

## Natural Resources



### SEAFOOD

Seafood Harvest - 2018 U.S. Port Ranking had Sitka ranked as the 20th largest port by weight and 15th port by value for seafood harvested in the United States. Total pounds landed: 27.7 million. Total ex-vessel value: \$38 million.  
Source: NOAA, "Fisheries of the United States 2018"

### Harvesting - 2019

Commercial fishing permit holders (active): 531  
Total permits issued: 1,031  
Fishermen (permit holders) who fished: 398  
Number of permits fished: 668  
Total pounds landed: 27,765,582  
Estimated gross earnings: \$38,270,875  
Source: AK Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

### Subsistence

Sitka maintains a rural status that allows residents to hunt, fish, and gather food on Federal public lands. Commonly harvested foods are: fish (salmon, halibut, lingcod, rockfish, and herring), deer, mountain goat, bear, shellfish, mushrooms, berries and seaweeds.

### FRESH WATER

The City & Borough of Sitka has 29,235 acre feet per year of fresh, untreated water available for bulk export. Blue Lake is fed by snow melt and abundant rainfall and is the source of the high quality water being offered for sale. For more information go to: [www.sawmillcove.com](http://www.sawmillcove.com) or call 907-747-2660.

### FOREST PRODUCT

The Sitka Ranger District (SRD) Office of the U.S. Forest Service is operating out of the new facility at 2108 HPR. The Tongass National Forest provides resources and opportunities that are crucial to the Sitka economy and way of life. SRD Maintains 18 cabins, 6 shelters and 130 miles of trails that attract visitors to Sitka. Additionally, SRD Manages 43 permits for outfitters each year; bringing several thousand visitors that contribute to the tourism economy. SRD also manages habitat for salmon & deer, contributing to local fisheries as well as subsistence fishing and hunting along with local job opportunities.

## History and Culture

The Tlingit people have lived on this land, now called Sitka, for over ten thousand years. A temperate climate, and an abundance of wildlife and edible plants, allowed for development of a rich culture in one of the most beautiful landscapes on Earth.

In 1741, the Vitus Bering expedition recorded the location of the Tlingit settlement. Recognizing the value of Sitka's location and resources, the Russians returned in 1799, built a fort and trading post and named the site "New Archangel." In 1802 the Tlingit destroyed the Russian outpost, and the Russians retaliated in 1804 by destroying the Tlingit fort in the Battle of Sitka. By 1808, Sitka was the capital of Russian-America, which extended from northern Alaska, south to Fort Ross, California.

During the mid-1800s, Sitka, known as the "Paris of the Pacific," was the largest, most industrious city on the Pacific Rim, with Canton China and San Francisco, California following behind. Ships from many nations visited the port. Furs, salmon, lumber and ice were exported to Hawaii, Mexico and California. There was an active shipyard and foundry. After the purchase of Alaska by the U.S. in 1867, Sitka remained the capital of the Territory until 1906, when it was moved to Juneau.

During World War II, the town was fortified and the U.S. Navy built an air base on Japonski Island across the harbor, with 30,000 military personnel and over 7,000 civilians. Today the U.S. Coast Guard now maintains an air station and other facilities on the Island.



The Sitka Traditional Canoe Club (Kaduksháki Yís) paddles its Tlingit warrior canoe Kaasadá Heeni Yaakw' (Canoe From Indian River) during the 2007 inaugural Sitka Sound Ocean Adventure Race.

Photo by Charles Bingham - Sitka.



### Visit Sitka

104 Lake St. Sitka, AK 99835  
907.747.8604  
[info@visitsitka.org](mailto:info@visitsitka.org)

### Sitka Economic Development Association

329 Harbor Drive, Suite 202 Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone: (907) 747-2660  
[www.sitka.net](http://www.sitka.net)  
[www.sawmillcove.com](http://www.sawmillcove.com)

# Sitka, Alaska Community Profile 2020



Sitka Alaska is a major seafood producing port for the U.S., supporting the largest commercial fishing fleet in Southeast Alaska.

Sitka Economic Development Association  
[www.sitka.net](http://www.sitka.net)





## POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

As of July 2020, Sitka's estimated population was 8,543. Residents age 65 years and over made up just over 18% of the total population.\*

Population	Demographic Profile 2019	
1995: 8,868	Male/Female	51%/49%
2000: 8,835	White:	65%
2005: 8,948	Alaska Native/Am. Ind.:	16%
2010: 8,881	Asian:	8%
2015: 8,929	African American:	1%
2020: 8,543	Hispanic & Latino:	7%
Note: Race alone or in combination with one or more other races.		

