

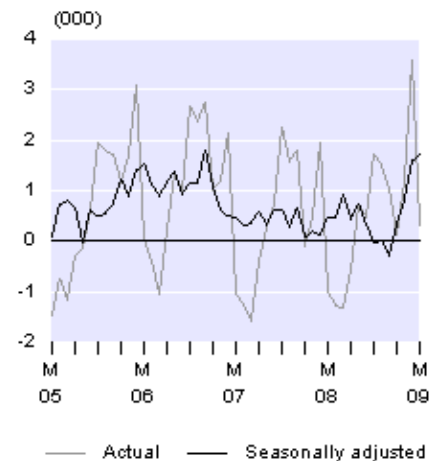
Embargoed until 10:45am – 21 April 2009

International Travel and Migration: March 2009

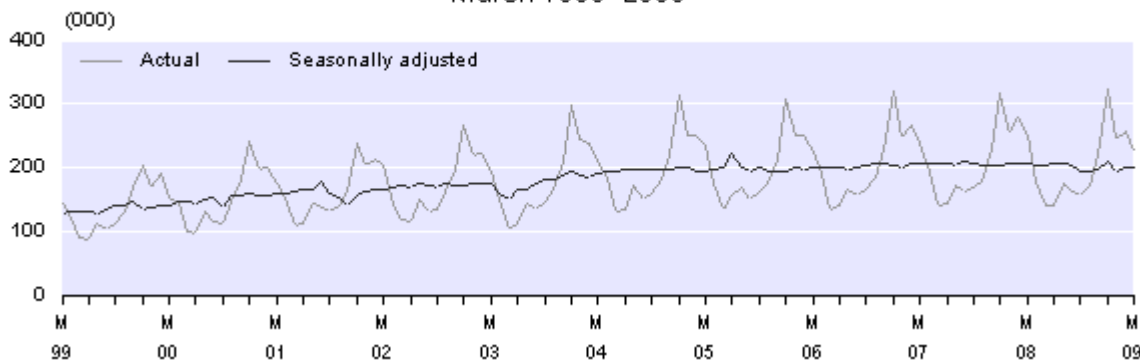
Highlights

- Visitor arrivals (226,500) were down 10 percent from March 2008 (250,800).
- There were fewer visitors from the United Kingdom (down 9,400), the United States (down 5,100), Australia (down 4,300), Japan (down 1,400) and Korea (down 1,300).
- New Zealand-resident departures (126,700) were down 6 percent from March 2008 (134,800).
- New Zealand residents departed on fewer trips to Fiji (down 2,000) and Australia (down 1,700).
- Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 1,700 on a seasonally adjusted basis.

Monthly Net Permanent and Long-term Migration
March 2005–09



Monthly Visitor Arrivals
March 1999–2009



Geoff Bascand
Government Statistician

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See also [International Travel and Migration: March 2009 – Media release](#).

Commentary

Visitor arrivals

Monthly visitor arrivals

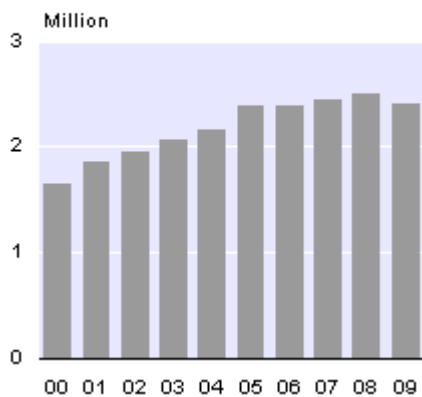
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 226,500 in March 2009, down 24,300 (10 percent) from March 2008 (250,800). This was the lowest visitor arrival total for a March month since 2004 (211,700). The shift in the timing of Easter, from March in 2008 to April in 2009, contributed to the drop. Visitor arrivals have now decreased for 10 out of the last 12 months, when compared with the same month of the previous year.

The estimated average number of visitors in New Zealand per day in March 2009 was 170,600, down 9 percent from the average of 187,100 in March 2008. Estimated numbers of visitors in the country are calculated from the date of arrival and intended length of stay of sampled visitor arrivals. The average intended stay of visitors who arrived in March 2009 was 18 days, down from 19 days in March 2008. The median (half stay shorter, and half stay longer than this duration) was 9 days, down from 10 days in March 2008.

