fox can be found roaming the hills and climbing the cliffs as it scavenges for food. Though clearly able to capture the occasional gull, foxes near the town prefer to scavenge garbage and explore the fishing docks and Processing Plant. Kits hide under storage containers and gobble a fisherman's offered scraps. Some kits shed their dark color much faster than their siblings and adopt a fluffy white/grey coat by mid-September. Foxes inhabiting areas farther from the human dwellings boast a more aggressive and territorial manner. Edging the fur seal rookeries, the two species cohabit easily.

Reindeer

A large herd of reindeer roam the island. Of domesticated Russian stock, 25 reindeer were introduced to the island in the fall of 1911, but, after a peak of 2,046 organisms in 1938, the number decreased to 8.^[9]

Wildflowers

In spring, with the greening of the island, wildflowers begin to decorate the maritime tundra landscape. There are more than 100 species of wildflowers, from the Arctic lupine, with its bluish-purple blossoms, to the glowing yellow Alaska poppy, that can be viewed.

Climate

The climate of St. Paul is Arctic maritime. The Bering Sea location results in cool weather year round and a narrow range of mean temperatures varying from 19 to 51 degrees Fahrenheit. Average precipitation is 25 inches, with snowfall of 56 inches. Heavy fog is common during summer months. Lightning and thunder are virtually unheard of. The last time a thunderstorm occurred in St. Paul was on November 8, 1982, which was the first thunderstorm in 40 years.

Facilities and utilities

Water is supplied by wells and an aquifer and is treated. There are two new wooden tanks; one 500,000 gallon and one 300,000 gallon. All 167 homes and facilities are connected to the piped water and sewer system and are fully plumbed. An ocean outfall line was recently added for seafood processing waste. The city collects refuse. The Tribe operates a recycling program which is currently on hold. A landfill, incinerator, sludge and oil disposal site have recently been completed. A new \$3 million power plant came online in 2000. A small wind turbine provides power and hot water to the village office, but it is not connected to the power grid. The village corporation has three turbines. Wind turbines were due to be installed summer/fall 2007. Electricity is provided by St. Paul Municipal Electric Utility.



Aerial view of St. Paul.

Health care

Local hospitals or health clinics include St. Paul Health Clinic. The clinic is a qualified Emergency Care Center. St. Paul is classified as an isolated town/Sub-Regional Center, it is found in EMS Region 2H in the Aleutian/Pribilof Region. Emergency Services have coastal and air access. Emergency service is provided by 911 Telephone Service, volunteers and a health aide Auxiliary health care is provided by St. Paul EMS Rescue Squad or 911.

Education

St. Paul is served by the Pribilof Island School District. St. Paul School, located in St. Paul, is attended by 112 students and covers grades K-12.

Economy and transportation

The federally controlled fur seal industry dominated the economy of the Pribilofs until 1985. St. Paul is a port for the Central Bering Sea fishing fleet, and major harbor improvements have fueled economic growth. Trident Seafoods and Icicle Seafoods process cod, crab, halibut and other seafoods in St. Paul. 30 residents hold commercial fishing permits for halibut. Several offshore processors are serviced out of St. Paul. The community is seeking funds to develop a halibut processing facility. Fur seal rookeries and more than 210 species of nesting sea birds attract almost 700 tourists annually. There is also a reindeer herd on the island from a previous commercial venture. Residents subsist on halibut, fur seals (1,645 may be taken each year), reindeer, marine invertebrates, plants and berries.

St. Paul is accessible by sea and air. Most supplies and freight arrive by ship. There is a breakwater, 700' of dock space, and a barge off-loading area. A small boat harbor is under construction through 2005 by the Corps of Engineers.

The island has an airport, known as St. Paul Island Airport. Peninsula Airways provides regularly scheduled flights to Anchorage using Saab 340 turboprop aircraft. There is one asphalt North-South oriented runway that is 6,500 feet in length. Runway 36 has an ILS approach system, allowing for instrument approaches during times of fog and low ceilings.^[10]

Media

St. Paul is served by KUHB-FM 91.9, an NPR affiliate, broadcasts a wide variety of programming and music. St. Paul also has two low-power translators of the state-wide Alaska Rural Communications Service on Channel 4 (K04HM) ^[1] (<http://www.recnet.com/cdbs/fmq.php?facid=11560&jaws=0>) and Channel 9 (K09RB) ^[2] (<http://www.recnet.com/cdbs/fmq.php?facid=62691&jaws=0>).

Points of interest

- LORAN-C transmitter Saint Paul

See also

- Alaskan king crab fishing

- *Deadliest Catch*

References

1. *1996 Alaska Municipal Officials Directory*. Juneau: Alaska Municipal League/Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs. January 1996. p. 131.
2. *2015 Alaska Municipal Officials Directory*. Juneau: Alaska Municipal League. 2015. p. 137.
3. "US Gazetteer files: 2010, 2000, and 1990" (<http://www.census.gov/geo/www/gazetteer/gazette.html>). United States Census Bureau. 2011-02-12. Retrieved 2011-04-23.
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5. "Census of Population and Housing" (<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>). Census.gov. Retrieved June 4, 2015.
6. "American FactFinder" (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>). United States Census Bureau. Retrieved 2008-01-31.
7. Medred, Katie (June 5, 2012). "Alarming reindeer die-off on St. Paul Island after difficult winter" (<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/alarmed-reindeer-die-st-paul-island-after-difficult-winter>). Alaska Dispatch., Retrieved 2013-5-31.
8. "Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Area History" (<http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov/historyculture/1900-1945.htm>). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Retrieved 2008-12-20.
9. Scheffer, Victor B. (PDF) http://faculty.jsd.claremont.edu/dmcfarlane/bio146mcfarlane/papers/Reindeer%20_Pribilofs.pdf. Retrieved 1 May 2012. Missing or empty |title= (help); |chapter= ignored (help)
10. "PASN - St. Paul Island Airport" (<http://www.airnav.com/airport/PASN>). AirNav. Retrieved 2010-04-12.

External links

- North facing Weather Cam from the Alaska FAA website (<http://akweathercams.faa.gov/imageloop.php?cameraID=10162>)
- South facing Weather Cam from the Alaska FAA website (<http://akweathercams.faa.gov/imageloop.php?cameraID=10165>)
- West facing Weather Cam from the Alaska FAA website (<http://akweathercams.faa.gov/imageloop.php?cameraID=10161>)
- Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (<http://www.cbsfa.com/>)
- Pribilof School District (<http://www.pribilofs.k12.ak.us>)
- Tanadgusix Corporation (<http://www.tdxnet.com>)
- Alaska Community Database Community Information Summaries (http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_CIS.htm)
- Community Photos from the Alaska Division of Community Advocacy Community Photo Library (http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/photos/comm_photos.cfm?comm=Saint%20Paul)
- Timeline of Saint Paul History (http://www.beringsea.com/communities/Saint_Paul/history.php)
- Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) No. AK-1, "Saint Paul Island, Saint Paul Island, Aleutians West Census Area, AK" (<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/ak0532>)

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Categories: Cities in Alaska | Cities in Aleutians West Census Area, Alaska
 | Historic American Landscapes Survey in Alaska | Populated coastal places in Alaska

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