Source: US Census, Bureau, \*AK Dept. of Labor



## CLIMATE - Temperate Maritime

Sitka is located within the Tongass National Forest, the largest temperate rainforest in the world. The maritime climate is moderated by the Kuroshio (Japan) Current of the Pacific Ocean.

The annual temperature range between winter and summer is comparatively narrow with average temperatures during the coldest month being 38°F high/30°F low and during the warmest month 62°F high/53°F low. Temperatures rarely fall below 21°F or rise above 68°F.

Average annual precipitation falls as 86" rain and 39" snow. The longest day of the year is June 20th with 17.55 hours of daylight and the shortest day is December 21st with 6.42 hours of daylight.

Climate data based on historical records from 1974 to 2019 for the Sitka Rocky Gutierrez Airport.



Cool weather crops that like Sitka's climate include carrots, beets & cauliflower. Sitka has a summer farmers market and a U-Pick garden.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The City & Borough of Sitka is a unified home rule municipality created in 1971. It is governed by a seven member Assembly that includes the Mayor. The Borough shares governmental responsibilities with the nine member Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, a federally recognized Indian Tribe.

The City & Borough of Sitka encompasses 4,811.5 square miles of which 1,937.6 square miles (40.27%) are water.

For more information go to the web sites:  
[www.cityofsitka.com](http://www.cityofsitka.com) and [www.sitkatribes.org](http://www.sitkatribes.org)



Facing the Pacific Ocean and surrounded by the Tongass National Forest with its abundant waterways, Sitkans enjoy an extensive variety of outdoor activities.



Allan Point Cabin  
Photo by Brigette Klakring

## RECREATION & CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Sitka has a great variety of indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities and a very active events calendar throughout the year.

Annual events include: Sitka Salmon Derby, Jazz Festival, Sitka Summer Music Festival, WhaleFest, Artigas Festival of Arts and Music, Farmers Markets, Fine Arts Camps, Seafood Festival, film festivals, basketball and softball tournaments, triathlon and other races, Spring herring fishery and wildlife viewing.

Additional concerts, workshops, and other activities take place every month of the year.

Museums - 5	Restaurants - 21+
New Public Library	Movie Theater
Parks - 7	Fishing - Awesome
Trails - 14+ and ATV Trail	Wildlife Viewing - Super
Campgrounds - 2	Skateboard Park - 1
Ball Fields - 9	Clubs & Fraternal Organizations - Many
Shooting Ranges - 2	4th of July Parade & Fireworks - Yes
Swimming Pools - 2	Alaska Day Parade, Ball and Events - Unique
Golf Course - 9 hole	Volunteer Opportunities - Numerous
Auditoriums / Stages - 4	Active High School Sports Teams (2 H.S.)
Playgrounds - 3	Adult Play: Baseball, Softball, Basketball, ....
Places of Worship - 20+	<b>Always Something TO DO!</b>

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Sitka has the services and amenities of a much larger city, all within a compact area. Residents of the borough have one of the shortest average daily commutes in the United States at only 10.4 minutes This leaves time to do other things. With the long daylight hours in summer you can even go salmon fishing, play a round of golf or take a hike after work.

### 2019 Jetsetter Magazine "Top 9 Cutest Towns in America"

- Nominated for 2019 Matador Network "25 Coolest Towns in America."
- 2019 Readers Digest listed Sitka one of the "21 Small Towns Everyone Should Visit."
- 2017 Country Living voted Sitka one of "18 of the Most Charming Small Towns across America."
- Named 2019 "Top 5 Alaskan Cruise Destinations" by Cruise Critic for the 4th year in a row.
- 2018 Condé Nast Traveler voted Sitka one of the "Top 20 Most Beautiful Towns in America."

## EDUCATION

### Enrollment 2018-2019 - Grades K-12

- Sitka School District: 1,261 (K-12)
- Mt. Edgecumbe High School: 432  
*\*MEHS is a state boarding school*

### Educational Attainment

	H.S. Graduate or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Sitka	94%	33%
Alaska	93%	29%
U.S.A.	88%	32%

Source: American Community Survey 2018

### University

A branch of the University of Alaska Southeast provides on-site and distance learning opportunities, including specialized degree and certificate programs in fisheries technology, education, health care, & law enforcement.

