

# US in the WORLD

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE A HEALTHY PLANET

## Oregon



Comparison at same scale

**Oregon**  
Area: 97,073 sq. miles  
Population: 3.2 million

**Costa Rica**  
Area: 19,730 sq. miles  
Population: 3.5 million

**Largest metropolitan areas by population (1996):**  
Portland-Vancouver (1,758,937), Salem (319,420), Eugene-Springfield (306,862)

## Costa Rica



**Largest urban areas by population (1994):** San Jose (1,186,417), Cartago (117,004)

Oregon and Costa Rica share a record of impressive environmental achievement. Oregon's reliance on renewable energy sources (the greatest of any state) and Portland's precedent-setting controls on urban sprawl contribute to the state's reputation for high quality of life. Costa Rica protects some 13 percent of its territory in parks and preserves, including high-altitude forests that have attracted ecotourists for decades.

Oregon and Costa Rica are strikingly similar in other ways also. They are nearly equal in population size, although Costa Rica is settled five times more densely. Both feature Pacific coastlines, mountain ranges, and agricultural lands. Oregon's old-growth forest and Costa Rica's high-altitude rain forests are both prized by ecologists; with their variety of ecosystems, each is home to an unusual

number and variety of plant and animal species.

Costa Rica's high literacy rate, low infant mortality, and high life expectancy, like Oregon's, distinguish it from its neighbors. Some differences, however, present distinct challenges to each region. Oregonians have more than eight times the wealth, per person, of Costa Rica. This wealth promotes high consumption and consequently high per capita levels of emissions of pollutants such as greenhouse gasses. Per person, Oregonians use 19 times as much energy and operate 25 times as many motor vehicles than Costa Ricans. Their growing populations present challenges for managing their cities and balancing the use and preservation of forested lands and rivers.

Costa Rica's population is growing at 2 percent annually, partly because of immigration from its poorer neighbors. More than one-half of Costa Rica's

people are crowded into 6 percent of its land in San José and its metropolitan area. In the 1970s, before anticipated job opportunities brought migrants to the city, 70 percent of the land around San José was agricultural. When a slumping economy helped to reverse the migration in the early 1980s, it eased the burden on the city but increased the pressure to settle and farm fragile hillsides. In the past decade, growth pressure in San José has been increasing.

Portland's strong antisprawl measures have kept the metropolitan area to nearly the same size since 1979, although its population has now grown to 1.8 million. Limited size and natural beauty make Portland attractive to migrants. Housing prices are now on the decline, thanks to more compact housing; the average size of lots for new

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## Demographic and Health Trends

- Oregon has the 10th fastest growth rate in the nation, having grown 14.1 percent since 1990.
- Between 1996 and 1997, about 54 percent of the state's population growth was the result of migration from other states, while international immigration accounted for an additional 15 percent. Migrants are attracted by Oregon's robust economy, employment opportunities, and its mountains, waters, and wide-open spaces.
- Greater Portland, home to 45 percent of Oregonians, has grown rap-

idly, with a 14 percent increase between 1990 and 1996. The areas around Salem and Medford have grown even faster than the state average.

- Deschutes County, in Central Oregon, grew 31 percent between 1990 and 1996—the highest growth rate in the state. The counties along the northern Willamette Valley also have grown faster than the state average during the 1990s, partly due to younger residents who are attracted to the area's natural amenities.

## Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

- According to a 1997 poll, Oregonians' top environmental concern was the decline in the number of salmon along the Columbia River basin. One of the proposed solutions, the removal of dams along the Columbia, is controversial because of economic concerns.
- Arguably the best known of Oregon's 26 endangered and threatened species is the northern spotted

