

US in the WORLD

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE A HEALTHY PLANET



Largest metropolitan areas by population (1998): Little Rock-North Little Rock (556,295), Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers (272,616), Fort Smith (194,045)



Arkansas
Area: 53,182 sq. miles
Population: 2.6 million

Myanmar
Area: 261,228 sq. miles
Population: 48.9 million

Myanmar



Largest urban area by population (2000): Yangon (Rangoon) (4,196,000)

Rich mineral deposits and fertile lowlands offer Arkansas and Myanmar the potential for substantial long-term increases in exports, income, and living standards. This opportunity, however, is threatened by air and water pollution; wetland loss; and in the case of Myanmar, overexploitation of natural resources.

The geography of both places ranges from rugged mountains to fertile lowlands. The Ozark Plateau and the Ouachita Province cover the interior of Arkansas, with the Gulf Coastal Plain extending on the east and south. In Myanmar, mountains rise to the east and west of central lowlands.

In Arkansas and in Myanmar, mineral exploitation helps meet domestic needs and provides exports. Arkansas has petrol and gas reserves and is the world leader in the extraction of bromine, a product similar to chlorine

used in dyes. The state also is a leader in U.S. bauxite production and diamond extraction. Myanmar has rich deposits of petrol, tin, tungsten, copper, and precious gems. Despite this mineral wealth, agriculture is the major income earner in both locations.

Although agriculture employs only 6 percent of Arkansas' labor force, the state is an important producer of rice, poultry, cotton, soybeans, and cattle. Dependence on irrigation, which accounts for almost three-quarters of the water used, could threaten agriculture because waterways are becoming polluted and wetlands are rapidly disappearing. Arkansas has lost 72 percent of its original wetlands area during the past 200 years, making it one of 10 states whose loss has exceeded 70 percent. In addition, 20 animal and six plant species are listed as threatened or endangered. What makes the state's

habitat loss even more critical is that high percentages of many of these species are found only in the Ouachita mountains.

Despite the natural riches of their home state, 18 percent of Arkansans still live below the poverty level, and the infant death rate is well over the national average. In addition, 28 of Arkansas' 75 counties—primarily in rural areas along the Mississippi River or on the Louisiana border—have lost population since 1990. These factors explain the state's relatively low population growth rate. Low growth and residents' increased awareness of environmental issues improve the likelihood of success of state policies to ensure more sustainable use of natural resources.

Myanmar's economy also relies heavily on agriculture. Three-quarters of the population lives in rural areas,

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ARKANSAS

Demographic and Health Trends

■ Between 1990 and 1999, Arkansas has grown by 9 percent—slightly slower than the nation as a whole, and noticeably slower than the 13 percent growth rate for the South over the same period.

■ Arkansas has grown by 201,000 people since the 1990 census. Of that

total, 111,000 people are the result of net migration from other states, with an additional 85,000 the result of excess births over deaths.

■ Arkansas has the second highest percentage of live births to women under the age of 20 (19.2 percent) of any state, significantly higher than the national average of 12.7 percent.

Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

■ According to the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, Arkansans recycled 750,000 tons of solid waste output in 1997. That translates into a savings of \$18.7 million in landfill disposal costs.

■ The bald eagle, the red-cockaded woodpecker, and the Ozark big-eared bat are among Arkansas' 20 endangered or threatened animals. The eastern prairie fringed orchid and the Missouri bladderpod are among the state's six endangered or threatened plants. There is concern about potential overharvesting of ginseng, an

herb that has become a popular dietary supplement, in the Ozark National Forest; the U.S. Forest Service has banned ginseng harvesting there through 2005.

■ In 1999, the four-county area around Little Rock had ozone levels of 0.09 parts per million, putting the region in danger of exceeding three-year-average limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Allowing ozone levels to exceed these limits would trigger industrial sanctions.

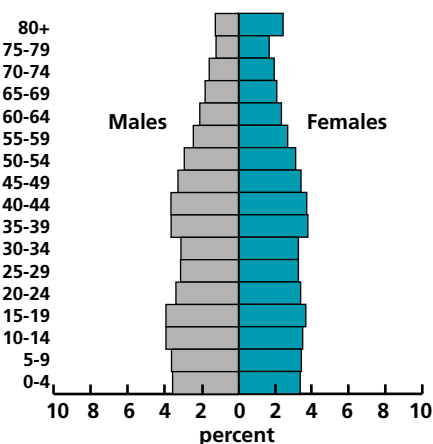
Socioeconomic Issues

■ Since 1990, income and employment in Arkansas have grown by 15 percent. The state leads the nation in poultry and rice production and is a top grower of other agricultural commodities. Tourism also has increased in recent years.

■ Arkansas' median household income was \$27,400 in 1996—one of the lowest in the country and 23 percent below the national average.

■ Nearly 18 percent of Arkansans were poor in 1996. In two Mississippi Delta counties (Lee and Phillips), the poverty rate was over 40 percent.

POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

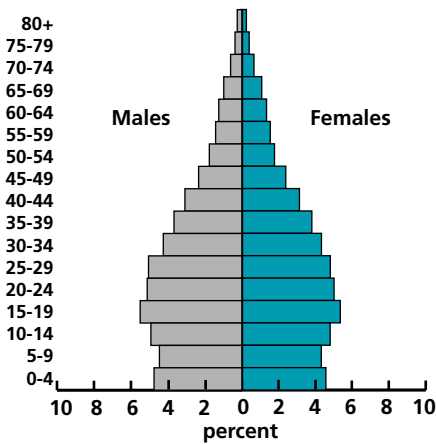


ARKANSAS FACTS

Population, 1999: 2.6 million
Projected population, 2025: 3.1 million
Annual growth rate: 0.5%
Doubling time (at current rate): 140 years
Average number of children per woman: 2.1
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 8.7
Life expectancy: 71 (male), 78 (female)
Persons per square mile: 49
Percent urban: 54
Endangered/threatened animals: 20 species
Endangered/threatened plants: 6 species
Percent of land protected: 2
Wetlands loss, 1780-1980: 72%
Daily water use per capita: 3,530 gallons
Water use for domestic purposes: 6%
Water use for agriculture: 72%
Water use for industry: 2%
Water use for energy production: 20%
Cropland per capita: 7.5 acres
Energy use per capita: 70.4 barrels of oil equiv.
Persons per motor vehicle: 1.4
Adults who are high school graduates: 79%
Elected officials who are women: 15%
Labor force in agriculture: 6%
Labor force in industry: 25%
Labor force in services: 69%
Gross State Product, 1997: \$23,180 per capita

MYANMAR

POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX



MYANMAR FACTS

Population, 2000:	48.9 million
Projected population, 2025:	68.1 million
Annual growth rate:	1.8%
Doubling time (at current rate):	38 years
Average number of children per woman:	3.8
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births:	83
Life expectancy:	53 (male), 56 (female)
Persons per square mile:	187
Percent urban:	26
Threatened animals:	98 species
Threatened plants:	29 species
Percent of land protected:	0.3
Wetlands loss, through 1980s:	98%
Percent with access to safe water:	60
Percent with adequate sanitation:	43
Daily water use per capita:	73 gallons
Water use for domestic purposes:	7%
Water use for agriculture:	90%
Water use for industry:	3%
Cropland per capita:	0.6 acres
Energy use per capita:	0.4 barrels of oil equiv.
Persons per motor vehicle:	1,000
Percent of girls in secondary school:	30
Percent of boys in secondary school:	29
Women as % of national legislature:	n.a.
Labor force in agriculture:	73%
Labor force in industry:	10%
Labor force in services:	17%
GDP per capita, 1998:	n.a.

Demographic and Health Trends

- Myanmar's population grew from 17.8 million in 1950 to 27.1 million in 1970, then further to 40.5 million in 1990, and is nearing 50 million today. The country's 2025 population is projected to reach 68 million.
- Birth rates have declined in Myanmar from six children per woman in the 1950s to about four today. Still, because of a large young population (see graph at left), there

will be continued population growth when these youths become parents.

- One in every 12 infants born in Myanmar does not survive one year of life. The country's infant mortality rate is 80 percent higher than the average for Southeast Asia. Today, 85 percent or more of 1-year-olds are immunized against measles, polio, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus; 91 percent are immunized against tuberculosis.

Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

- Myanmar supports 7,000 known species of higher plants; 867 known species of birds; and 251 known species of mammals. Threatened species in Myanmar include a number of species found only in Myanmar such as the Arakan forest turtle, the flatback tortoise, and the white-browed nuthatch.

two-thirds of the country's moist tropical forests have been destroyed by timber harvesting, shifting cultivation, and natural fires.

- Roughly 3 percent of Myanmar's total forest area is protected. Over

- Commercial energy use has increased 43 percent since 1985, while traditional fuel use has increased 24 percent. With more energy use usually comes an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming.

Socioeconomic Issues

- Official development assistance amounts to US\$1 per person annually in Myanmar.
- Between 1980 and 1995, the gap in adult literacy between men and women declined from 20 percentage points to 10; 88 percent of men and 78 percent of women can read and

write. Political turmoil has affected literacy campaigns, however, and it is probable that functional literacy is lower than official figures.

- One-quarter of children ages 10 to 14 are in the labor force in addition to those engaged in agricultural or household work with their families.

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and over half the labor force is employed in agriculture, a sector that provides more than 60 percent of the gross national product. The country is a large sugarcane and corn producer, and it also exports rice, but, as in Arkansas, agricultural abundance does not ensure a high standard of living for all. Malnutrition is soaring, and the infant death rate is 10 times higher than in Arkansas. Myanmar faces a daunting challenge to improve the situation, given its high population growth rate and the short-term policies adopted by its government regarding the use of natural resources.

Despite the overwhelming victory of pro-democracy forces in elections held in 1990, a military regime remains in power in Myanmar. This regime has implemented various measures favoring short-term economic returns over sustainability. It has allowed foreign loggers to strip forests, especially for teak, at a rate higher than in the Amazon Basin; allowed foreign trawlers to deplete fish stocks; and encouraged farmers to favor immediate high yields over sustainable harvesting methods such as crop rotation. Likewise, mining, oil, and gas operations have been

rapidly expanded without regard for environmental impact.

Responding to Challenges

In Arkansas, The Nature Conservancy has launched the Alluvial Plain Ecosystem Initiative to address the loss of habitat and biodiversity, reduce toxic contamination, and improve flood control. The project brings together private landowners, foundations, corporations, public agencies, and the University of Arkansas to restore a corridor of forested wetlands along the Mississippi River.

In 1990, a National Commission for Environmental Affairs was created in Myanmar to advise the government on environmental policies and promote environmentally sustainable development. Even though there has never been a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer program in Myanmar, the government has secured the sup-

port of the U.S.-based Wildlife Conservation Society and the Smithsonian Institution. These two institutions are helping to ensure the protection of several endangered species in Myanmar through the creation of wildlife reserves, one of which will be the largest

People in Arkansas and Myanmar, 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.

in the world. This initiative, however, has been criticized because it entails the forced displacement of specific minority groups and because its central aim is seen as generating tourist dollars. ■

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. **Commercial energy** includes energy from solid, liquid, and gaseous fuels, plus primary electricity. **Traditional energy** includes fuelwood, charcoal, bagasse, and animal and vegetal wastes.

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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