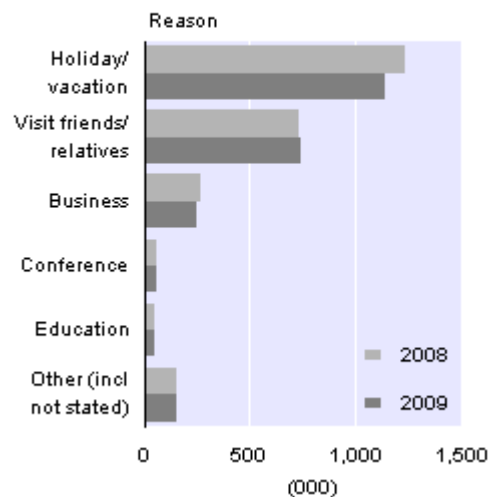
Annual visitor arrivals

During the March 2009 year, there were 2.401 million visitor arrivals, down 96,300 (4 percent) from the March 2008 year. A holiday was the main travel reason for 1.143 million visitors to New Zealand in the March 2009 year, down 85,800 (7 percent) from the previous year. Another 738,000 arrived to visit friends and relatives (up 10,000 or 1 percent), and 247,300 arrived for business (down 19,500 or 7 percent).

Annual Visitor Arrivals
Year ended March



Visitor Arrivals by Reason
Year ended March



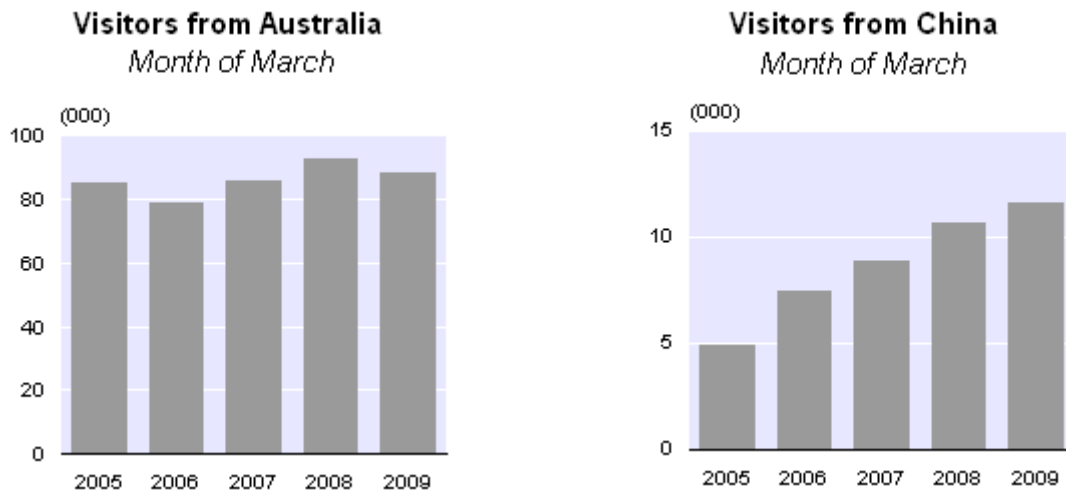
Note: Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly visitor arrival data, are available on the Statistics NZ website. This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on visitor arrivals from 10 major source countries.

Visitors by source country

In March 2009, there were fewer visitor arrivals from 8 of the top 10 source countries, including the United Kingdom (down 9,400 or 26 percent), the United States (down 5,100 or 20 percent), Australia (down 4,300 or 5 percent), Japan (down 1,400 or 12 percent), Korea (down 1,300 or 19 percent) and Canada (down 900 or 14 percent).

In contrast, visitor arrivals from China, the fourth largest source, were up 1,000 (9 percent). Holidaymakers from China were up by 2,100 compared with March 2008, but business travellers were down by 500. Arrivals to visit friends and relatives were unchanged.

The March increase in visitors from China follows a small gain in December 2008 (up 200) and a gain of 100 when January and February 2009 are combined to take account of Chinese New Year. These gains came after six months of decreases, between June and November 2008, following the large earthquake in May and the Olympic Games in August. During these six months, the number of business travellers and holidaymakers both dropped each month compared with the same month of the previous year. Business travellers have continued to drop each month since December 2008, but holidaymaker numbers have increased.