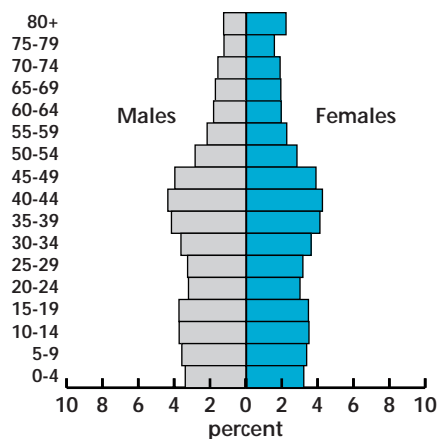
owl, whose fate has heightened tension between environmentalists and logging interests. Among the state's 16 other endangered and threatened animals are the Columbian white-tailed deer, brown pelican, bald eagle, and Aleutian Canada goose. Endangered plant species include the golden paintbrush and the western lily.

## Socioeconomic Factors

- Oregon's rapid growth has been accompanied by efforts to limit it. Portland, for example, has limited its boundaries to prevent urban sprawl from encroaching upon forests and farmland. Critics, however, fear that the policy has helped make Portland one of the most expensive places to live in the United States.

- Historically, timber has been Oregon's top industry. In recent decades, however, the state's economy has diversified—so much so that high technology has surpassed lumber as the top source for employment. Tourism, agriculture, and activities related to fish and wildlife also are key industries.

## POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

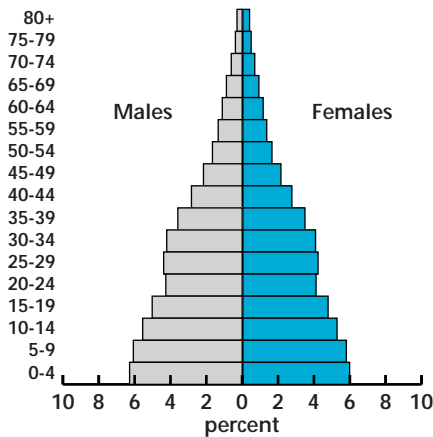


## OREGON FACTS

Population, 1997:	3.2 million
Projected population, 2025:	4.3 million
Annual growth rate:	1.5%
Doubling time (at current rate):	47 years
Average number of children per woman:	2.1
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births:	6.1
Life expectancy:	73 (male), 80 (female)
Persons per square mile:	34
Percent urban:	71
Endangered/threatened animals:	17 species
Endangered/threatened plants:	9 species
Percent of land protected:	5
Wetlands loss, 1780-1980:	38%
Daily water use per capita:	2,506 gallons
Water use for domestic purposes:	17%
Water use for agriculture:	78%
Water use for industry:	5%
Water use for energy production:	0.1%
Cropland per capita:	13.3 acres
Energy use per capita:	57.4 barrels of oil equiv.
Persons per motor vehicle:	1.1
Adults who are high school graduates:	88%
Elected officials who are women:	25%
Labor force in agriculture:	5%
Labor force in industry:	19%
Labor force in services:	76%
Gross State Product, 1994:	\$24,033 per capita

# COSTA RICA

## POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX



## COSTA RICA FACTS

Population, 1997: 3.5 million

Projected population, 2025: 5.6 million

Annual growth rate: 2.0%

Doubling time (at current rate): 35 years

Average number of children per woman: 2.8

Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 13

Life expectancy: 73 (male), 78 (female)

Persons per square mile: 176

Percent urban: 44

Threatened animals: 44 species

Threatened plants: 456 species

Percent of land protected: 12.7

Wetlands loss, through 1980s: n.a.

Percent with access to safe water: 96

Percent with adequate sanitation: 84

Daily water use per capita: 563 gallons

Water use for domestic purposes: 4%

Water use for agriculture: 89%

Water use for industry: 7%

Cropland per capita: n.a.

Energy use per capita: 3.1 barrels of oil equiv.

Persons per motor vehicle: 27

Percent of girls in secondary school: 49

Percent of boys in secondary school: 45

Women as % of national legislature: 16

Labor force in agriculture: 23%

Labor force in industry: 26%

Labor force in services: 51%

GDP per capita, 1995: US\$2,798

## Demographic and Health Trends

■ At 2.0 percent, Costa Rica's annual growth rate is the second lowest in Central America. The country's population, however, increased by 25 percent between 1990 and 1997.

