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Saskatchewan's northern population changes, 2011 to 2016

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v04

Key messages:

The 2016 Census of Canada shows that in Northern Saskatchewan:

- Overall population growth has stalled.
- The First Nations on-Reserve population has grown, while the off-Reserve population has shrunk.
- The majority of the Northern population now lives on Reserve.

Population growth patterns show that the economic boom of the past five years has been centered in the major cities of southern Saskatchewan, and has pulled people out of the North and southern rural areas.

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Effective strategy to achieve organizational goals

The overview

The Census is out

The first results of the 2016 Census of Canada are out. What do they tell us about northern Saskatchewan? We compared the population counts for the last, 2011 Census to the new 2016 Census, and also compared the Census to the 2011 and 2016 Saskatchewan Covered Population (health card) counts.

What is the North?

This analysis covered the Northern Administrative District of Saskatchewan. For the Census, this is Census Division 18. It covers everything including and north of Green Lake and Canoe Lake on the West Side, Montreal Lake and Timber Bay in the north-central part of the province, and Cumberland House on the East Side.

How the counts are done

You would think it would be easy to count people. It isn't. People don't stay in one place and they can be hard to find. The Census and the Covered Population also count people differently. To see the details, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, Table A.2.1. Basically, the Covered Population counts more people than the Census, especially in rural areas, but the Census is more accurate, especially for counting where people actually live.

By all reports, the 2016 Census was the best ever done, with an almost 100 per cent response rate. In at least some northern areas, house-to-house counts were done. The 2016 Census numbers are very believable.

What this Census and the Covered Population tell us

Northern population growth has stalled

While Saskatchewan population grew by 8.6 per cent from 2011 to 2016, the Northern Saskatchewan population grew only 1.4 per cent. This slowing population growth appears to be real. Although they give different counts, the Saskatchewan Covered Population counts also show much lower population growth in the North than in the province as a whole.

The First Nations on-Reserve population has grown, while the off-Reserve population has shrunk

The population living on Reserve in the North grew by seven per cent between the 2011 and 2016 Censuses, while the off-Reserve population shrank five per cent.

The majority of the Northern population now lives on Reserve

The result was that in 2016, 53 per cent of the northern population lived on Reserve, up from a hair over 50 per cent in 2011.

What does this mean?

It suggests that the strong economic growth in Saskatchewan has occurred mainly in the cities, and has pulled people southward from the North. Sasktrends Monitor (Doug Elliott) analysis has had similar findings. Its analysis showed that "the Regina and Saskatoon metropolitan areas absorbed 89% of the 65,000 population increase from 2011 to 2016" (Sasktrends Monitor, 2017, p. 1). Sasktrends reported a population decline of -0.4 per cent for all Saskatchewan Reserves and of -1.5 per cent for the North non-Reserve communities (p. 2).

What's next?

Population counts by age and sex will be released May 3, and the remaining Census information will be rolled out in four more releases until November 29, 2017. The count of self-declared Aboriginal people will be released October 25, 2017.