In the year ended March 2009 compared with the year ended March 2008, more visitors arrived from Oceania (up 18,400 or 2 percent) and from Africa and the Middle East (up 6,000 or 14 percent). Fewer visitors arrived from Asia (down 58,200 or 12 percent), Europe (down 29,300 or 6 percent) and the Americas (down 27,700 or 9 percent).

There were 975,900 visitor arrivals from Australia in the year ended March 2009, up 5,400 (1 percent) from the March 2008 year. More visitors were also recorded from Fiji (up 4,100 or 20 percent), South Africa (up 2,900 or 13 percent) and France (up 2,300 or 12 percent).

Fewer visitor arrivals were recorded from the United Kingdom (down 29,500 or 10 percent), the United States (down 26,100 or 12 percent), Korea (down 20,600 or 22 percent), Japan (down 19,700 or 17 percent) and China (down 10,900 or 9 percent) in the March 2009 year. After Australia, these five countries are New Zealand's largest sources of visitors. There were also fewer visitors from Taiwan (down 5,400 or 23 percent) in the March 2009 year.

Note: Detailed visitor data will be available in the March 2009 edition of *International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand*, which can be ordered on the [International visitor arrivals subscription page](#) on the Statistics NZ website.

New Zealand-resident departures

Monthly resident departures

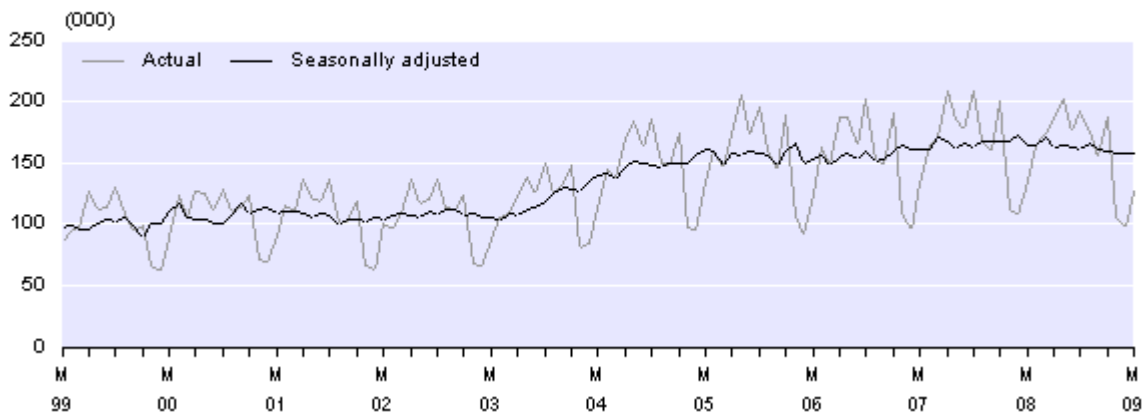
New Zealand residents departed on 126,700 short-term overseas trips in March 2009, down 8,100 (6 percent) from the 134,800 departures in March 2008. March 2009 is the fifth consecutive month in which New Zealand resident departures were lower than for the same month of the previous year.

In March 2009, there were fewer trips to Fiji (down 2,000 or 35 percent), Australia (down 1,700 or 2 percent) and the United Kingdom (down 1,000 or 19 percent).

The estimated average number of New Zealand residents who were temporarily overseas during March 2009 was 68,800 per day, down 3 percent from the average of 71,100 in March 2008. Estimates of the number of residents overseas are calculated from the date of departure and intended length of absence of sampled resident departures. The average intended absence of residents who departed in March 2009 was 20 days, up from 19 days in March 2008. The median was 9 days, unchanged from March 2008.

Monthly New Zealand Resident Short-term Departures

March 1999–2009



Annual resident departures

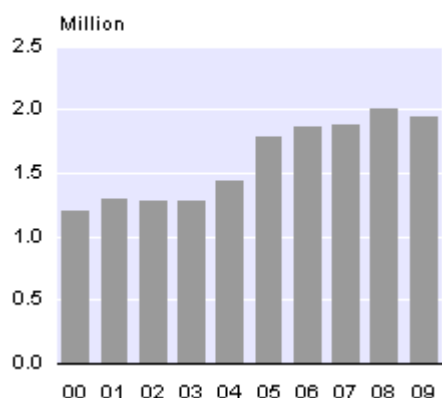
Short-term departures of New Zealand residents in the March 2009 year numbered 1.942 million, down 54,600 (3 percent) from the March 2008 year. There were fewer departures to Oceania (down 40,600 or 3 percent), Europe (down 10,000 or 6 percent) and Asia (down 4,300 or 2 percent). More resident departures were recorded to the Americas (up 2,600 or 2 percent) and to Africa and the Middle East (up 1,400 or 4 percent).

