Population projections: Canada, the provinces and territories, 2013 to 2063

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According to all projection scenarios, the Canadian population would continue to grow over the next 50 years, reaching between 40.0 million people and 63.5 million people by 2063. The level of variation across scenarios demonstrates the uncertainty inherent to population projections, and is linked to different assumptions about future fertility, mortality and migration levels. In the medium-growth scenario, the Canadian population would grow from 35.2 million people in 2013 to 51.0 million people by 2063.

However, the rate of population growth would slow in the coming years according to the low- and medium-growth scenarios, as the contribution of natural increase (the difference between births and deaths) to population growth in Canada would diminish. Specifically, the number of deaths will increase in the next several decades as a result of population growth and aging.

In all scenarios, migratory increase would remain the key driver of population growth over the next 50 years, as has been the case since the early 1990s.

According to all scenarios, population aging would continue in the coming years. Over the next two decades in particular, the proportion of seniors aged 65 years and over in the population would grow rapidly as the large baby-boom (1946 to 1965) cohort reaches age 65 and over. Thus, by 2030, the year in which the youngest baby boomers will reach age 65, close to one in four persons in Canada would be aged 65 years or over (22.2% in the high-growth scenario, 22.8% in the medium-growth scenario and 23.6% in the low-growth scenario) compared with 15.3% in 2013.

The number of persons aged 65 years and over per 100 persons aged 15 to 64 years would also increase, from about 22 in 2013 to 37 in 2030 according to the medium-growth scenario.

During the same period, the working-age population—persons aged 15 to 64 years, most of them being in the labour force—would decrease according to all projection scenarios, from 68.6% in 2013 to about 60% in 2030. Between 2030 and 2063, this proportion would remain fairly stable.

The number of older seniors would also increase according to all projection scenarios. By 2063, the number of Canadians aged 80 years and over would reach nearly 5 million according to the medium-growth scenario, compared with 1.4 million in 2013. According to this scenario, the share of older seniors in the total population would increase slightly from 2013 to 2026—from 4.1% to 5.3%—and would then increase more rapidly between 2026 and 2045, from 5.3% to 9.6%, as the baby-boom cohorts reach this age group. During this period, the proportion of older seniors among the total senior population aged 65 years and over would also increase, from 26.6% in 2013 to 39.4% in 2045.

The number of centenarians in Canada would reach more than 62,000 persons in 2063 according to the medium-growth scenario, compared with just under 7,000 in 2013. This nine-fold increase in the number of centenarians over the next 50 years would be mostly a result of the arrival of baby boomers in this age group beginning in 2046, combined with a projected decline in mortality.

Provinces and territories

Between 2013 and 2038, most provinces and territories would see their populations increase, while some of the Atlantic provinces and some territories would experience population decline in certain scenarios.

At the provincial and territorial level, the five medium-growth scenarios show varying results because of the different assumptions regarding interprovincial migration, which often has a large impact on regional population growth.

Despite these variations, all scenarios show that population aging will continue in all provinces and territories over the next 25 years. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over will be higher in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec compared with the Western provinces, with the exception of British Columbia.

Atlantic provinces

In all scenarios but one, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador would decrease over the next 25 years.

Newfoundland and Labrador would have the highest proportion of the population aged 65 and over in Canada by 2038, that is between 32% and 36% of the provincial population depending on the scenario.

According to all projection scenarios, the population of Prince Edward Island would continue to grow during the next 25 years, and its rate of population growth would be similar to that of Canada as a whole.

Most projection scenarios show a decrease in the population sizes of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick up to 2038. Positive interprovincial migration could change this trend, however, as indicated by certain medium-growth scenarios.

The proportion of seniors in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 2038 would surpass 30% according to all projection scenarios.

Quebec

Quebec's population would grow over the next 25 years in all projection scenarios, mostly as a result of immigration.

