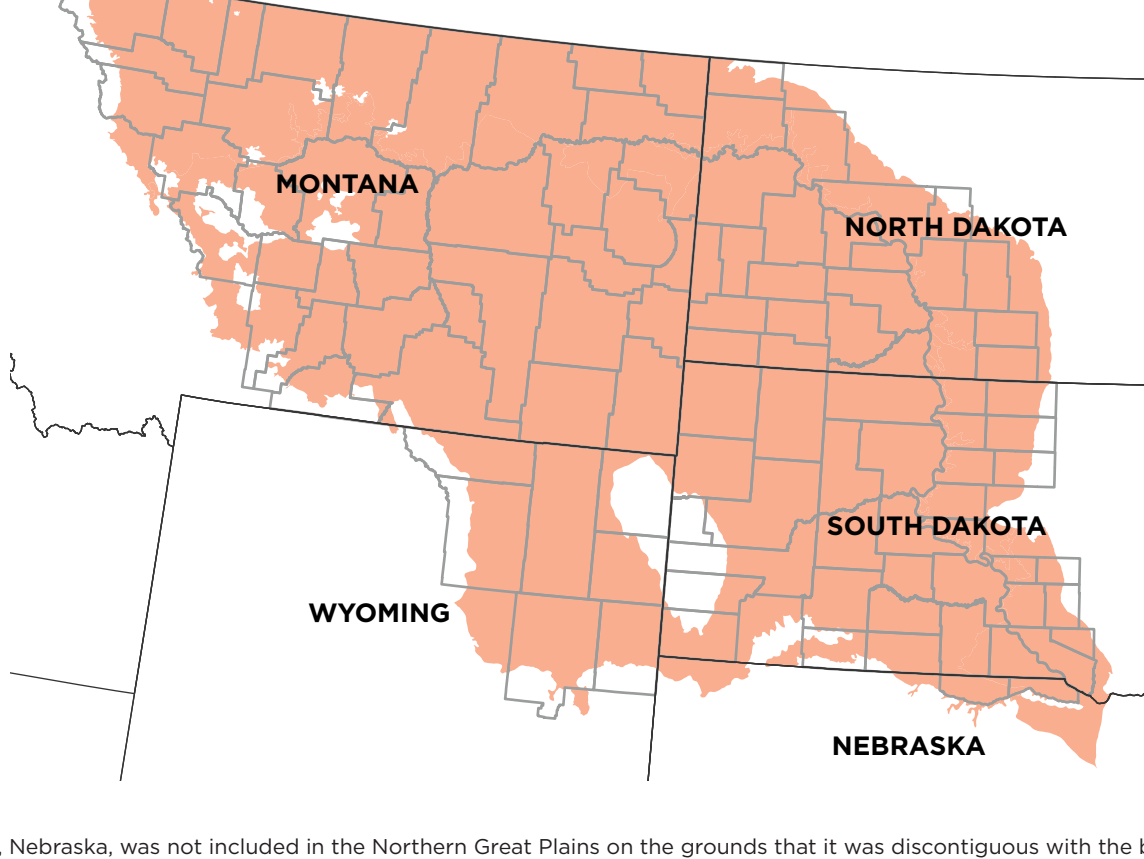


# The Northern Great Plains

## Geographic Extent

The Northern Great Plains, a region of about 1.1 million people as of 2019, was delineated using a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ecoregion classification. A county is classified as being within the Northern Great Plains if its geographic center falls within either the Northwestern Great Plains or the Northwestern Glaciated Plains Level III ecoregion.\* Defined this way, the Northern Great Plains region includes 106 counties in five states and accounts for more than 440 miles of the U.S. border with Canada.



