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Crescent City, California

Crescent City is the only incorporated city in Del Norte County, California; it is also the county seat. Named for the crescent-shaped stretch of sandy beach south of the city, Crescent City had a total population of 6,673 in the 2020 census, down from 7,643 in the 2010 census.

The population includes inmates at Pelican Bay State Prison, also within the city limits, and the former census-designated place Crescent City North annexed to the city.

The city is also the site of the Redwood National Park headquarters, as well as the historic Battery Point Light. Due to the richness of the local Pacific Ocean waters and the related catch, and ease of access, Crescent City Harbor serves as home port for numerous commercial fishing vessels.

The city is on the Pacific coast in the upper northwestern part of California, about 20 mi (32 km) south of the Oregon border.

Crescent City's offshore geography makes it unusually susceptible to tsunamis.^[8] In 1964 much of the city was destroyed by four tsunami waves generated by the Great Alaskan earthquake off Anchorage, Alaska. In 2011 the city's harbor suffered extensive damage and destruction from tsunamis generated by the March 11, 2011, earthquake off Sendai, Japan. Several dozen vessels and many of the docks they were moored to were destroyed as wave cycles related to the tsunamis exceeded 8 ft (2.4 m).

The climate of Crescent City is moderate, with cool summers for its latitude as a result of intense maritime moderation. Nearby inland areas behind the mountains have substantially warmer summer temperatures.

History

Crescent City was founded on the site of Tolowa Indian Settlements at Battery Point and Pebble Beach south of Point St. George, and north of Point St. George. In Tolowa: *Taa-'at-dvn*;^[9] Yurok: *Kohpey*;^[10] Wiyot: *Daluwagh*^[11]

In 1855, the U.S. Congress authorized the building of a lighthouse at "the battery point" (a high tide island on the coast of Crescent City) which is still functioning as a historical landmark.^[12]

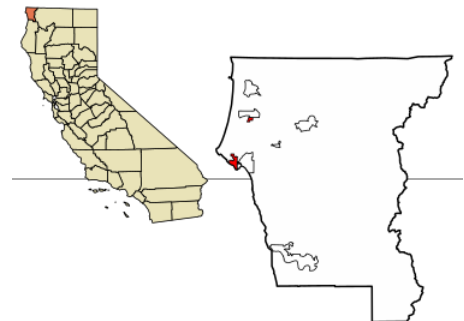
Crescent City, California

City



Crescent City harbor

Nickname: The Redwood Gate to the Golden State



Location of Crescent City in Del Norte County



Location in the state of California

Coordinates: 41°45′22″N 124°12′06″W﻿ / ﻿﻿ / ﻿

Country	<u>United States</u>
State	<u>California</u>

Europeans began moving to the area in the 1850s. Crescent City was incorporated as a city in 1854.^[13]

Namesake ships

- Crescent City* was a 113 t (111 long tons; 125 short tons) schooner built in 1848 by Joshua T. Foster of Medford, Massachusetts^[14]
- A 1906 ship named *Crescent City* was the former *Jim Butler*, a 701 t (690 long tons; 773 short tons) steam schooner built by Lindstrom Shipbuilding Company in Aberdeen, Washington,^[15] that wrecked in the Channel Islands, off Santa Cruz Island, in 1927^[16]

Shipwrecks

- The *Brother Jonathan*, a paddle steamer, crashed on an uncharted rock near Point St. George, off the coast of Crescent City, California, on July 30, 1865^[17]
- The *SS Emidio*, a 6,912 t (6,803 long tons; 7,619 short tons) tanker of the General Petroleum Corporation (later Mobil Oil), was the first casualty of the Imperial Japanese Navy's submarine force action on California's Pacific Coast on December 20, 1941. The damaged tanker broke up on the rocks off Crescent City. The remaining pieces of the ship are now California Historical Landmark #497^[18]

Geography

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 2.415 sq mi (6.25 km²), of which 1.963 sq mi (5.08 km²) (81.3%) is land and 0.452 sq mi (1.17 km²) (18.7%) is water. Fishing and crabbing, tourism, and timber are the major sources of income in Del Norte County.^[19] Elk Creek flows into the Pacific Ocean at Crescent City. Its nearest Californian place of any size to its interior is Happy Camp separated by roughly 42 mi (68 km) by air, but, due to the unsuitable terrain, it is much farther by road. The nearest city is fellow coastal city Brookings, Oregon, around 20 mi (32 km) to its north. The Humboldt Bay area encompassing Eureka and Arcata is more than 60 mi (97 km) to its south. Crescent City is as far north in latitude as Chicago, Middle Island in Ontario, Canada, as well as New England on the Atlantic side. It is as much as nine degrees latitude north of San Diego at the southern tip of the state. Crescent City is closer to Vancouver, Canada (838 km (521 mi)) than to Los Angeles (1,003 km (623 mi)).^[20]