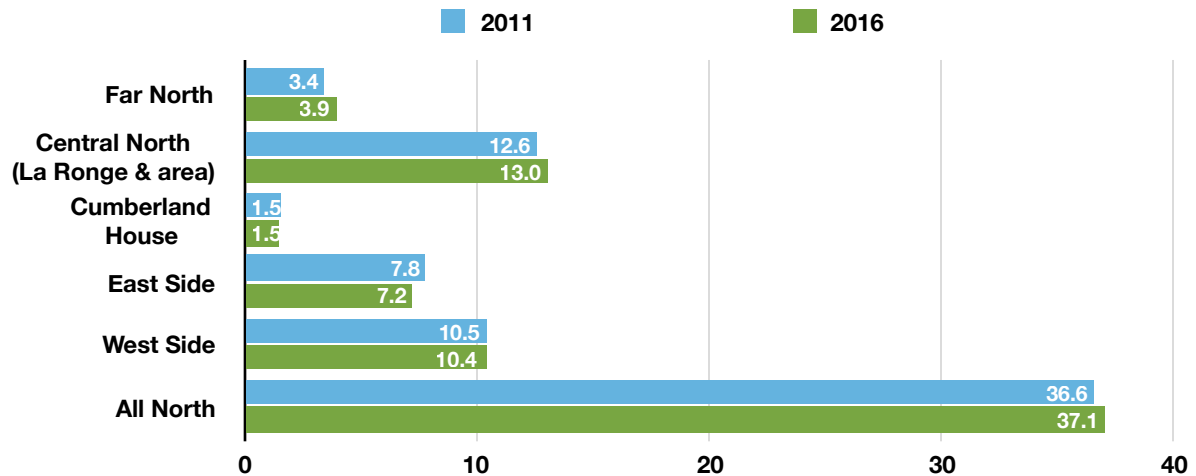
The details

Table 1 presents population counts for each community, district and region, and for the on-Reserve proportion of the population by region, for both 2011 and 2016. Table 1 also presents population changes between 2011 and 2016 by community, district and region. Table 2 compares the Census count by region to the Covered Population count.

The overall picture

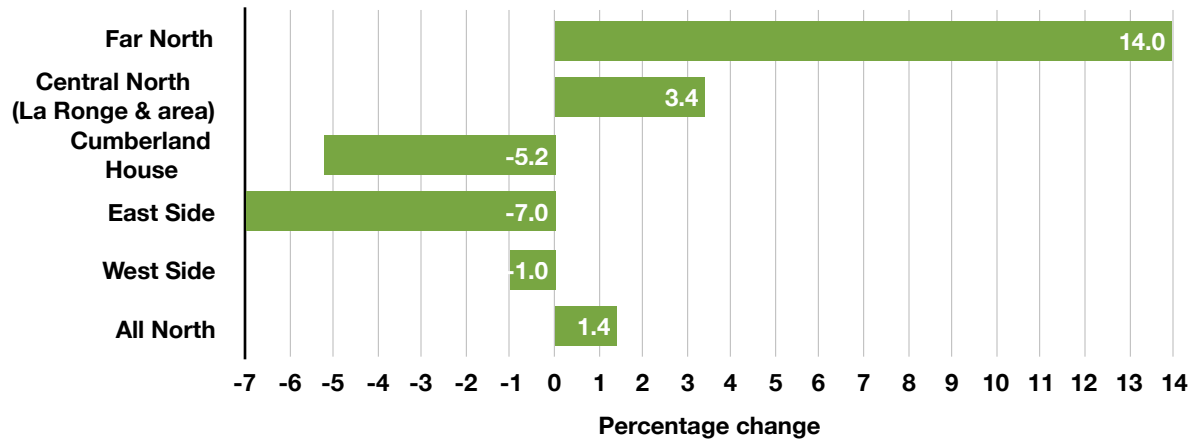
- The overall population of the North increased by five hundred people in the five years from 2011 to 2016 (Figures 1 & 2, Table A.2.1).
- The Northern population grew slowly from 2011 to 2016 by 1.4 per cent (Figure 2, Table A.2.2).
- While the Far North and Central North gained population, the West Side, East Side and Cumberland House all lost population (Figure 2, Table A.2.1).
- Overall, in the Far North, and in the Central North, there are more people living on than off Reserve (Figure 3, Table A.2.1).
- The proportion of people living on-Reserve overall is 53 per cent, and ranges from 93 per cent in the Far North to 36 per cent in the West Side (Figure 4, Table A.2.1).