### Alaska State Trooper Academy

The Department of Public Safety Academy, located in Sitka, is one of the nation's finest training facilities. The Alaska Law Enforcement Training Program offers specialized classes and practical training for a variety of law enforcement careers. In 2019, 65 officers completed training in Sitka.

### Arts and Science Opportunities

Alaska Arts Southeast provides year-round opportunities for youth and adults with a wide range of music, visual and performing arts classes and workshops. The core program is the nationally acclaimed Sitka Fine Arts Camp, which is held in June and July each year. In 2019 the Camp was attended by over 1,000 students.

Sitka Sound Science Center is a research and education facility with a variety of programs focusing on the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems of the Gulf of Alaska.

The SSSC offers a variety of programs for youth and adults including summer science camps, field courses and lectures. The facility houses a salt-water aquarium, touch tank and salmon hatchery. SSSC also hosts the annual Sitka WhaleFest science symposium.

The SSSC Field Station Program offers Universities the opportunity to conduct ocean to alpine field courses in; geology & energy systems, marine sciences & fisheries, forestry & botany, anthropology & tourism. SSSC has a salmon hatchery set up for training, one of only two on the west coast of North America.



Students of the Sitka Fine Arts Camp



Resident Eagle at The Alaska Raptor Center



Commercial & light industrial property available at the Sawmill Cove Industrial Park with year-round, ice-free deep water access.  
[www.sawmillcove.com](http://www.sawmillcove.com)

## EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMY

Sitka's largest economic driver is the seafood industry supporting three large seafood processing plants and the largest commercial fishing fleet in Southeast Alaska (610 vessels 2017). In 2018 Sitka ranked as the 15th seafood port in the U.S. based on value, with an estimated \$38 million ex-vessel value. It has been estimated that more than 20% of Sitka's population over age 16 are directly involved, in some aspect, in the seafood industry.

Virtually all commercial fishermen are self-employed and their activities are not included in the payroll employment and unemployment rate data below.

Payroll Employment & Earnings - 2019	
• Total Earnings:	\$208,658,715
• Avg. Monthly Wage:	\$4,033
• Avg. Total Monthly Employment:	4,311
• Government Employment :	1,015
• Private Employment:	3,296
Unemployment Rate & Labor Force - 2019	
• 4.2% average annual	
• Highest:	5.3% in January
• Lowest :	3.4% in Aug./Jul.
• Average monthly labor force:	4,494
• Peak labor force:	5,262 in August
Source: Alaska Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development	

Health care is the largest sector for payroll employment accounting for 14% of all payroll jobs with monthly average employment of 609 in 2018.

### Top Industry Employers - 2017

Industry	Employees
Education, Healthcare, Social Assistance	1,297
Retail	546
Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting	504
Public Administration	467
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	431
Arts, Rec, Food Services	404
Professional, Admin, Waste Ser.	256
Construction	255
Manufacturing	208

Source: CBS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, 2019.

## HEALTH CARE

Health Care is Sitka's second largest economic driver. Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) provides critical care and a full range of health care services including specialty clinics.

In addition, Sitka has four AMA member dentists, a public health center, optometrist, and chiropractic service providers.

Sitka's hospital hosts the annual Sitka Health Summit. A number of successful community wellness projects have been initiated from the Summit and independently. A variety of wellness programs are offered throughout the community.

Sitka has been designated a bicycle friendly community. There is a community gym with workout equipment, classes and group activities.

According to a study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Sitka ranks as the 2nd healthiest community in Alaska - just behind Juneau.



## PUBLIC SAFETY

Sitka has been designated by the National Weather Services as a tsunami-ready community. The Sitka Local Emergency Planning Committee has been active in performing hazard assessments for the City and Borough, and ensuring community awareness and practical emergency response education.

Public safety personnel include: 16 full-time police officers, 9 full time Fire personnel, and 70 EMS/SAR/Dive Volunteers. Average response to a working fire is 10-15 firefighters. In addition, Sitka hosts the Alaska Public Safety State Trooper Academy and a US Coast Guard Air Station as well as the US Coast Guard Cutter Kukui.

The U.S. Coast Guard has over 200 personnel stationed in Sitka.

## Sitka is a U.S. Coast Guard City



Sitka Air Station Jay Hawk crew conducts a training flight. US Coast Guard photo by AET1 William Greer

## TRANSPORTATION

**Land:** No roads connect Sitka to other communities. There are 13.8 miles of paved highway.

**Registered Vehicles (all types):** 9,434  
Passenger Vehicles: 4,500 (2018 DMV)

**Transit System:** Community Ride Bus

**Air:** The major air carrier is Alaska Airlines. Delta provides summer service. There are several small air carriers with scheduled and charter air service.