Climate

Crescent City has a warm-summer Mediterranean climate (Köppen *Csb*). The wettest months are from October to March; the wettest month is December with 11.14 in or 283.0 mm and the driest month is July with 0.33 in or 8.4 mm. The average high and low temperatures in December are 55 °F or 12.8 °C and 41 °F or 5 °C. The average high and low temperatures in August are 64 °F

County	Del Norte
Incorporated	April 13, 1854 ^[1]
Government	
 • Type	Mayor/Council
 • Mayor	Jason Greenough ^[2]
 • State senator	Mike McGuire (D) ^[3]
 • Assemblymember	Jim Wood (D) ^[4]
 • U. S. rep.	Jared Huffman (D) ^[5]
Area ^[6]	
 • Total	2.42 sq mi (6.25 km ²)
 • Land	1.96 sq mi (5.09 km ²)
 • Water	0.45 sq mi (1.17 km ²) <div>18.7%</div>
Elevation ^[7]	43 ft (13 m)
Population (2020)	
 • Total	6,673
 • Density	3,399.39/sq mi (1,312.26/km ²)
Time zone	UTC-8 (Pacific)
 • Summer (DST)	UTC-7 (PDT)
ZIP codes	95531, 95532, 95538
Area code	707
FIPS code	06-17022 (https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=1600000US0617022)
GNIS feature IDs	277494 (https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names/277494), 2410262 (https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names/2410262)
Website	crescentcity.org (http://www.crescentcity.org)

or 17.8 °C and 53 °F or 12 °C. On average, four mornings each winter fall below 32 °F or 0 °C.

The highest temperature recorded in Crescent City was 97 °F (36 °C) on September 20, 1989, and September 21, 1939. The lowest temperature on record was 19 °F (−7 °C) on January 20, 1937, and December 21, 1990. The maximum monthly precipitation was 31.25 in (793.8 mm) in November 1973. The wettest year was 1904 when 107.61 in (2,733.3 mm) fell and the driest year was 2013 with 28.92 in (734.6 mm). The maximum 24-hour precipitation was 7.73 in (196.3 mm) on January 9, 1995. The highest snowfall recorded for any period in 24 hours was 6.0 in (0.15 m) on January 26, 1972. The 30-year average annual precipitation in Crescent City has decreased from 64 inches (1,630 mm) in the 1980–2010 period to about 58 inches (1,470 mm) over the 1990–2020 period.^[21]

The warmest ever overnight low was 68 °F (20 °C) in 1929 and the mean between 1991 and 2020 was at the modest 59 °F (15 °C).^[21] Cold winter days are also rare. The coldest daytime temperature was 30 °F (−1 °C) in 1924, which remains the last time Crescent City did not climb above the freezing point for 24 hours.^[21] Between 1991 and 2020, the coldest maximum temperature averaged 44 °F (7 °C).^[21]