By country, trips to Australia (945,200), the most popular destination, were down 33,400 (3 percent) from the previous year. There were also fewer trips to France (down 5,100 or 27 percent), the United Kingdom (down 3,800 or 4 percent), Singapore (down 3,000 or 19 percent), Fiji (down 3,000 or 3 percent) and New Caledonia (down 2,800 or 26 percent). There were more trips to Samoa (up 1,800 or 5 percent).

A holiday was the main travel reason for 803,500 New Zealand residents who departed in the March 2009 year, down 40,900 (5 percent) from the previous year. Another 635,200 were departing to visit friends and relatives (up 10,100 or 2 percent). Departures for business purposes (271,600) were down 18,600 (6 percent) from the year ended March 2008.

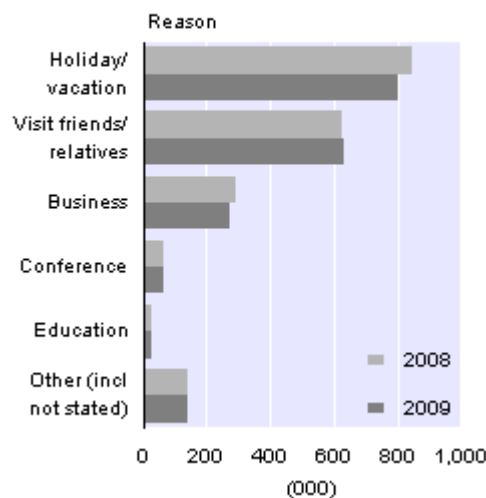
Annual Resident Departures

Year ended March



Resident Departures by Reason

Year ended March



Note: Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly resident departure data, are available on the Statistics NZ website. This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on resident departures to 10 major destination countries.

Permanent and long-term migration

Definition

Permanent and long-term (PLT) arrivals include people who arrive in New Zealand intending to stay for a period of 12 months or more (or permanently), plus New Zealand residents returning after an absence of 12 months or more. Included in the former group are people with New Zealand residency, as well as students and holders of work permits. PLT departures include New Zealand residents departing for an intended period of 12 months or more (or permanently), plus overseas visitors departing New Zealand after a stay of 12 months or more.

Monthly PLT migration

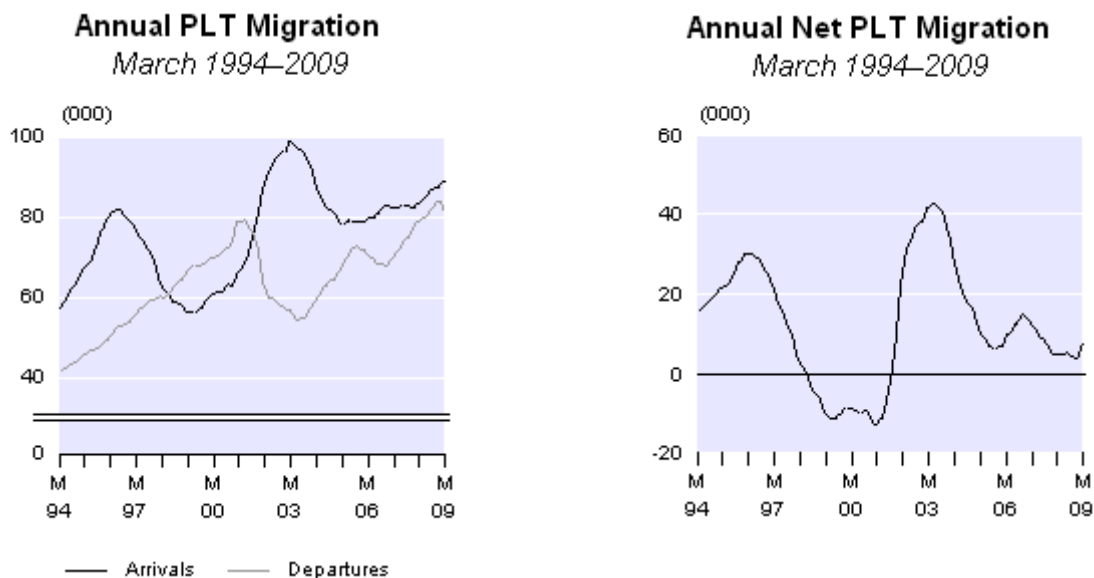
PLT arrivals exceeded departures by 300 in March 2009, compared with a net PLT outflow of 1,000 in March 2008. The increase was mainly due to 1,000 fewer PLT departures, including 800 fewer departures to Australia. PLT arrivals increased by 300, consisting of 200 more New Zealand citizen arrivals and 100 more non-New Zealand citizen arrivals. The increase in non-New Zealand citizens was helped by 200 more PLT arrivals on student permits in March 2009 compared with March 2008.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, PLT arrivals exceeded PLT departures by 1,700 in March 2009, up from 1,600 in February 2009 and 800 in January 2009.