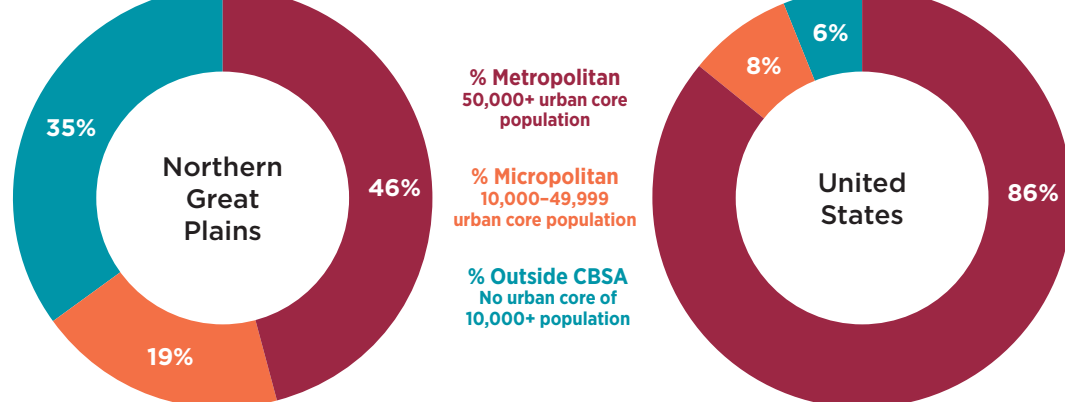
\*Antelope County, Nebraska, was not included in the Northern Great Plains on the grounds that it was discontinuous with the balance of the region. Conversely, three counties with geographic centers within the Middle Rockies Level III ecoregion were included as they are surrounded by the Northern Great Plains.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

## Population Distribution

The population of the Northern Great Plains falls less within metropolitan statistical areas and more within micropolitan statistical areas than is true for the United States as a whole. A large proportion of the region's population falls outside core based statistical areas (CBSAs) altogether.

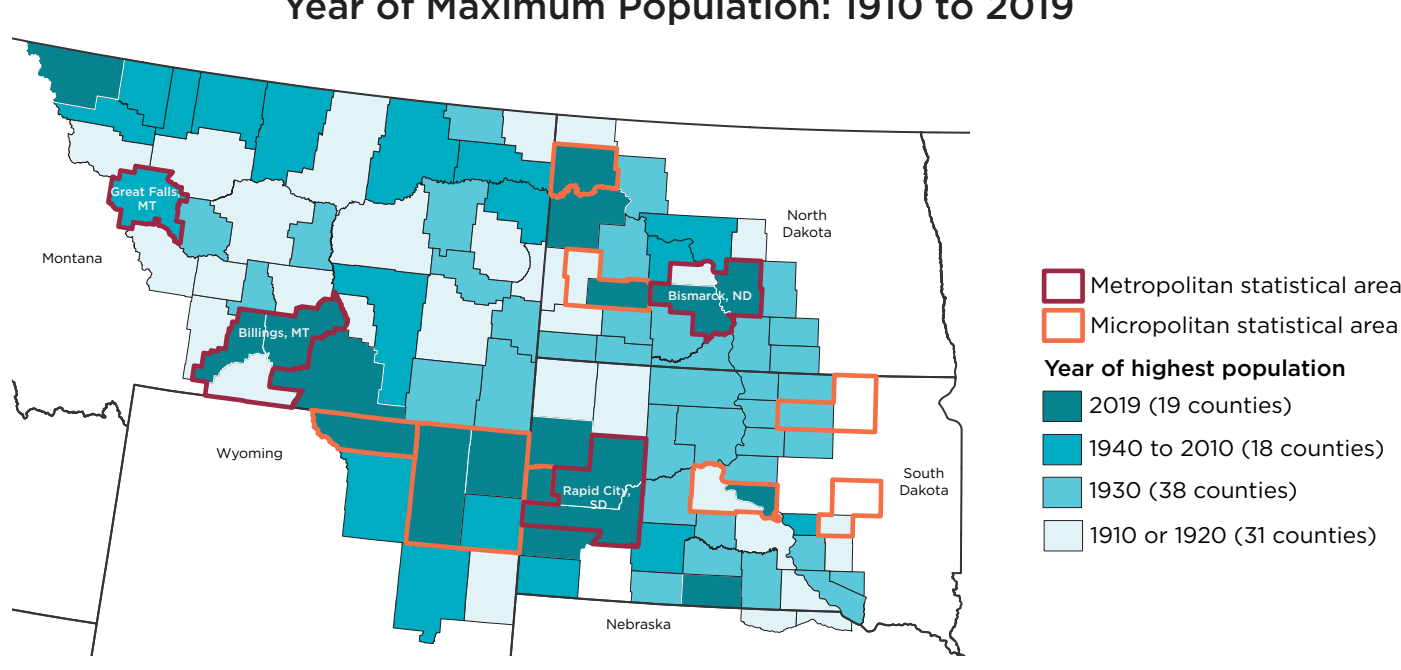
### Population of the United States and the Northern Great Plains by Core Based Statistical Area Status: 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, V. 2019 Population Estimates and U.S. Office of Management and Budget, March 2020 delineations.