Figure 1. Northern Saskatchewan Census population 2011 and 2016, by region



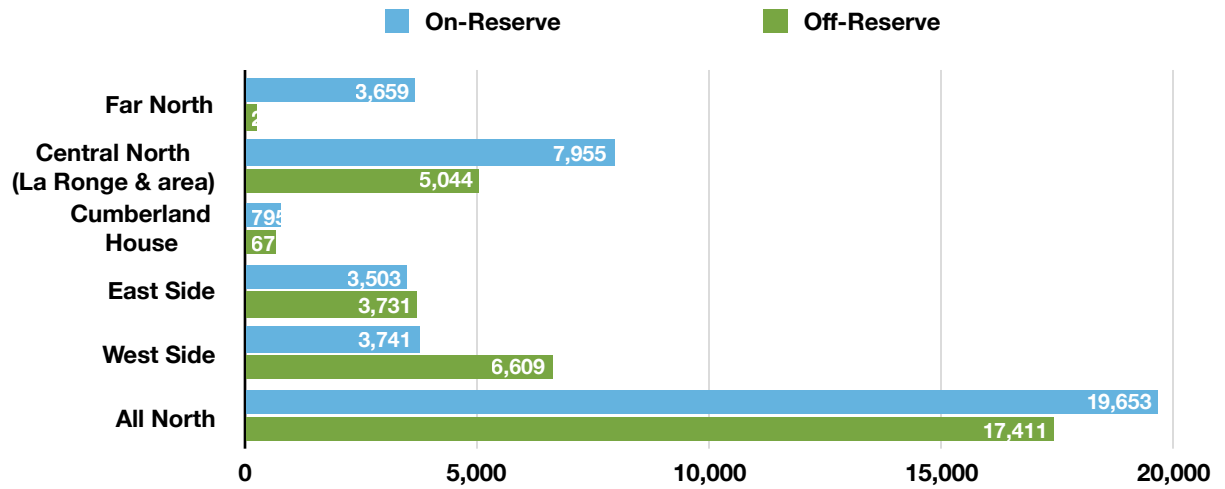
Source: Table A.2.1.

Figure 2. Northern Saskatchewan Census population percentage change 2011 to 2016, by region

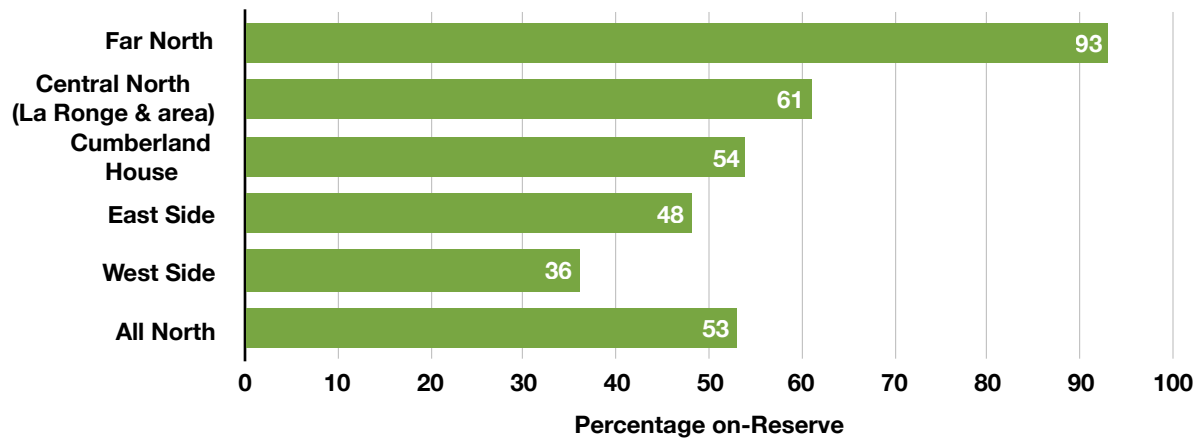


Source: Table A.2.1.

Figure 3. Northern Saskatchewan Census population on and off-Reserve, 2016, by region



Source: Table A.2.1.

Figure 4. Proportion of the Census population living on-Reserve, 2016, by region

Source: Table A.2.1.

