

US in the WORLD

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE A HEALTHY PLANET

Montana



Comparison at same scale

Montana
Area: 147,046 sq. miles
Population: 0.9 million

Mongolia
Area: 604,250 sq. miles
Population: 2.4 million

Mongolia



Largest urban area by population (1994): Ulaanbaatar (680,000)

Largest metropolitan areas by population (1996): Billings (125,966), Great Falls (81,087)

Though sparsely populated and removed from major urban centers, Montana and Mongolia are experiencing environmental pressures that often accompany population growth. The grandeur of these expansive lands disguises the fragility of their landscapes, where mounting pressures on grasslands and water resources seriously threaten their ecological and economic health.

These two landlocked regions straddle the same middle latitudes, with continental climates that bring harsh winters and other extremes of weather. The Rocky Mountains in western Montana trap moisture from the Pacific Ocean to spawn a multitude of rivers, but they also create a rain shadow, an area of little or no rainfall, that produces semiarid grasslands on the state's eastern plains. Similarly, Mongolia's well-watered mountains in the West and Northwest (the Altai and

Sayan ranges) descend to dry grassland steppes on the country's eastern plateau and to the even drier Gobi Desert in the Southeast.

Mongolia's arid steppes are home to a nomadic people whose culture and economy center on livestock herding. They became great horsemen and reached their pinnacle of power in the 1200s under Genghis Khan, who established one of the largest empires in history. Montana's indigenous people, too, were nomadic and eventually included such skilled horsemen as the Crow, the Blackfeet, Sioux, and Northern Cheyenne. The Cheyenne were compared to the Mongols as warriors on horseback. Today, over 80 percent of Mongolia's people are indigenous Mongols, but Native Americans are just 6.2 percent of Montana's population.

Montana's mineral wealth attracted its first nonnative settlers, but ranching

and irrigated agriculture were to become the mainstay of the plains economy. Today the progressive loss of native grasslands to cultivation is a leading environmental concern and threatens the biodiversity of the entire region. Mongolia's drier grasslands are even more vulnerable to overgrazing by its expanding livestock population of 30 million. There are increasing signs of desertification, which threatens both wildlife and human economy.

Mongolia's population growth rate of 1.6 percent annually is fueled by a birth rate that is the highest in East Asia. And while the average family size in Mongolia has declined by more than 50 percent since the 1960s, Mongolia is one of the few developing nations that promotes population growth. In Montana, the eastern plains are declining in population, but for most of the 1990s the state as a whole has been

continued on back page

MONTANA

Demographic and Health Trends

■ Since 1990 Montana's population has grown by 10 percent—higher than the national average of 7.5 percent. However, because of the state's small population size, this translates into one of the smaller numerical gains of any state. About 80,000 people have been added to Montana's population since 1990.

■ Most of this decade's population growth occurred between 1992 and 1995. Between 1996 and 1997 population growth was low as more people moved out of Montana.

■ Western Montana and the counties around Billings have grown even more rapidly than the state as a whole. Ravalli County, for example, has grown by more than one-third since 1990.

■ Nineteen of Montana's counties lost population between 1990 and 1996. Most of these rapidly shrinking counties are in the eastern third of the state, with McCone and Garfield counties losing the most at 10 percent and 11 percent respectively.

Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

■ Open pit mines in Montana normally expose acidic ores that cause poisonous runoff into surface and ground water, killing fish and birds long after the mines are abandoned. More than 130 years of such runoff from mines along the Clark Fork River have turned more than 100 miles of the floodplain downstream of Butte into the largest federal Superfund site in the United States. Established in 1988 by the U.S. Congress, Superfund locates, investigates, and cleans up the worst hazardous waste sites in the United States.

■ Montanans used 10,187 gallons of water per capita in 1995, the third

highest total in the country. Nearly all of it (97 percent) is used for agriculture.

■ Roadless areas and habitats for threatened grizzly bears were at the center of a 20-year controversy that ended in 1997 with the decision to prohibit oil and gas development on the Rocky Mountain Front for the next 15 years.