In March 2009, there were net inflows of migrants from India (500) and China (300). There was a net outflow of 2,300 PLT migrants to Australia, down from the outflows of 3,100 in March 2008 and 2,800 in March 2007.

Annual PLT migration

In the year ended March 2009, there were 88,900 PLT arrivals, up 5,400 (6 percent) from the March 2008 year. Over the same period, there were 81,400 PLT departures, up 2,600 (3 percent). As a result, net PLT migration was 7,500 in the March 2009 year, up from 4,700 in the March 2008 year.



The net PLT migration gain of 7,500 in the year ended March 2009 is below the annual average of 11,400 recorded for the December years from 1990–2008. Net PLT migration varied substantially within this 19-year period. The net gain peaked at 30,200 in the April 1996 year and again at 42,500 in the May 2003 year. Net outflows were generally experienced during 1998–2001, with the highest being a net loss of 13,200 people in the February 2001 year.

Annual PLT migration by country

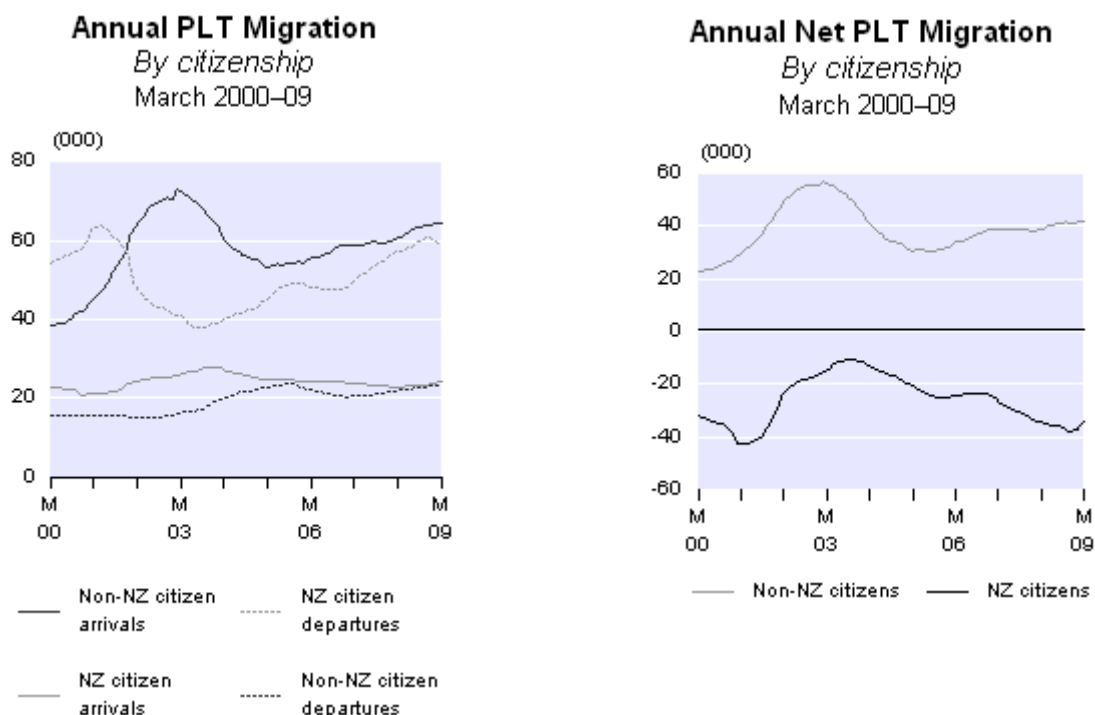
In the year ended March 2009, there was a net inflow of 8,300 migrants from the United Kingdom, up from 6,900 in the March 2008 year. The net inflow from India was 5,800, up from 4,200 in the March 2008 year and 2,500 in the March 2007 year. There were also net PLT inflows from the Philippines (3,500), China and Fiji (each 3,100), and South Africa (2,700).