Brother Jonathan Cemetery in Crescent City



Crescent City Harbor from Battery Point Lighthouse

Climate data for Crescent City, California (Del Norte County Airport), 1991–2020 normals, extremes 1894–present [hide]													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °F (°C)	75 (24)	78 (26)	88 (31)	86 (30)	89 (32)	91 (33)	96 (36)	95 (35)	97 (36)	93 (34)	80 (27)	80 (27)	97 (36)
Mean maximum °F (°C)	65.5 (18.6)	66.2 (19.0)	64.3 (17.9)	65.6 (18.7)	67.8 (19.9)	69.1 (20.6)	69.2 (20.7)	70.7 (21.5)	74.9 (23.8)	76.6 (24.8)	67.6 (19.8)	63.7 (17.6)	80.8 (27.1)
Mean daily maximum °F (°C)	56.2 (13.4)	56.2 (13.4)	55.8 (13.2)	57.2 (14.0)	59.3 (15.2)	61.6 (16.4)	63.0 (17.2)	64.2 (17.9)	64.5 (18.1)	62.3 (16.8)	58.2 (14.6)	55.2 (12.9)	59.5 (15.3)
Daily mean °F (°C)	49.0 (9.4)	49.3 (9.6)	49.3 (9.6)	50.8 (10.4)	53.3 (11.8)	55.5 (13.1)	57.3 (14.1)	58.5 (14.7)	57.3 (14.1)	54.8 (12.7)	51.1 (10.6)	48.3 (9.1)	52.9 (11.6)
Mean daily minimum °F (°C)	41.9 (5.5)	42.4 (5.8)	42.8 (6.0)	44.4 (6.9)	47.2 (8.4)	49.3 (9.6)	51.6 (10.9)	52.8 (11.6)	50.2 (10.1)	47.2 (8.4)	44.0 (6.7)	41.4 (5.2)	46.3 (7.9)
Mean minimum °F (°C)	33.1 (0.6)	33.0 (0.6)	34.2 (1.2)	36.1 (2.3)	39.2 (4.0)	42.1 (5.6)	45.3 (7.4)	46.4 (8.0)	43.5 (6.4)	39.0 (3.9)	34.7 (1.5)	32.7 (0.4)	29.9 (−1.2)
Record low °F (°C)	19 (−7)	23 (−5)	27 (−3)	29 (−2)	30 (−1)	32 (0)	36 (2)	34 (1)	33 (1)	32 (0)	23 (−5)	19 (−7)	19 (−7)
Average precipitation inches (mm)	9.40 (239)	6.94 (176)	7.81 (198)	5.12 (130)	2.48 (63)	1.40 (36)	0.33 (8.4)	0.37 (9.4)	1.10 (28)	4.07 (103)	7.82 (199)	11.14 (283)	57.98 (1,473)
Average precipitation days (≥ 0.01 in)	17.1	14.1	17.6	14.2	8.9	6.6	3.6	6.0	8.0	11.7	15.4	18.0	141.2
Source: NOAA ^{[22][21]}													

Tsunamis

The bathymetry of the sea floor surrounding Crescent City has the effect of focusing tsunamis. According to researchers at Humboldt State University and the University of Southern California, the city experienced tsunami conditions 31 times between the years 1933 and 2008.^[23] Although many of these incidents were barely perceptible, eleven events included wave measurements exceeding one meter, four events caused damage, and one event in particular is commonly cited as "the largest and most destructive recorded tsunami to strike the United States Pacific Coast."^[24]



Battery Point Light, from jetty

On March 27, 1964, the Great Alaskan earthquake off Anchorage, Alaska, set in motion local landslide tsunamis, as well as a trans-Pacific wave. The tsunami wave travel time to Crescent City was 4.1 hours after the earthquake, but it only produced localized flooding.^[25] The second and third waves to hit Crescent City were smaller, but the fourth wave struck with a height of approximately 20 ft (6.1 m) after having drawn the harbor out nearly dry.^[25] The next morning the damage was counted: 289 buildings and businesses had been destroyed; 1,000 cars and 25 large fishing vessels had been crushed; 12 people were confirmed dead, over 100 were injured, and more were missing; and 60 blocks had been inundated, with 30 city blocks destroyed. Although most of the missing were later accounted for, not all were tracked down. Insurance adjusters estimated that the city received more damage from the tsunami on a block-by-block basis than did Anchorage from the initial earthquake.^[26]

The tsunami raced down the West Coast with more deaths and destruction, but no other location was hit as hard. Crescent City bore the brunt, due to its offshore geography, position relative to the earthquake's strike-line, underwater contours such as the Cobb Seamount, and the position of rivers near the city.^[27] Although houses, buildings, and infrastructure were later rebuilt, years passed before the city recovered from the devastation to lives, property, and its economy. Since the 1980s, the breakwater has been protected from normal storm waves by hundreds of Dolos armor units, 38 ton concrete shapes.^[28]



Crescent City's jetty

The city is deemed to be tsunami-ready today. Its preparedness was tested on June 14, 2005, when the 2005 Eureka earthquake measuring 7.2 on the moment magnitude scale hit 90 mi (145 km) offshore; much of the city (an estimated 6,000 people)^[29] was evacuated when a tsunami warning was issued, and a 26 cm (10 in) tsunami wave hit the area.^[30]