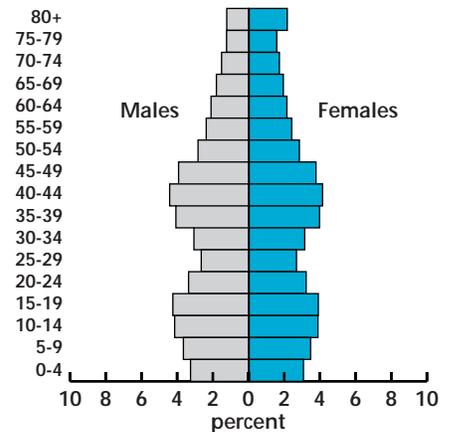
■ Montana's 13 endangered and threatened species include the grizzly bear, whooping crane, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon.

Socioeconomic Factors

■ Agriculture—mainly wheat and beef production—is an important mainstay of Montana's economy. With 89 acres of arable land per capita, the state ranks second only to Wyoming. Eight percent of Montana's jobs are in agriculture. This percentage is one of the highest in the United States.

■ Montana has become an attractive destination for entrepreneurs and other persons attracted to the state's wide-open spaces. Managing this growth, particularly as the population is projected to grow an additional 27 percent by 2025, will present a challenge to the state's leaders.

POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

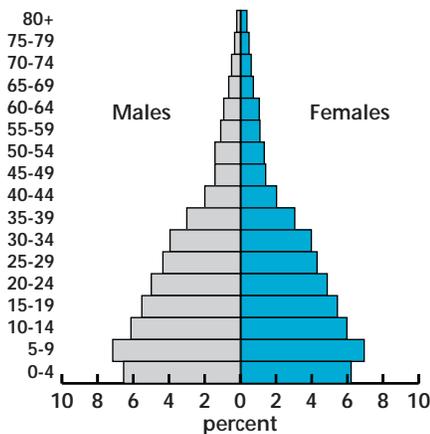


MONTANA FACTS

Population, 1997:	0.9 million
Projected population, 2025:	1.1 million
Annual growth rate:	0.2%
Doubling time (at current rate):	350 years
Average number of children per woman:	2.1
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births:	7.0
Life expectancy:	73 (male), 79 (female)
Persons per square mile:	6
Percent urban:	53
Endangered/threatened animals:	11 species
Endangered/threatened plants:	2 species
Percent of land protected:	6
Wetlands loss, 1780-1980:	27%
Daily water use per capita:	10,187 gallons
Water use for domestic purposes:	2%
Water use for agriculture:	97%
Water use for industry:	1%
Water use for energy production:	0.2%
Cropland per capita:	88.7 acres
Energy use per capita:	75.1 barrels of oil equiv.
Persons per motor vehicle:	0.9
Adults who are high school graduates:	86%
Elected officials who are women:	23%
Labor force in agriculture:	8%
Labor force in industry:	12%
Labor force in services:	80%
Gross State Product, 1994:	\$19,687 per capita

MONGOLIA

POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX



MONGOLIA FACTS

Population, 1997:	2.4 million
Projected population, 2025:	3.8 million
Annual growth rate:	1.6%
Doubling time (at current rate):	43 years
Average number of children per woman:	3.6
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births:	70
Life expectancy:	62 (male), 65 (female)
Persons per square mile:	4
Percent urban:	55
Threatened animals:	29 species
Threatened plants:	1 species
Percent of land protected:	3.9
Wetlands loss, through 1980s:	n.a.
Percent with access to safe water:	80
Percent with adequate sanitation:	74
Daily water use per capita:	197 gallons
Water use for domestic purposes:	11%
Water use for agriculture:	62%
Water use for industry:	27%
Cropland per capita:	0.0 acres
Energy use per capita:	7.4 barrels of oil equiv.
Persons per motor vehicle:	n.a.
Percent of girls in secondary school:	n.a.
Percent of boys in secondary school:	n.a.
Women as % of national legislature:	8
Labor force in agriculture:	n.a.
Labor force in industry:	n.a.
Labor force in services:	n.a.
GDP per capita, 1995:	US\$374

Demographic and Health Trends

- Couples in Mongolia are having fewer children than couples did in previous decades. Fertility has declined from an average of six births per woman in the early 1960s to the current 3.6 births.
- Despite lower fertility, the population will continue to grow rapidly for many years because Mongolia's population is very young. A large number of people will enter their childbearing years in the near future.

■ In Mongolia, 70 of every 1,000 infants born die before their first birthday. This is 10 times the rate for the United States.

■ With approximately four persons per square mile, Mongolia has a lower population density than any other country except Western Sahara. There are about six persons per square mile in Montana and 76 persons per square mile in the United States.

Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

- Water resources are unevenly distributed and very limited in Mongolia.
- Almost 90 percent of Mongolia is pasture or desert; only 1 percent is arable, and the remainder is forested.
- The total area of land that is being degraded or devoid of vegetation is increasing. These lands are difficult to restore and risk becoming perma-

nent desert. The country's arid climate and, in some areas, fragile soil make land used as pasture extremely vulnerable to overgrazing.

■ Threatened animals in Mongolia include: the wild bactrian camel, Siberian musk deer, wolverine, swan goose, and the greater spotted eagle.

Socioeconomic Factors

■ Agriculture is by far the largest sector of the economy and livestock herding is the main economic activity. Live animals and animal products, such as wool and hides, account for one-half of Mongolia's output and nearly 90 percent of its exports.

per capita had fallen to less than one-quarter of its 1989 level. Official development assistance constituted 28 percent of the country's GNP during that year.

■ In 1989 the country began the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. By 1994 gross national product (GNP)

■ Since 1990, copper has become the country's largest source of foreign exchange.

continued from page 1

growing at a rate faster than most of the United States, driven primarily by in-migration from other states.

With most of Montana's growth occurring in the West, mountain communities are struggling with urban sprawl, as development fills valleys and degrades wetlands and riparian areas. Land use planning has become a critical issue in trying to protect wildlife habitats and people's quality of life. Just over half of both Mongolians and Montanans live in urban areas. Most Montanans, however, live in small towns while over one-quarter of Mongolia's population lives in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Half of the people in Ulaanbaatar live in traditional tents with minimal supplies of water and electricity.

Geology bestowed similar mineral riches on Montana and Mongolia: copper, coal, molybdenum, and phosphates. In Montana, extracting those minerals has threatened the state's other natural wealth. Giant open pit mines, like Butte's abandoned copper mine—part of the largest Superfund site in the United States—have seriously degraded the water in downstream rivers (see state profile).

Proposals for new mining operations, including oil and gas exploration, conflict with wilderness values that underlie the growing tourism industry.

Meanwhile, Mongolia has only recently begun to exploit its coal and oil reserves in response to its rapid growth in energy consumption. Mining and industrial pressures on precious water resources and wilderness are just beginning to be recognized.

Responding to Challenges

Montana Partners in Flight is a broad-based coalition working to protect Montana's bird species and their habitats. Partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Audubon, the University of Montana, and the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes. By identifying priority species (such as the sage grouse) and priority habitats, the Partners will focus attention on protecting grasslands, wetlands, and other threatened habitats.

The United Nations Development Programme's Mongolia Biodiversity Project is a multipronged approach to helping Mongolia conserve its ecological wealth. This cooperative project involves numerous partners from

Mongolia and other nations, such as World Wildlife Fund Mongolia and the United Kingdom's Volunteer Services Overseas, which provide assistance in protected area planning, training, research, and other initiatives. The Mongolian government now con-

People in Montana and Mongolia, along with all other living creatures, need clean and healthy air, water, and land, and a stable climate. But as people strive to meet these fundamental needs and improve their lives, they make demands on Earth's resources—and leave footprints. No species demands as much and leaves as many footprints as humans do. The number of people on the planet has a direct impact on the environment and how resources are used. But the level of consumption and the ways in which natural resources are used also directly affect the health of the planet—locally, regionally, globally.

No matter where one lives, the activities of *all* humans will ultimately determine the well-being of *all* humans.

siders wetland conservation a national priority.

The United States is helping Mongolia to solve its own resource problems, both by funding certain United Nations programs and by the work of 58 U.S. Peace Corps volunteers assigned to important protected areas. ■

DEFINITIONS: **Doubling Time:** The number of years it will take for a population to double, assuming a *constant* rate of natural increase. **Average Number of Children Per Woman:** Known as the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) or the average number of children a woman would have in her lifetime, assuming that birth rates remained constant throughout her childbearing years. **Endangered Species:** Any species in danger of extinction throughout all, or a significant portion of its habitat. **Threatened Species:** Any species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all, or a significant portion of its habitat. **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** The value of all goods and services produced within a nation in a given year. **Gross State Product (GSP):** The value of all goods and services produced within a state. It is the state counterpart of the nation's GDP.

SOURCES: Major sources are International Labour Organization; National Center for Health Statistics; UNICEF; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Geological Survey; The World Conservation Union (IUCN); and World Resources Institute. For a complete list of sources, contact PRB.

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