The net PLT outflow to Australia was 33,600 in the March 2009 year. While this was above the net outflow of 29,900 in the March 2008 year, it was down from the record net outflows of 35,400 recorded in both the December 2008 and January 2009 years. The latest net outflow resulted from 46,700 PLT departures to Australia, partly offset by 13,100 PLT arrivals from Australia. Almost two-thirds of the PLT arrivals from Australia were New Zealand citizens (8,400), similar to levels observed over the past decade.

Annual PLT migration by citizenship

A net inflow of 41,400 non-New Zealand citizens and a net outflow of 34,000 New Zealand citizens were recorded in the year ended March 2009. The majority of the net outflow of New Zealand citizens was to Australia (33,400), followed by the United Arab Emirates (600) and Canada (400).

Compared with the March 2008 year, PLT arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens were up 4,000 and PLT arrivals of New Zealand citizens were up 1,400. There were 1,100 more PLT departures of New Zealand citizens and 1,400 more PLT departures of non-New Zealand citizens. Changes in non-New Zealand citizen departures are often related to changes in non-New Zealand citizen arrivals a few years earlier. Similarly, changes in New Zealand citizen arrivals are often related to changes in New Zealand citizen departures a few years earlier.



PLT migration by permit type

In the March 2009 year, 28,300 PLT arrivals were Australian or New Zealand citizens who did not require a permit to remain in New Zealand. Of PLT arrivals who did require a permit, 24,100 arrived on work permits, 16,100 arrived on student permits, 14,500 arrived on residence permits, and 5,400 arrived on visitor permits. Compared with the March 2008 year, there were more PLT arrivals on student permits (up 3,000) and work permits (up 2,200), but fewer arrivals on residence permits (down 700). The majority of residence approvals in recent years have been granted onshore, to people who arrived on other permit types.

Recent international travel and migration articles

Statistics NZ has recently released a number of articles on international travel and migration topics. These can be accessed on the [International travel and migration articles](#) page of the Statistics NZ website. The most recent releases are:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| April 2009 | <i>Visitors from the Americas</i> examines changes in the number of visitors from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Argentina and Chile between 1979 and 2008. |
| March 2009 | <i>Christmas travel 2008</i> examines travel to and from New Zealand around the peak Christmas period. |
| November 2008 | <i>Arrivals by permit type</i> introduces the newly available permit type data. It includes background notes about permit types, as well as data analysis. |

Infoshare and INFOS databases

Statistics NZ provides a free-of-charge online database, Infoshare (www.stats.govt.nz/infoshare) that gives access to a range of time-series data. Infoshare contains many international travel and migration data series, currently available through:

- International travel and migration (under Tourism on the Browse page)
- External migration (under Population on the Browse page).

The international travel and migration subject is under development, with most series now available. The remaining series will cover the number of international flights, New Zealand residents temporarily overseas, and visitors temporarily in New Zealand.

Statistics NZ is developing a communication plan to ensure users have adequate information and time to transition from the external migration subject to the international travel and migration subject, before the former becomes available later this year.

Quarterly seasonally adjusted series now available

Statistics NZ is now producing seasonally adjusted international travel and migration series on a quarterly basis, in addition to the monthly series already available. The quarterly series are available through the Infoshare database – consult the [Infoshare data changes webpage](#) for details. The series are also available through the INFOS database, with details available on the [INFOS database changes webpage](#).

