

TRENDS ANALYSIS: POPULATION BY AGE AND GENDER

FALL 2015



What does this measure & why is it important?

This indicator measures the total number of people in the region in five-year age groups, or ‘cohorts’, reported by gender. Data for this indicator are typically gathered from the [Census](#), but for this update, data were sourced from BC Stats’ annual [population estimates](#).

As we age, our needs change. Young people need family care, schooling and recreation services, while working people are concerned about employment opportunities and childcare. In addition, some retirees need community supports to maintain health and live independently at home. By tracking changes in the structure of our population, decision-makers are able to plan for demographic pressures and be prepared for the required adjustments to local service priorities.

What are the trends & current conditions?

BC Stats estimates that in 2011, there were 164,248 people living in the region and that in 2014, there were 164,272 residents, only 24 more than in 2011. The 2011 estimate provided by BC Stats is roughly 3000 higher than the 2011 figure reported by Statistics Canada as a result of the Census. BC Stats accounts for this discrepancy by confirming that Statistics Canada estimates are revised post-census based on a study of the number of individuals that, for one reason or another, were not counted in the Census (BC Stats, 2015).

Despite the size of the population remaining relatively constant at the regional scale, individual areas have seen greater variability (Figure 1). Over the period 2011-2014, a population increase was reported for ten of 14 Local Health Areas, with Nelson leading at 2.5%. A population decrease was reported for four Local Health Areas, with the Kettle Valley showing the biggest decrease at -6.3%. Note that the Prince George Local Health Area, which includes the Village of Valemount, was excluded from this analysis due to its geographic scope which includes a major population centre outside of the Basin-Boundary region.

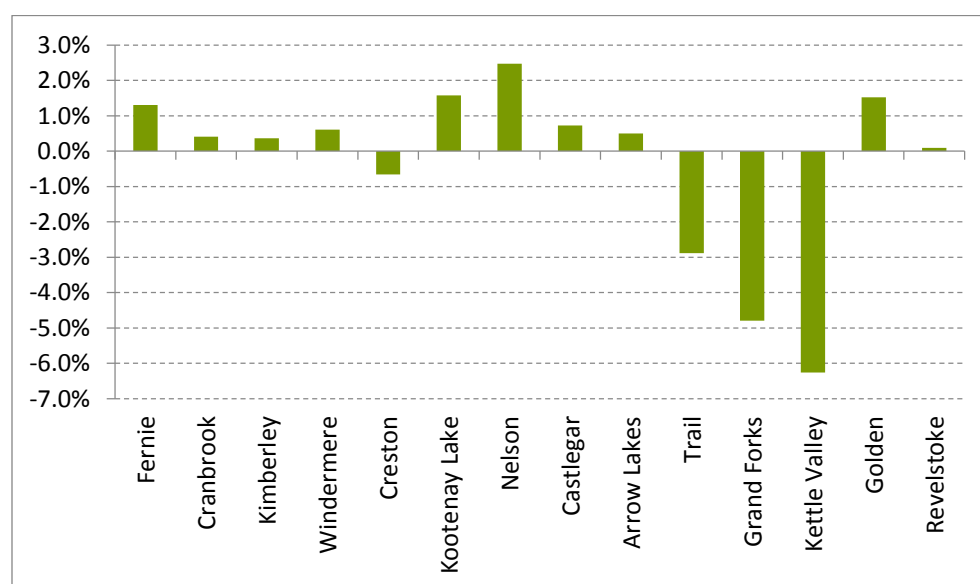


Figure 1: % change in 2011 and 2014 population estimates for Basin-Boundary Local Health Areas

Source: Data: BC Stats, 2015; Analysis: RDI

The region's population pyramid (Figure 2) shows a bulge in the 'boomer' population (ages 50-70) who have retired, or will be retiring over the next 10-15 years. Demographers commonly compare the youth cohort (under 20 years) to the senior cohort (65+ years) to understand the relative size of the components of the population that are typically considered to be dependent on the working population. Our 2014 population pyramid shows 19.8% of the population being under 20, and 20.5% of the population being over 65. This represents a reversal from 2011, when the youth component was larger than the senior component (21.0% and 17.9%, respectively).

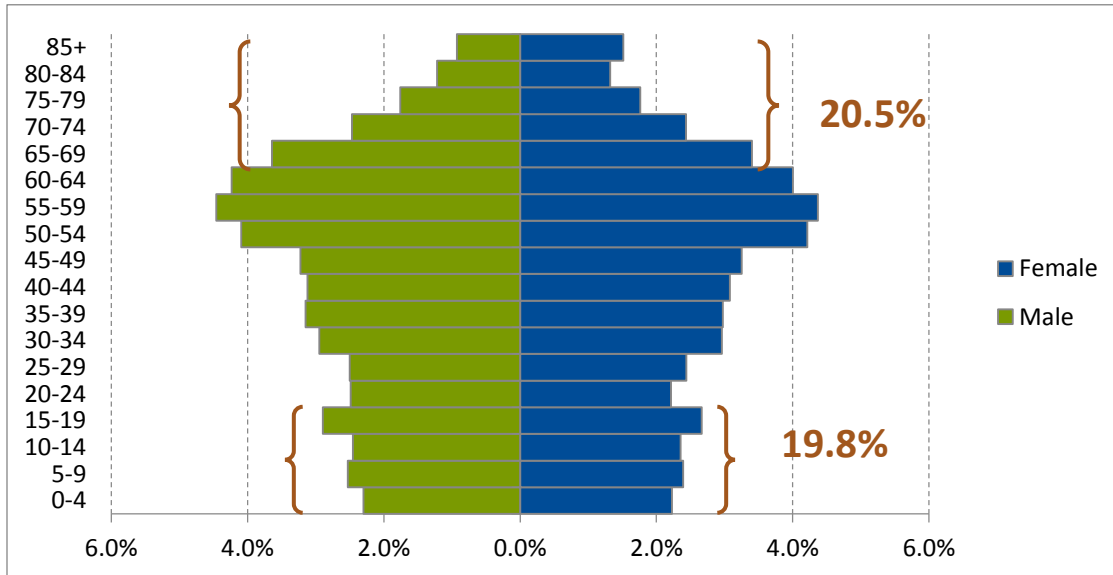


Figure 2: Basin-Boundary population by 5-year age cohort and gender, 2014

Source: Data: BC Stats, 2015; Analysis: RDI

As the boomer cohort ages and birthrates decline, the North American population as a whole is aging. However, the issue is particularly relevant to our region, where the senior population is projected to grow by 45% over the period 2015-2035. Over the same period, the size of the working population is projected to decline by 6%, resulting in a projected population structure that suggests only 1.6 workers for every senior by the year 2035 (Figure 3).

Though our region is generally aging, population structure varies by community. At the time of the 2011 Census, there was an over 20 year difference in median age between the population in Golden (38.1) and Midway (58.3). Full, community-specific population data are available on the [Digital Basin](#).



The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, at Selkirk College, is a regional research centre with a mandate to support informed decision-making by Columbia Basin-Boundary communities through the provision of information, applied research and related outreach and extension support. Visit www.cbrdi.ca for more information.

References

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