Nearly two-thirds of the counties in the Northern Great Plains had their highest population between 1910 and 1930. Almost one in five counties reached their peak population in 2019, including Yellowstone County (part of the Billings, MT metropolitan statistical area) and Burleigh County, which falls within the Bismarck, ND metropolitan statistical area.

### Year of Maximum Population: 1910 to 2019

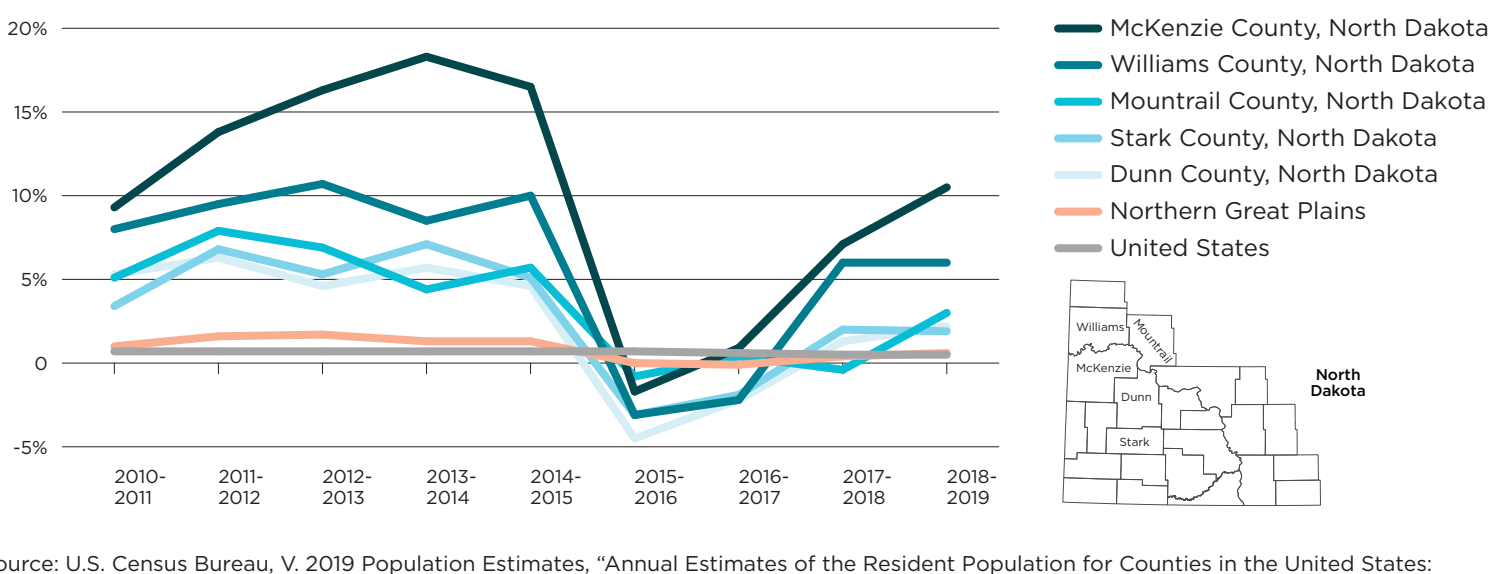


Note: Population data for 1910 to 2010 are decennial census counts; the 2019 data are population estimates. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, V. 2019 Population Estimates; 2000 and 2010 Censuses; 1910 through 1990 census data from Richard L. Forstall, "Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790 to 1990," U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1996; and U.S. Office of Management and Budget, March 2020 delineations.