References

- Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Health (2015). Covered Population 2015. Regina: Author (Available at: www.ehealthsask.ca/health-data/covered-population/Documents/2015-covered-population.pdf)
- eHealth Saskatchewan (no date). Detailed Regional Health Authority Population Totals [various years]. Regina: Author (Available at: <https://opendata.ehealthsask.ca/MicroStrategyPublic/asp/Main.aspx>)
- Sasktrends Monitor (2017). Census population trends. 34(1). (Available through www.sasktrends.ca).

Appendix 1. Methods

Considerations in using Census and Covered Population data

Who is counted

The Census counts all people living in Canada by where they usually live on Census day (even if they are temporarily away). The Covered Population counts Canadian citizens and permanent residents with Saskatchewan health coverage by the address of their health card. Small numbers of people, such as Armed Forces members and RCMP members, as well as new residents from other parts of Canada in their first two months here, are excluded. First Nations people (people with Registered Indian status, commonly called Treaty status) are included.

Timing of the counts

Both the Census and Covered Population counts are close together in time (May 10, 2016 for the Census, and June 30, 2016 for the Covered Population).

Differences in the counts

Despite being close together in time, the two counts give different results.

The Covered Population count is higher than the Census

Firstly, the Covered Population is usually a higher count than the Census since 2011 by about 3 per cent (Government of Saskatchewan, 2015, p. 6). This over counting is especially so in rural areas and the North. The main reason for this is that people do not update their address when they move. This especially affects the count of young adults who move away for education or work, but leave their address as where they grew up and / or return for summer and Christmas.

The Covered Population count varies by year

The Covered Population count difference from the Census also varies by year. The health cards on which the Covered Population count is based are renewed by mailed request every three years. In the year after this occurs, the count is more accurate. By the third year after renewal, the count of the Covered Population is the most inflated. In 2011, the health cards were in their third year after renewal (most inflated), while in 2016, they were in their second year (less inflated). (Government of Saskatchewan, 2015, p. 6).

Where people are counted differs between the two counts

The Covered Population also counts people in different places than the Census. The Census counts people by their usual residence address. For the Covered Population, although the Government attempts to obtain residence addresses from people for their health cards, for many people postal addresses are still used. Because many rural people get their mail in a nearby town or village, the number of people in rural municipalities, suburbs, and Indian Reserves is usually undercounted. Instead people are counted in the nearby town where they get their mail.

What this means for using the counts

This means you cannot use the Covered Population to give an accurate count of particular communities. It works better when used to count the population of a whole district or Region. The Census, on the other hand, as long as a community is completely enumerated, is a very accurate account of where people actually live. By all accounts the 2016 census was a very accurate count.

Reporting units

For this analysis, we have reported population for all northern municipal units or Indian Reserves as reported by the Census or the Covered Population reports. The two report in slightly different ways. The Census reports by all legally constituted governance units, while the Covered Population reports by First Nation, rather than by Indian Reserve. This affects the reporting of multi-community / multi-Reserve First Nations, such as Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.

We have then grouped most of the reported units into districts, around major northern centres, and then into Regions. The Regions nearly, but do not exactly, match Regional Health Authorities, as we

have included Hatchet Lake (Wollaston Lake) in the Far North because of its remoteness from La Ronge and cultural and social ties to the Athabasca region, although it is in the Central North region's Mamawetan Churchill River Health Authority (MCRRHA). MCRRHA is divided into the Central North and the East Side, according to the major two service centres in that RHA. Montreal Lake and Timber Bay have been included in the Central North, although in fact those communities are more closely connected to Prince Albert for services.

