

US in the WORLD

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE A HEALTHY PLANET

Colorado



Colorado
Area: 104,091 sq. miles
Population: 3.9 million

Nepal
Area: 54,362 sq. miles
Population: 22.6 million

Largest metropolitan areas by population (1996): Denver (1,866,978), Colorado Springs (472,924), Boulder-Longmont (258,234)

Nepal



Largest urban areas by population (1993): Kathmandu (535,000), Biratnagar (132,000), Lalitpur (190,000)

When outdoor enthusiasts look for mountain adventure, Colorado and Nepal are two of the most popular spots for visitors from all over the world. If “Top of the Nation” describes Colorado, with the highest elevation of any U.S. state and 54 peaks over 14,000 feet, then “Top of the World” aptly describes Nepal, home to eight of the world’s 10 highest mountains, including the 29,030-foot Mt. Everest. Sharing similar mountain terrain, however, means also sharing the challenge of managing mountain ecosystems in the face of rapid development. Today, both Colorado and Nepal must balance the needs of expanding populations and growing economies with the need to protect the environmental resource base upon which these populations and economies depend.

More than 80 percent of Colorado’s population resides along the Front Range, which contains four of the

nation’s 10 fastest growing counties. Nepal’s total population has doubled in the past 20 years; the urban population has more than quadrupled. Nepal’s Kathmandu Valley, the country’s largest urban area, like Colorado’s Front Range, is experiencing air and water pollution from automobile emissions and industrial wastes.

The development of alternative energy sources concerns both areas. In Colorado, ozone levels often exceed safe levels. In Nepal, the dependence on wood for fuel contributes to deforestation.

Economically, however, the areas are very different. Most of Colorado’s labor force is employed in the service sector, with recreation and tourism contributing over \$7 billion annually to the state’s economy. Most of Nepal’s labor force is engaged in subsistence agriculture, but a significant and growing number of workers are employed in the

rapidly growing service economy created by tourism. Earnings from tourists—many of whom visit Nepal for trekking excursions and other adventure travel—is the country’s main source of foreign exchange.

Nepal has half the area of Colorado, but six times its population. Both places are growing at the same rate of about 2 percent per year. But while most of Colorado’s growth is due to migration from other states, Nepal’s growth is attributable to high but declining birth rates.

Unlike Colorado, Nepal is one of the poorest nations in the world. Its farmers live on marginal land, eking out a minimal existence and taxing natural resources. The burgeoning tourism industry—Nepal expects nearly 1 million visitors annually by 2000—adds even more environmental stress.

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COLORADO

Demographic and Health Trends

■ During the 1990s, Colorado's population increased 18 percent—from 3.3 million in 1990 to 3.9 million in 1997. This was more than twice the U.S. rate, making Colorado one of the country's fastest growing states.

■ Between 1990 and 1997, net migration accounted for 62 percent of Colorado's growth. Most migrants come from other states; only 13 percent come from other countries.

■ With just 10 percent of its population ages 65 and older, Colorado has one of the lowest proportions of older people in the United States. Its

share of this population group, however, is likely to double by 2025 as the baby-boom generation ages.

■ Population growth in the Front Range area of northern Colorado has expanded Denver's metropolitan area by 15 percent between 1990 and 1996. Most of the growth was concentrated in the suburbs. The areas surrounding Colorado Springs and Fort Collins are also growing rapidly.

■ The Western Slope is the state's fastest growing region because of the construction of vacation homes and resort facilities and the creation of construction and service jobs.

Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

■ The high population growth around Colorado's Front Range has contributed to frequent temperature inversions, leading to poor air quality in these areas during cold weather months.

■ Colorado's mountains form the headwaters for four major rivers—the Colorado, the Rio Grande, the Arkansas, and the Platte. In addition to serving the needs of Colorado residents, at least six other states have claims to Colorado's water.

■ Colorado has taken aggressive measures to improve air quality and maintain its already high water quality. Still, with Colorado's population expected to grow to 5.2 million by

2025, resource use will be a major issue in the future.