### Distance in air miles from nearby cities:

Juneau, Alaska - 94 (35 mins. flight time)  
Anchorage, Alaska - 596 (3.25 hrs. flight time w/1 JNU stop)  
Seattle, Washington - 858 (2.25 hrs. flight time)

**Marine:** Sitka is served by the Alaska Marine Highway offering weekly scheduled ferry service for passengers and vehicles.

**Harbors:** The City & Borough of Sitka owns five small boat harbors with 1,293 permanent slips. This is the largest small boat harbor system in Alaska.

Registered Boats (all types): 2,068 (2017 DMV)  
Commercial Fishing Vessels: 610 (2017)

**Freight:** Regularly scheduled barge service from Seattle. Alaska Airlines air cargo service. Sitka has one U.S. Post Office location and is also served by UPS and Federal Express for air parcel delivery.



The Rockwell Lighthouse, recently purchased, is now available for rent on Air B & B.



Trailers make up a large segment of Sitka's lowest cost housing.

## HOUSING

Sitka has an estimated 4,199 housing units with an owner occupancy rate of just over 57%. The median value for owner-occupied units was estimated at \$349,300

Source: American Community Survey 2018

In 2019, 44 single family homes were sold with an average price of \$381,831.

Source: Davis Realty

The rental vacancy rate is 3.9%.

HUD - Fair Market Rent - 2020

- Efficiency: \$950
- One-Bedroom: \$1085
- Two-Bedroom: \$1,293
- Three-Bedroom: 1,846

## TAXES - Local and State

City Sales Tax: 5% Oct.-Mar. / 6% Apr.-Sept.  
Sales Tax Revenues FY19: \$13,309,207

Property Tax: 6 mills  
Property Tax Revenues FY19: \$6,777,625

Bed Tax: 6%  
Bed Tax Revenues FY19: \$553,911

Source: City Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, FY 2019

Fish Box Tax: \$10 per box of Charter caught fish  
Fish Box Tax Revenues FY19: \$137,084

Raw Fish Tax: tax assessed on fish processors.  
Raw Fish Tax for Harbor Fund FY19: \$1,188,722

State Taxes: The State of Alaska has NO state sales tax, inheritance tax or personal property tax. Corporate Income tax rate varies from 1% to 9.4%.

(9.4% is the maximum rate for taxable income over \$90k)

## COMMUNICATION

**Telephone & Internet:** Local, long distance, cellular and satellite telephone services are available. A fiber-optic network was completed in 2007. Cable modem, DSL and dial-up connections are available.

**Television:** Cable and satellite services are available.

**Radio Stations:** Local stations are KCAW 104.7 FM Raven Radio (public radio), KIFW 1230 AM (commercial radio), KSBZ 103.1 FM (class rock/rock), KRSA 94.9 FM/580 AM (Christian programming). Satellite radio is also available.

**Newspaper:** Daily Sitka Sentinel - published Monday through Friday.



M.V. Fairweather arriving at the Sitka ferry terminal. Passengers and vehicles can travel to Juneau in about 4 hours.

## UTILITIES

**Electricity:** Over 95% of Sitka's electricity is generated by two hydro-electric power plants with the remainder being provided by diesel generators. The Blue Lake dam expansion project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2015 raising the dam by 83 feet and increasing Sitka's electric capacity by approximately 23%.

**Supplier:** City and Borough of Sitka  
**Generative Capacity:** hydro 32 MW / diesel 25 MW  
**Peak Load:** 25MW **Reserve Capacity:** 7 MW  
**Residential Rates:** Based on Usage - from \$0.1203 to \$0.1370 per kWh. Plus a \$24.80 per month service charge.

Commercial Rates	Small Customer	Large Customer
First 500 kWh - per kWh	\$0.1850	\$0.1860
Additional kWh over 500 - per kWh	\$0.1308	\$0.1303
Customer Charge - per month	\$40.95	\$63
Demand Charge over 25 kW	\$5.88 per kW	\$5.88 per kW

**Water:** Sitka is blessed with abundant fresh water. Drinking water comes from Blue Lake and is so pure it does not require filtering prior to purification and distribution to the consumer.

**Utility Rates:** for current rate information contact Utility Customer Service Department at 907-747-1800