Appendix 2. Community population counts and comparisons

Table A.2.1. Population in northern Saskatchewan, by region, district and community and on Reserve, 2011, 2011 revised, and 2016

Region / district / community	Total census population				Census population on Reserve			
	2011	2011r	2016	Change	2011r	2016	Change	% of Total
Far North		3,438	3,921	14.0%	3,195	3,659	14.5%	93.3%
Athabasca	2,187	2,187	2,544	16.3%				
Black Lake (Chicken 224 IR)	1,070	1,070	1,379	28.9%	1,070	1,379		
Stony Rapids (Northern Hamlet)	243	243	262	7.8%				
Fond du Lac (227 IR)	874	874	903	3.3%	874	903		
Hatchet Lake (Wollaston Lake)								
Hatchet Lake (Lac La Hache 220 IR)	1,251	1,251	1,377	10.1%	1,251	1,377		
Central North		12,574	12,999	3.4%	7,492	7,955	6.2%	61.2%
La Ronge and immediate area		6,344	6,416	1.1%	2,558	2,622	2.5%	
La Ronge (Town)	2,304	2,743	2,688	-2.0%				
Air Ronge (Northern Village)	1,043	1,043	1,106	6.0%				
Kitsakie (156B IR) (LLRIB)	644	644	605	-6.1%	644	605		
Lac La Ronge (156 IR) (LLRIB)	1,914	1,914	2,017	5.4%	1,914	2,017		
Outlying district served by La Ronge		5,138	5,388	4.9%	3,935	4,220	7.2%	
Grandmother's Bay (219 IR) (LLRIB)	337	337	342	1.5%	337	342		
Stanley Mission (157 IR) (LLRIB)	1,812	1,634	1,840	12.6%	1,634	1,840		
Hall Lake (Morin Lake 217 IR) (LLRIB)	618	618	577	-6.6%	618	577		
Weyakwin (Northern Hamlet)	135	135	49	-63.7%				
Pinehouse (Northern Village)	978	978	1,052	7.6%				
Brabant Lake (Indian Settlement)	51	51	62	21.6%				
Missinipe (Northern Hamlet)		39	5	-87.2%				
Southend (200 IR) (PBCN)	904	904	917	1.4%	904	917		
Southend (200A IR) (PBCN)		42	128	204.8%	42	128		
Sucker River (Nemeiben River 156C IR) (LLRIB)	400	400	416	4.0%	400	416		
Montreal Lake / Timber Bay		1,092	1,195	9.4%	999	1,113	11.4%	
Montreal Lake (106 IR)	999	999	1,113	11.4%	999	1,113		
Timber Bay (Northern Hamlet)		93	82	-11.8%				
Cumberland House		1,546	1,466	-5.2%	715	795	11.2%	54.2%
Cumberland House (Northern Village)	772	831	671	-19.3%				
Cumberland House Cree Nation (20 IR)	715	715	795	11.2%	715	795		
East Side		7,778	7,234	-7.0%	3,617	3,503	-3.2%	48.4%
Creighton district		2,547	2,404	-5.6%				
Creighton (Town)	1,498	1,498	1,402	-6.4%				
Flin Flon (SK Part)		229	223	-2.6%				
Denare Beach (Northern Village)	669	820	779	-5.0%				
Pelican Narrows district		2,703	2,499	-7.5%	1,913	1,869	-2.3%	
Pelican Narrows (184B IR) (PBCN)	1,913	1,913	1,869	-2.3%	1,913	1,869		
Pelican Narrows (Northern Village)	790	790	630	-20.3%				