■ Colorado is losing 90,000 acres of rural land each year to subdivisions, malls, and other development.

■ The Colorado areas that do not meet federal clean air standards are Aspen, Cañon City, Colorado Springs, Denver–Boulder, Fort Collins, Lamar, Longmont, Pagosa Springs, Steamboat Springs, and Telluride.

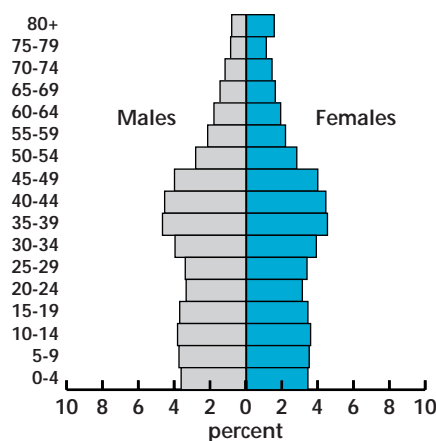
■ Colorado's endangered and threatened species include the Canada lynx, bald eagle, American peregrine falcon, blackfooted ferret, and two species of cacti.

Socioeconomic Factors

■ Tourism is one of the state's largest industries, generating more than \$7 billion annually and employing more than 115,000 people in 1994.

■ In 1996, more than 30 percent of adults ages 25 and older in Colorado had a bachelor's degree or higher. This was one of the highest rates in the United States.

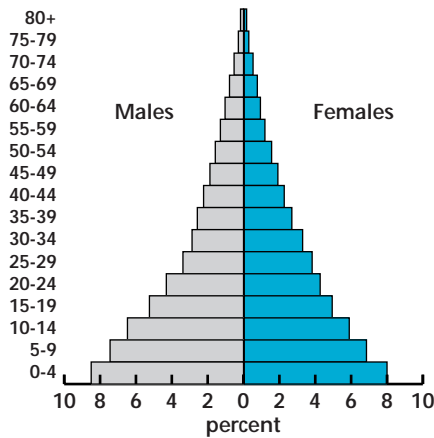
POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX



COLORADO FACTS

Population, 1997:	3.9 million
Projected population, 2025:	5.2 million
Annual growth rate:	2.0%
Doubling time (at current rate):	35 years
Average number of children per woman:	2.0
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births:	6.5
Life expectancy:	74 (male), 80 (female)
Persons per square mile:	38
Percent urban:	82
Endangered/threatened animals:	17 species
Endangered/threatened plants:	12 species
Percent of land protected:	6
Wetlands loss, 1780-1980:	50%
Daily water use per capita:	3,685 gallons
Water use for domestic purposes:	5%
Water use for agriculture:	92%
Water use for industry:	1%
Water use for energy production:	1%
Cropland per capita:	14.8 acres
Energy use per capita:	49.5 barrels of oil equiv.
Persons per motor vehicle:	1.3
Adults who are high school graduates:	89%
Elected officials who are women:	35%
Labor force in agriculture:	3%
Labor force in industry:	16%
Labor force in services:	81%
Gross State Product, 1994:	\$27,239 per capita

POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX



NEPAL FACTS

Population, 1997:	22.6 million
Projected population, 2025:	41.4 million
Annual growth rate:	2.4%
Doubling time (at current rate):	29 years
Average number of children per woman:	4.6
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births:	79
Life expectancy:	53 (male), 54 (female)
Persons per square mile:	429
Percent urban:	10
Threatened animals:	61 species
Threatened plants:	21 species
Percent of land protected:	7.9
Wetlands loss, through 1980s:	n.a.
Percent with access to safe water:	63
Percent with adequate sanitation:	18
Daily water use per capita:	108 gallons
Water use for domestic purposes:	4%
Water use for agriculture:	95%
Water use for industry:	1%
Cropland per capita:	0.3 acres
Energy use per capita:	0.2 barrels of oil equiv.
Persons per motor vehicle:	n.a.
Percent of girls in secondary school:	23
Percent of boys in secondary school:	46
Women as % of national legislature:	5
Labor force in agriculture:	95%
Labor force in industry:	0%
Labor force in services:	n.a.
GDP per capita, 1995:	US\$187

