



Demographics

The County of Huron is not only one of Ontario's most productive farming communities, but also a summertime retreat for thousands of visitors.

Located about three hours northwest of Toronto, Huron County covers 3,408 km² of mixed farming country in the lee of Lake Huron. Crossed by major rivers like the Maitland, the county boasts many scenic conservation areas and nature preserves. This link to water continues to have a profound influence on Huron's economy, social life and environment.

Farming and small-scale manufacturing dominated the economy upon early settlement and continue to do so today, with about one in five residents still counting farming as their occupation. Service and retail sectors also comprise a large portion of the economy, driven by tourism generated from Huron's many public beaches and spectacular sunsets. Other popular tourist attractions include the Blyth Festival Theatre, the designated historic main street (and shopping district) of Bayfield, the County Museum and Historic Gaol, and an extensive trail network enjoyed by walkers, hikers and snowmobilers.

In 2006, Huron County's population was estimated at 59,325 people by the Canadian Census, down 0.6% from 59,701 in 2001.¹ This decline is due to an aging population, a declining birth rate and the migration of younger people to larger cities.² The county includes nine local municipalities: Howick (population 3,882), North Huron (5,015), Morris-Turnberry (3,403), Huron East (9,310), Central Huron (7,641), Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (5,409), Goderich (7,563), Bluewater (7,210) and South Huron

(9,982). Bluewater, North Huron and Howick all experienced population growth between 2001 and 2006. The largest centre by population, and the county seat, is Goderich.

Huron County is one of Ontario's most rural counties with 60.4% of the population living in a non-urban areas and an overall population density of 17.5 people/km² (1).³

Typical of rural communities, Huron County exhibits a high dependency ratio. This means that the county has large populations of children, youth and seniors compared with a relatively smaller population of working-age persons. The age distribution, by gender, of Huron County is shown in **Figure 2**. As noted, almost half of the population is either ≤19 years (26%) or ≥65 years of age (18%). This higher proportion of children/youth and seniors becomes apparent upon comparison to the age distribution of Ontario, shown in **Figure 3**. This figure also demonstrates the lower proportion of residents aged 20-39 years in Huron County compared to Ontario. The majority of Huron County residents are

Map of the location of Huron County within Southwestern Ontario.



Canadian-born (92%) (3). Foreign-born Huron County residents were mainly from either the United Kingdom (22%) or the Netherlands (33%). English is the predominant first language (91%) in Huron County; although there are also large German (4%) and Dutch (3%) speaking communities.

1 Statistics Canada. 2006 Census. Accessed 10 July 2008 from www.statcan.ca.

2 Huron Business Development Corporation. 2005. State of the Economy Report. Accessed 10 July 2008 from http://www.huroncounty.ca/econdev/downloads/StateofHuronCountyEconomy05.pdf.

3 Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Accessed 10 July 2008 from www.statcan.ca.

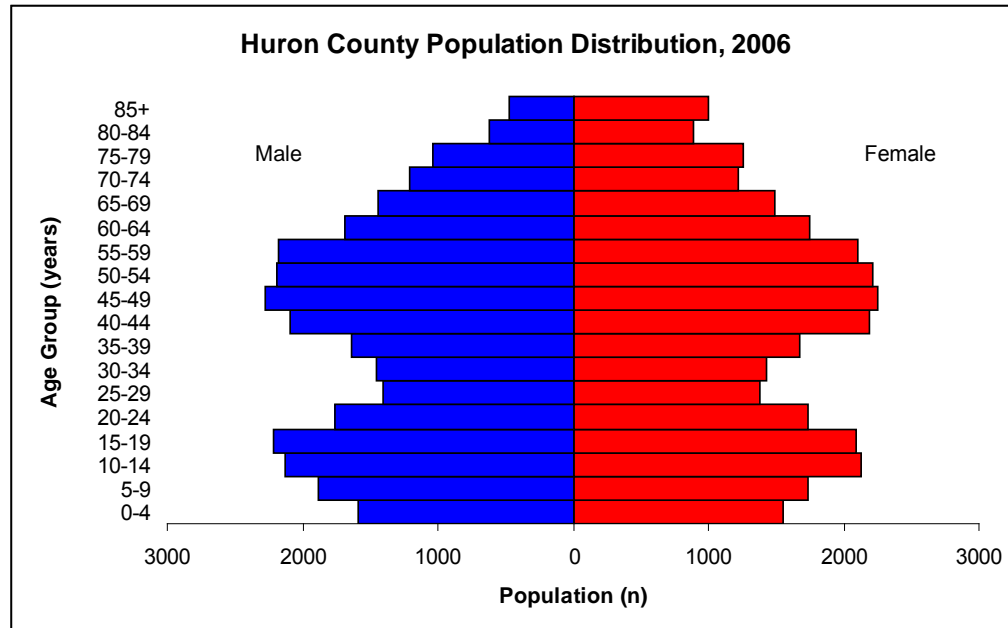


Figure 2. The age distribution of Huron County, by gender. Source: Statistics Canada, Census, 2006.

Figure 3. The age distribution of Ontario, by gender. Source: Statistics Canada, Census, 2006.