On November 15, 2006, a magnitude 8.3 earthquake struck off Simushir Island in the Kuril Islands in the western Pacific. A tsunami warning was issued but rescinded hours later. However, a surge from that quake did hit the harbor at Crescent City causing damage to three docks and several boats. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a county state of emergency. Upon that declaration, the area affected was eligible for federal emergency relief funding to repair the damage.^{[31][32]}

Parts of the city were evacuated on March 11, 2011, after a 9.0 earthquake struck Japan.^{[33][34]} Thirty-five boats were destroyed, and the harbor suffered major damage.^{[35][36]} The reported peak surge was over 8 ft (2.4 m) by 9:50am.^[37] Five were swept out to sea, and one person was killed.^{[35][38][39]}

Demographics

2010

The 2010 United States Census^[42] reported that Crescent City had a population of 7,643. The population density was 3,164.9/sqmi (1,222.0/km²). The racial makeup of Crescent City was 5,052 (66.1%) White, 910 (11.9%) African American, 370 (4.8%) Native American, 333 (4.4%) Asian, 7 (0.1%) Pacific Islander, 696 (9.1%) from other races, and 275 (3.6%) from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2,342 persons (30.6%).

The Census reported that 4,063 people (53.2% of the population) lived in households, 28 (0.4%) lived in non-institutionalized group quarters, and 3,552 (46.5%) were institutionalized. The very high institutionalized percentage is a result of the presence of Pelican Bay State Prison, which was annexed into the city limits in the 1990s.

There were 1,707 households, out of which 559 (32.7%) had children under the age of 18 living in them, 512 (30.0%) were opposite-sex married couples living together, 314 (18.4%) had a female householder with no husband present, 114 (6.7%) had a male householder with no wife present. There were 170 (10.0%) unmarried opposite-sex partnerships, and 7 (0.4%) same-sex married couples or partnerships. 614 households (36.0%) were made up of individuals, and 229 (13.4%) had someone living alone who was 65

Historical population		
Census	Pop.	%±
1860	638	—
1870	458	−28.2%
1880	343	−25.1%
1890	907	164.4%
1900	699	−22.9%
1910	1,114	59.4%
1920	955	−14.3%
1930	1,720	80.1%
1940	1,363	−20.8%
1950	1,706	25.2%
1960	2,958	73.4%
1970	2,586	−12.6%
1980	3,075	18.9%
1990	4,380	42.4%
2000	4,006	−8.5%
2010	7,643	90.8%
2020	6,673	−12.7%
2023 (est.)	5,611 ^[40]	−15.9%

US Decennial Census^[41]

years of age or older. The average household size was 2.38. There were 940 families (55.1% of all households); the average family size was 3.13.

The city population contained 1,107 people (14.5%) under the age of 18, 934 people (12.2%) aged 18 to 24, 3,292 people (43.1%) aged 25 to 44, 1,725 people (22.6%) aged 45 to 64, and 585 people (7.7%) who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 34.9 years. For every 100 females, there were 250.1 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 298.5 males.

There were 1,906 housing units at an average density of 789.2/sqmi (304.7/km²), of which 1,707 were occupied, of which 532 (31.2%) were owner-occupied, and 1,175 (68.8%) were occupied by renters. The homeowner vacancy rate was 7.7%; the rental vacancy rate was 4.8%. 1,203 people (15.7% of the population) lived in owner-occupied housing units and 2,860 people (37.4%) lived in rental housing units.

Government

In the California State Legislature, Crescent City is in the 2nd Senate District, represented by Democrat Mike McGuire,^[3] and the 2nd Assembly District, represented by Democrat Jim Wood.^[4]

In the United States House of Representatives, Crescent City is in California's 2nd congressional district, represented by Democrat Jared Huffman.^[5]

Education

The public schools of Crescent City are part of the Del Norte County Unified School District, which encompasses all of the public schools in Del Norte County. The following are schools within Crescent City or its immediate vicinity.