## Population Growth

Several counties in the region experienced large population increases at the beginning of the 2010s, declined in population after the midpoint of the decade, and returned to growth at the end of the decade. The five counties with the fastest average annual growth were all located in North Dakota (see inset map). Population growth patterns for these counties paralleled changes in activity in extractive industries.

### Population Change for Fast-Growing Counties: 2010 to 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, V. 2019 Population Estimates, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019."

This imagery from the National Agriculture Imagery Program shows changes that have occurred in a portion of one of the region's fastest-growing counties—Williams County, North Dakota—between 2010 and 2018. By 2018, new housing in the image's southeast quadrant is indicative of local population growth that was proximate to industrial activity in the image's northwestern corner.

### Satellite Imagery Depicting Residences and Industrial Activity in Williams County: 2010 and 2018

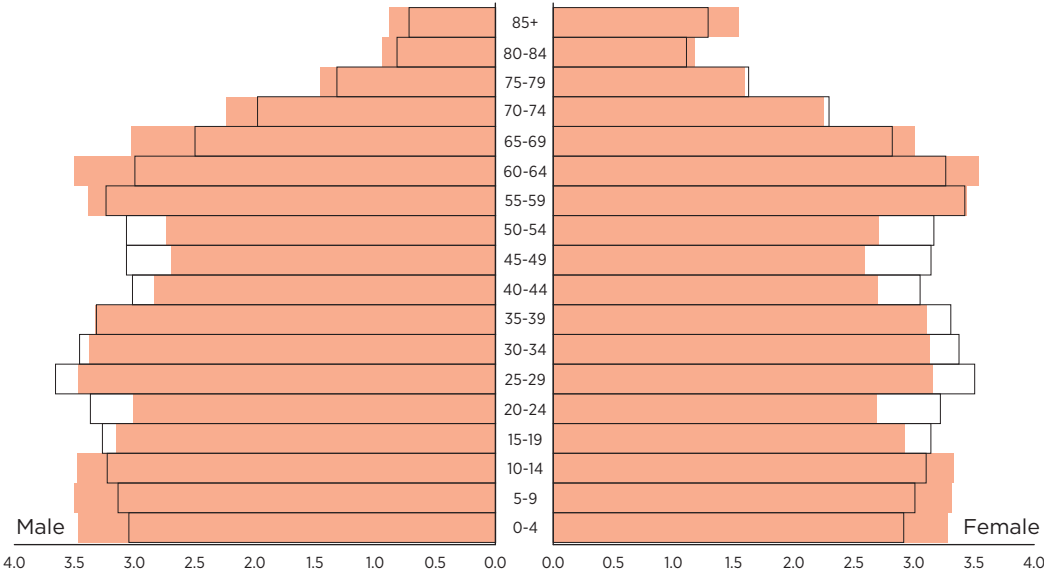


Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Imagery Program.

## Demographic Characteristics

The Northern Great Plains generally has a higher proportion of population aged 55 and older and 14 and younger compared to the United States in its entirety. The Northern Great Plains has a lower proportion of population aged 15 to 54, with the exception of males between the ages of 35 and 39. This distribution indicates that the region has a high dependency ratio, the ratio of the nonworking-age population (young or old) to the working-age population.