The rate of population growth in Quebec, however, would remain lower than that of Canada in most scenarios. As a result, Quebec's demographic weight within the nation would continue to decrease over the next 25 years.

Ontario

According to all projection scenarios, the population of Ontario would increase over the next 25 years, reaching between 14.8 million and 18.3 million inhabitants by 2038. Ontario would remain the most populous province according to all scenarios.

In all scenarios, immigration would remain the key driver of Ontario's population growth.

Prairie provinces

The populations of Manitoba and Saskatchewan would increase over the next 25 years according to all projection scenarios, with gains mostly driven by immigration in both provinces, but also as a result of positive interprovincial migration in Saskatchewan in certain scenarios.

In all scenarios, population growth in Alberta would be the highest among Canadian provinces over the next 25 years. By 2038, Alberta's population would number between 5.6 million and 6.8 million people depending on the scenario, compared with 4.0 million in 2013.

Alberta's population would surpass that of British Columbia by 2038 according to most scenarios.

In 2038, the proportion of seniors aged 65 years and over would be lower than the national average in both Manitoba and Saskatchewan, varying between 19% and 23% depending on the scenario.

Alberta would continue to have the lowest proportion of seniors among the Canadian provinces by 2038, at less than 20% in all scenarios.

British Columbia

British Columbia's population would continue to grow over the next 25 years according to all scenarios, primarily as a result of immigration and, in some scenarios, interprovincial migration.

The proportion of the population aged 65 and over would reach between 24% and 27% in British Columbia in 2038 according to the scenarios, levels higher than the national average.

Territories

Population growth in Yukon and in the Northwest Territories over the next 25 years would be largely influenced by interprovincial migration flows.

By 2038, Yukon's population would number between 35,900 and 62,000 persons, depending on the scenario. In 2013, Yukon's population numbered 36,700.

The population of the Northwest Territories is projected to number between 38,300 and 48,800 by 2038. The territory had 43,500 inhabitants in 2013.

As a result of much higher fertility than elsewhere in Canada, the population of Nunavut would increase over the next 25 years to reach between 43,800 and 53,300 by 2038, depending on the scenario. Nunavut's population was 35,600 persons in 2013.

In 2038, the population of Nunavut is projected to remain the youngest in Canada in all scenarios. The proportion of seniors aged 65 years and over would be 9% at the most, compared with 3.5% in 2013.

Note to readers

This release presents new population projections by age and sex for Canada, the provinces and territories. Population projections are not forecasts. While forecasts tell what will most likely occur in the future, projections represent an attempt to establish plausible long-term scenarios based on assumptions of fertility, life expectancy and migration. These assumptions are usually developed on the basis of past trends, among other things.

These projections use the postcensal population estimates for July 1, 2013, as a base population. The population of the provinces and territories is projected up to the year 2038, and that of Canada up to the year 2063.

This release presents the main results of seven projections scenarios including a low-growth scenario, five different medium-growth scenarios that only differ in terms of their assumptions about interprovincial migration, and a high-growth scenario. For Canada, the medium-growth scenario assumes a continuation, for the most part, in recent demographic trends. It is bracketed by high- and low-growth scenarios, in which fertility, mortality and immigration levels are higher or lower as the case may be.

The publication Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2013 to 2063 (91-520-X), includes an analysis of the key projection results. The publication Population Projections for Canada (2013 to 2063), Provinces and Territories (2013 to 2038): Technical Report on Methodology and Assumptions includes a description of the underlying projection methods, as well as the methodologies used to derive the different assumptions.

Detailed data tables for each of the projection scenarios are available on CANSIM.

Available in CANSIM: tables 052-0005 and 052-0006.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3602.

The publication *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories,* 2013 to 2063 (91-520-X), is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

The publication *Population Projections for Canada (2013 to 2063), Provinces and Territories (2013 to 2038): Technical Report on Methodology and Assumptions* (91-620-X), is also now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

The public is also invited to chat with an expert on September 19, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Eastern Time.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).