The quarterly series are adjusted independently of the adjustments made to the monthly series. The actual monthly figures are summed into quarters and then seasonally adjusted. This gives slightly different results to summing the monthly seasonally adjusted figures. Also, extra adjustments for calendar effects differ between the monthly and quarterly seasonal adjustment processes. The extra adjustments made to the quarterly series are:

- permanent and long-term arrivals: no additional adjustments
- permanent and long-term departures: no additional adjustments
- visitor arrivals: Easter, June/July school holidays
- visitor departures: Easter, September/October school holidays
- New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals: September/October school holidays
- New Zealand-resident traveller departures: Easter, April/May school holidays, June/July school holidays
- all composite series (total arrivals, total departures, total passenger movements, net permanent and long-term migration) are a combination of the series above.

The extra adjustments for calendar effects made to the monthly seasonally adjusted series are detailed in the technical notes of this release. The extra adjustments were introduced in March 2009, as a key part of an improved seasonal adjustment process for international travel and migration data. The improvements result in less volatile seasonally adjusted series, which has also allowed monthly trend series to be published.

Further information about the changes to International Travel and Migration series can be obtained from the contacts below. More information about the seasonal adjustment process in general is available on the Statistics NZ website:

<http://www.stats.govt.nz/statistical-methods/data-analysis/seasonal-adjustment/welcome.htm>.

Tourism and Migration tables

As previously advised, Statistics NZ will no longer publish the annual Tourism and Migration tables produced since 2000. The detailed international travel and migration data is now freely available through the Infoshare database.

In addition to data from the international travel and migration dataset, the following data were included in the tables, with alternative sources noted:

- forecasts of visitors arrivals, available on the [Ministry of Tourism's research website](#)
- residence approvals, work permits and student permits, available on the [statistics page of the Immigration New Zealand website](#)
- citizenship approvals, available in the New Zealand Official Yearbook which is published every second year by Statistics NZ
- the birthplace of New Zealand residents, and internal migration within New Zealand, both sourced from Statistics NZ's [2006 Census of Population and Dwellings](#)
- the projected population of New Zealand, from Statistics NZ's [national population projections](#)

For technical information contact:

Nick Thomson or Ian Richards

Christchurch 03 964 8700

Email: demography@stats.govt.nz

Next release ...

International Travel and Migration: April 2009 will be released on 21 May 2009.

Technical notes

Nature of data

The statistics in this release are based on final international travel and migration counts. They relate to the number of passenger movements, rather than to the number of people – that is, the multiple movements of individual people during a given reference period are each counted separately.

Changes in passenger type

In the preparation of international travel and migration statistics, the passenger type (overseas visitor, New Zealand-resident traveller, or permanent and long-term (PLT) migrant) is primarily determined by the passenger's response, on the arrival or departure card, to the questions on where they live and their length of stay or absence. If the person's intention changes later during the trip, this passenger type may no longer be correct. For example, a person may come to New Zealand with the declared intention of settling permanently (PLT migrant), but in fact may return overseas after a few months (overseas visitor). Data users should recognise the limitations inherent in the information supplied by travellers.

Sampling accuracy

The statistics for short-term passenger movements by country (that is, overseas visitor arrivals by country of last permanent residence and New Zealand-resident departures by country of main destination) are derived from a systematic random sample taken each month from arrival and departure cards, and are therefore subject to sampling errors. However, total counts for arrivals and departures of overseas visitors and New Zealand residents are actual counts, which are not subject to sampling errors. Figures for PLT arrivals and departures are also actual counts and have no sampling errors.

Infoshare and INFOS databases

All data in the Hot Off The Press tables are available through the Infoshare database (www.stats.govt.nz/infoshare), a free-of-charge online tool that gives you access to a range of time-series data. International travel and migration data are currently available through two subjects within Infoshare:

- International travel and migration (under Tourism on the Browse page)
- External migration (under Population on the Browse page).

The international travel and migration subject is under development, with more detailed cross-tabulations being progressively added. This will eventually replace the external migration subject, but both will remain available until development of the international travel and migration subject is complete.

Both subjects are also available in the INFOS database (for subscribers only). Where feasible, INFOS series identifiers are shown in the Hot Off The Press tables.

New Zealand-resident short-term departures

The commentaries relating to New Zealand-resident short-term departures are based on data for the country of main destination – that is, the country where each departing person intended to spend most of their time while away from New Zealand.