### Percentage of Total Population of the Northern Great Plains and the United States by Age and Sex: 2019

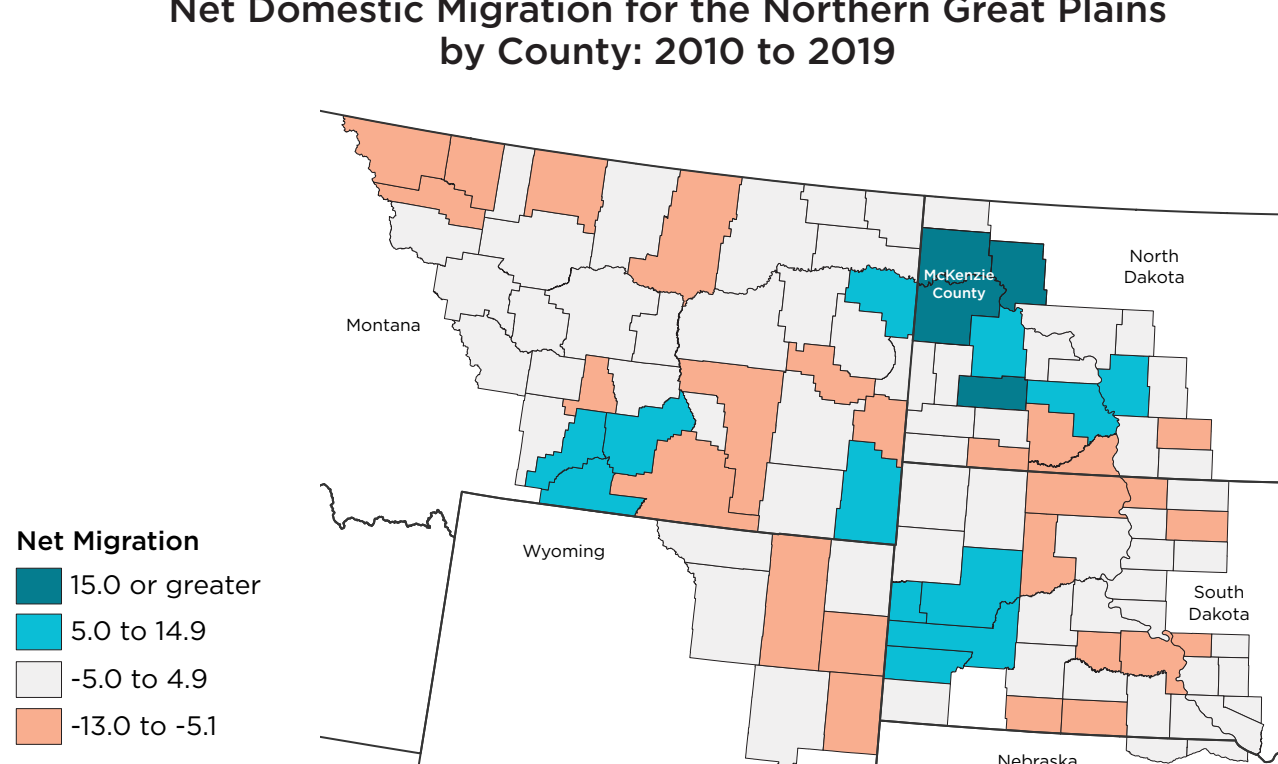


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, V. 2019 Population Estimates.

## Migration

Approximately half of the counties in the Northern Great Plains had a net domestic migration rate between -5 percent and 4.9 percent between 2010 and 2019, indicating that the region was relatively stable. Several counties in North Dakota had a net rate of domestic migration above 5 percent, and McKenzie County's rate was over 100 percent, helping to make it the fastest-growing county in the country during those years.

### Net Domestic Migration for the Northern Great Plains by County: 2010 to 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, V. 2019 Population Estimates, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019."

## Economic Characteristics

While under 5 percent of workers in the United States as a whole are engaged in the "Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining" industry, in the Northern Great Plains this industry accounts for over 10 percent of workers. Conversely, about 10 percent of workers in the United States work within the "Manufacturing" industry, but under 5 percent of workers in the Northern Great Plains work in this industry.

In terms of occupational concentration, compared to the United States as a whole, the Northern Great Plains had a higher percentage of its employment in the category of "Natural resources, construction, and maintenance." It had lower percentages of its employment than the United States in the "Production, transportation, and material moving," "Sales and office," and "Management, business, science, and arts" categories.