Region / district / community	Total census population				Census population on Reserve			
	2011	2011r	2016	Change	2011r	2016	Change	% of Total
Sandy Bay district		1,233	1,178	-4.5%	409	481	17.6%	
Sandy Bay (Northern Village)	1,233	824	697	-15.4%				
Wapaskokimaw (202 IR) (Sandy Bay) (PBCN)		409	481	17.6%	409	481		
Deschambault Lake (Kimsom Pwatinahk 203 Deschambault Lake IR) (PBCN)	1,194	1,194	1,061	-11.1%	1,194	1,061		
Kinoosao-Thomas Clark (204 IR) (PBCN)	40	40	11	-72.5%	40	11		
Sturgeon Weir (184F IR) (PBCN)		61	81	32.8%	61	81		
West Side		10,450	10,350	-1.0%	3,293	3,741	13.6%	36.1%
La Loche district		4,006	3,854	-3.8%	1,216	1,333	9.6%	
La Loche (Northern Village)	2,611	2,611	2,372	-9.2%				
Clearwater River Dené Nation (222 IR)	778	778	822	5.7%	778	822		
Clearwater River Dené Nation (223 IR)	19	19	35	84.2%	19	35		
Turnor Lake (Northern Hamlet)	0	179	149	-16.8%				
Birch Narrows (Turnor Lake 193B IR)	419	419	476	13.6%	419	476		
Beauval district		871	788	-9.5%	115	148	28.7%	
Beauval (Northern Village)	756	756	640	-15.3%				
La Plonge (192 IR)	115	115	148	28.7%	115	148		
Buffalo River district		930	971	4.4%	764	783	2.5%	
Buffalo River Dené Nation (Peter Pond Lake 193 IR)	764	764	783	2.5%	764	783		
Michel Village (Northern Hamlet)	66	66	57	-13.6%				
St. George's Hill (Northern Hamlet)	100	100	131	31.0%				
Canoe Lake district		1,133	1,234	8.9%	716	912	27.4%	
Canoe Lake and Canoe Narrows (165 IR)	716	716	912	27.4%	716	912		
Cole Bay (Northern Hamlet)	230	230	170	-26.1%				
Jans Bay (Northern Hamlet)	187	187	152	-18.7%				
English River district		546	638	16.8%	482	565	17.2%	
English River First Nation (Wapachewunak 192D IR)		482	565	17.2%	482	565		
Patuanak (Northern Hamlet)	64	64	73	14.1%				
Green Lake (Northern Village)	418	418	429	2.6%				
Ile-à-la-Crosse (Northern Village)	1,365	1,365	1,296	-5.1%				
Doré Lake (Northern hamlet)		28	30	7.1%				
Buffalo Narrows (Northern Village)	1,153	1,153	1,110	-3.7%				
Division 18, unorganized	1,641	771	1,094	41.9%				
North total (Division 18)		36,557	37,064	1.4%	18,312	19,653	7.3%	53.0%

IR: Indian Reserve

LLRIB: Lac La Ronge Indian Band

PBCN: Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation

r: Revised in the 2016 Census population report. Revised population numbers from 2011 in 2016 are indicated in red.

Change is the change in 2016 from the 2011r number.

Source: 2016 Census of Canada at http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page_Hierarchy-Hierarchie.cfm?Lang=E&Tab=1&Geo1=CD&Code1=4718&Geo2=PR&Code2=47&Data=Count&SearchText=Division%20No.%2018&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1

Table A.2.2. Comparison of Census with Saskatchewan Covered Population counts, 2011 and 2016

Region / district / community	Total census population			SK Covered population			Difference ¹	
	2011r	2016	Change	2011	2016	Change	2011	2016 ¹
Far North	3,438	3,921	14%	4,089	4,083	-0%	651	162
Central North	12,574	12,999	3%	13,316	13,962	5%	742	963
Cumberland House	1,546	1,466	-5%	1,551	1,659	7%	5	193
East Side	7,778	7,234	-7%	9,564	9,519	-0%	1,786	2,285
West Side	10,450	10,350	-1%	12,032	12,501	4%	1,582	2,151
Division 18, unorganized	771	1,094	42%	0	0		-771	-1,094
North total (Division 18)	36,557	37,064	1.4%	40,552	41,724	2.9%	3,995	4,660
Saskatchewan	1,033,381	1,098,352	6.3%	1,084,127	1,173,586	8.3%	50,746	75,234

1. Covered Population - Census population for the same year
r: revised population as of 2016 Census

Sources: Table A.2.1 and eHealth Saskatchewan (no date).