■ Infant mortality in Costa Rica is less than one-half the level found in other countries of Central America. It is also much lower than the average rates for South America and the Caribbean.

■ Costa Rica has the highest life expectancy in Central America. Low infant mortality levels contribute to this advantage.

■ Because of the large number of people in the youngest ages (see figure), Costa Rica's population will continue to grow for several generations, even if couples average only two children.

■ At current rates, families average about three children. The government believes that this number is too high.

■ Contraceptive use is high; 75 percent of women use some form of family planning.

## Natural Resources and Wildlife Issues

■ With almost 13 percent of its land protected, Costa Rica has one of the most extensive systems of protected areas in the world.

■ Much forest has been cleared to provide more land for cattle ranching and farming. But settlement on land not suitable for intensive farming or grazing has resulted in endangered ecosystems. Deforestation exposes soil to erosion, removing topsoil and polluting water resources.

■ Wildlife that depends on rain forest habitat is threatened by its conversion to other uses. With 850 known species of birds (more than the United States and Canada combined), 205 known species of mammals, and 11,000 known species of plants, Costa Rica is rich in biodiversity. But loss of habitat places all of these species at risk.

## Socioeconomic Factors

■ Costa Rica, with a history of more than 40 years of democratically elected governments, is considered the most politically stable country in Central America.

■ Costa Rica's economy is considered stable and progressive. It depends mostly on tourism and the export of agricultural products, especially bananas and coffee.

■ Although the reported rate of unemployment is low, much of the labor force is underemployed. One-half of the country's labor force is employed in the service sector and about one-quarter each in agriculture and industry.

■ Just under one-half of the young people of secondary school age are enrolled in school. The percentage is slightly higher for girls.

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houses has shrunk by one-half since 1979.

In Costa Rica, forest preserves are widely praised, but forests outside these areas are being rapidly cleared. Though land title laws from the 1960s provided economic opportunities, they also encouraged settlement on lands that cannot support intensive farming or grazing. Between 1950 and 1985, one-third of Costa Rica's forested land was stripped. As a result, a strong new forestry law passed in 1990 has proven difficult and costly to enforce.

Both regions have had to balance forest preservation against economic benefits. In Oregon, the spotted owl has become the most notable symbol of this struggle for balance. The issue is difficult because timber industry workers see jobs declining, even though recent studies indicate that jobs have been lost primarily because of technological change in the industry, not forest protection.

Oregon and Costa Rica both rely heavily on their rivers to generate electricity. Eight dams have transformed Oregon's Columbia and Snake rivers from symbols of wildness and from home to the annual spawning migration of Pacific salmon, to carefully regulated power producers. Dam proponents counter that hydroelectric

power is cheaper and cleaner than coal, oil, or gas. With energy consumption increasing by at least 7 percent a year, Costa Rica is also planning to harness its rivers' energy even more extensively.

## Responding to Challenges

Disputes over Oregon's forest and river management have attracted national attention. Timber and energy-producing companies, preferring to avoid further federal regulation, are contributing to a state program to protect and restore salmon streams and negotiate timber management. Such agreements must overcome deep mutual suspicion among industries, Native American communities, and environmental advocates.

Nongovernmental organizations from Costa Rica and environmental groups such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature and the Forest Stewardship Council are promoting a variety of small-scale sustainable use schemes in the country's forests, some with funding from The World Bank. The

government and Costa Rican environmentalists are planning an ambitious joint campaign to restore 80 percent of Costa Rica's pasture back to forest and woody crops.

Costa Rica no longer receives direct development assistance from the

**P**eople in Oregon and Costa Rica, 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.

United States, but it does benefit from Central America-wide regional programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, such as AIDS education and prevention and environmental management. The United States also supported the work of 48 Peace Corps volunteers in Costa Rica in 1997. ■

**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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