Demographic and Health Trends

- Between 1991 and 1997, Nepal's population increased by 22 percent. At 2.3 percent, the country's annual growth is above the average for developing countries.
- Nearly all of Nepal's population growth is a result of high birth rates.
- More than 40 percent of the population is under age 15. A large share of resources is used to meet the basic health, nutrition, and education needs of these children.
- Nepal's maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world. For every 100,000 births, 1,500 women die of pregnancy or childbirth-related causes.
- Nepal's urban growth rate peaked in the 1980s, yet the country remains one of the most rural in the world. The high densities in the country's large urban centers have led to more intense human settlement and environmental problems.

Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

- Deforestation, development of the Himalayas, and other activities such as road and bridge construction contribute to soil erosion—Nepal's greatest environmental problem. Soil erosion severely affects agriculture.
- Nepal's forests are cleared to meet the agricultural needs of its growing population. Forests are also degraded by overgrazing and cutting fuelwood that supplies up to 90 percent of the country's energy needs. Deforestation reduced Nepal's forests acreage by 5 percent between 1990 and 1995 alone.
- Industries in Nepal discharge toxic compounds directly into rivers. In the Kathmandu Valley, these pollutants include raw sewage, hospital wastes, acid, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers.
- Agriculture dominates Nepal's economy, yet food production has not kept pace with population growth.
- Nepal's 61 threatened animals include the snow leopard and red panda.

Socioeconomic Factors

- About half of the economically active population is unemployed part of the year. Jobs for full-time, seasonal workers, and for the projected growing population of working ages, will need to be created.
- Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries. At least 50 percent of the population lives in absolute poverty.
- Tourism is Nepal's main source of foreign exchange. In 1993, earnings from tourism generated US\$66.3 million in foreign exchange. Rising tourism has created a large service economy in Kathmandu, the nation's capital.

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Yet both areas have projects designed to address the demographic, socioeconomic, and natural resource challenges in their communities.

Responding to Challenges

One such project is the Colorado Front Range Ecosystem Management Research and Demonstration Project. Funded by the U.S. Forest Service, it addresses factors contributing to the decline in the health of the Front Range ecosystem and assesses the ability of land managers to deal with them. Project participants include Colorado State University and the Arapaho, Roosevelt, Pike, and San Isabel national forests. Because of the complex nature of land ownership and management, and of regulatory responsibilities, plans are in place to develop partnerships at the local, county, state, and federal levels.

In Nepal, more than 40,000 tourists each year hike in the Annapurna range of the Himalayas. While the Nepalese government is working to integrate tourism into the country's development policy, the increasing number of tourists exacerbates existing environmental problems as tourists compete with residents for resources. To protect the environment, raise the living stan-

dards of local people, and develop an environmentally friendly tourism program, King Mahendra's Trust for Nature Conservation, a local nongovernmental organization (NGO), started the Annapurna Conservation Area Project. The project funds environmental protection and community development activities including reforestation, energy conservation, and management training for local villagers. Sources of project funding include fees from tourists and the World Wildlife Fund.

Similar projects are evident in other parts of Nepal. Local communities, the Nepalese government, international development agencies, lending institutions, and a variety of international NGOs often support such projects. In recent years, the U.S. Agency for International Development has provided Nepal with an average of \$15 million per year. This assistance supports agriculture, health, education, family planning, and other programs.

The Peace Corps, which has provided technical assistance to Nepal for 34 years, had 145 volunteers working there in 1997. U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations working in Nepal include the Mountain Institute, CARE, and the Sagarmatha Environ-

People in Colorado and Nepal, 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.

mental Expedition (the last works to remove trash from Mt. Everest). ■

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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