- Del Norte High School is the only public high school in Crescent City, located on the northern edge of town. It replaced the earlier high school that was more centrally located, and which remains today as a public-access gymnasium and county offices
- The Bess Maxwell Elementary School is the older of two elementary schools in the northern part of town that are located near the high school. Bess Maxwell serves grades 1–5. In its earlier years, it was a K–6 school
- The Castle Rock Charter School is a K–12 charter school that provides personalized education to students, and is the liaison school for parents who home school their children. It operates the Tah-Ah-Dun American Indian Magnet School to provide for the unique requirements of American Indian students who might be at risk. (Tah-Ah-Dun is the Tolowa name for Crescent City, honoring the Tolowa village that stood on present-day Crescent City.) The school is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- Crescent Elk Middle School is the oldest operating school site in town, centrally located in Crescent City. The site was originally a K–8 school, but slowly shed grade levels to other schools as it became a 4–6 school with a separate 7–8 program, then the 6–8 program that it is today
- Mary Peacock Elementary School is the newer of two elementary schools that are located near the high school. The creation of Pelican Bay State Prison caused an increase in housing demand in the Crescent City area, and an increased school district population. This school was built to address that demand, but is not directly associated with the prison
- Joe Hamilton Elementary School is a K–5 school located near Crescent Elk Middle School. It was founded as a K–3 school
- Pine Grove Elementary School has been a K–5 school for many years. It serves the eastern part of Crescent City
- Sunset High School is another Crescent City high school with its own child care center^[43]

Transportation

Highway access is provided by U.S. Route 101, which runs directly through the city, connecting the Oregon Coast to the north and Eureka to the south. U.S. Route 199 begins north of Crescent City and runs northeast to Grants Pass, Oregon. The junction of U.S. Routes 101 and 199 is one of only two junctions of two U.S. Routes in California, the other being the junction of U.S. Routes 6 and 395 in Bishop.

SkyWest Airlines formerly served Del Norte County Airport (also known as Jack McNamara Field) as United Express until April 7, 2015. Most flights connected to San Francisco International Airport.^[44] PenAir contracted to begin serving the airport with Saab 340 turboprop aircraft beginning September 15, 2015.^[45]

Contour Airlines currently operates flights from Crescent City (CEC) to Oakland International Airport (OAK) and Los Angeles-Hawthorne Airport (HHR).

Local public transit is provided by Redwood Coast Transit and by various taxi companies. Crescent City is also served by Curry Public Transit, and POINT.

The Crescent City Harbor serves as a commercial fishing port for salmon, shrimp, tuna, cod, and dungeness crab commercial fishing vessels. The Harbor is also home to multiple fishing and non-fishing related businesses and harbor governmental offices. The Crescent City Harbor also has several pleasure boat docks.^[46]

Arts and culture

Attractions

- In town
 - Battery Point Lighthouse
 - Crescent City Harbor
 - Del Norte County Historical Society Main Museum
 - SS Emidio Memorial
- Nearby
 - Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park
 - Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park
 - Lost Monarch (tree)—Largest known Coastal Redwood by volume.
 - Pelican Bay State Prison
 - Redwood National and State Parks
 - St. George Reef Lighthouse
 - Smith River National Recreation Area
 - Tolowa Dunes State Park
 - Trees of Mystery

Annual events

- Fourth of July fireworks display – July

- Sea Cruise Car Show Weekend – Columbus Day Weekend – October

Notable people

- Eunice Bommelyn – tribal historian and the last person to speak Tolowa as a native first language
- Loren Bommelyn – tradition bearer for the Tolowa tribe
- Donald H. Clausen – American politician
- James F. Curtis – commander of Camp Lincoln
- Louis DeMartin – Del Norte County pioneer
- David Owen Dryden – builder-architect in the craftsman style
- Cody Hoffman – football wide receiver, and multi-record holder, for the football team of Brigham Young University
- Derrick Jensen – author and environmentalist^[47]
- Rick Keene - California politician
- Lee Kohse - artist
- Clinton McKinnon - musician (Mr. Bungle)
- Justin Miller – lawyer and a federal appellate judge
- Buck Pierce – professional football player, Canadian Football League
- Jackson Pierce – author
- Fred Rinne – visual and performance artist
- Max Steineke – petroleum geologist
- Audrey Wagner – outfielder in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
- Wendell Wood – conservationist and environmentalist^[48]



Map of the area surrounding Crescent City

International relations

Twin towns – sister cities

Crescent City is twinned with:

- Rikuzentakata, Japan (January 7, 2019)^{[49][50]}

See also

- Achulet Massacre
- Fort Dick, California
- Lake Earl
- Yontoket Massacre



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External links

- Official website (<http://www.crescentcity.org>) 
 - Visit Crescent City Visitor Information (<https://explorecrescentcity.com/>)
 - The Story of Kamome (<https://visitdelnortecounty.com/article/the-story-of-kamome-crescent-city/>)
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