Seasonally adjusted and trend series

The purpose of seasonally adjusting a time series is to measure and remove the varying seasonal components in the series (for example, there are more visitor arrivals during the New Zealand summer, due to the warmer weather and longer daylight hours). This makes the data for adjacent months more comparable.

An improved seasonal adjustment process was adopted in March 2009. The new process continues to use Statistics NZ's standard seasonal adjustment package, X-12-ARIMA, but incorporates enhancements which allow the specification and adjustment of additional calendar effects. These include the number and type of trading days in the month (as more people generally arrive and depart on Friday, Saturday and Sunday), and holiday periods which have important effects on travel but in different months each year (eg Easter can be in March or April). The additional adjustments for the monthly seasonally adjusted series are:

- permanent and long-term arrivals: no additional adjustments
- permanent and long-term departures: no additional adjustments
- visitor arrivals: Chinese New Year, Easter, April/May school holidays, June/July school holidays, daily trading day
- visitor departures: Chinese New Year, Easter, September/October school holidays
- New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals: Easter, April/May school holidays, September/October school holidays, weekday/weekend trading day
- New Zealand-resident traveller departures: Chinese New Year, Easter, April/May school holidays, June/July school holidays, September/October school holidays, weekday/weekend trading day
- all composite series (total arrivals, total departures, total passenger movements, net permanent and long-term migration) are a combination of the series above.

Quarterly seasonally adjusted series were introduced in April 2009. The quarterly series are adjusted independently of the adjustments made to the monthly series. Hence, quarterly figures may not equal the sum of monthly seasonally adjusted figures. The additional adjustments made to the quarterly series are:

- permanent and long-term arrivals: no additional adjustments
- permanent and long-term departures: no additional adjustments
- visitor arrivals: Easter, June/July school holidays
- visitor departures: Easter, September/October school holidays
- New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals: September/October school holidays
- New Zealand-resident traveller departures: Easter, April/May school holidays, June/July school holidays
- all composite series (total arrivals, total departures, total passenger movements, net permanent and long-term migration) are a combination of the series above.

Seasonally adjusted and trend data back to January 1996 are subject to revision each month. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the months immediately prior to the current month. Data before January 1996 is not revised. This cut-off is used because of the change to a four-term school year in 1996, which resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand-resident arrivals and departures series.

Permit type

With the exception of New Zealand citizens, Australian citizens and a small number of other people exempt under the Immigration Act 1987, everyone entering New Zealand is required to obtain a permit to remain in New Zealand. People already in New Zealand can apply for a permit renewal or a new permit of a different type. However, Statistics NZ only holds data on the permit type that an individual was given on arrival.

The determination of passenger type (as an overseas visitor, New Zealand-resident traveller or PLT migrant) by Statistics NZ is independent of the permit type a person holds. Passenger type is based on the time spent in and out of New Zealand, determined from past arrivals and departures of a person and responses to questions on the arrival or departure card.

Permit type data is available from July 2003 for arrivals of short-term overseas visitors and PLT migrants. It is not available for arrivals of short-term New Zealand-resident travellers or for departures of any passenger type.

Processing system

The current international travel and migration processing system, which incorporates scanning and image recognition technology, was first used to process the June 2004 arrival and departure cards. The determination of passenger type (overseas visitor, New Zealand-resident traveller or PLT migrant) and capture of the information required for the sample are done automatically for the majority of the cards. Operator intervention is only required for approximately one-tenth of the cards. The system is used only for the production of statistics.

Users should be aware of the changes to the processing system when comparing data for June 2004 onwards with data for earlier periods.

More information

For more information, follow the [link](#) from the technical notes of this release on the Statistics NZ website.

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Timing

Timed statistical releases are delivered using postal and electronic services provided by third parties. Delivery of these releases may be delayed by circumstances outside the control of Statistics NZ. Statistics NZ accepts no responsibility for any such delays.

Tables

The following tables are printed with this Hot Off The Press and can also be downloaded from the Statistics New Zealand website in Excel format. If you do not have access to Excel, you may use the [Excel file viewer](#) to view, print and export the contents of the file.

1. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, actual counts
2. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, seasonally adjusted and trend series
3. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
4. Short-term New Zealand-resident traveller departures, by country of main destination
5. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
6. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
7. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence
8. Permanent and long-term migration, by country of citizenship