

Census of Environment: Resource-based communities, 2016 and 2021

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In 2021, close to 1% of the Canadian population was living in resource-based communities, that is, communities with the highest contribution from a resource industry (agriculture, forestry or fishing) to their economic base. Renewable resources from neighbouring ecosystems, such as fish, wood and agricultural biomass, are particularly important to these communities. Therefore, the people who live and work in these communities depend more directly on these ecosystem resources than the general population, which can also make them more vulnerable to ecosystem changes.

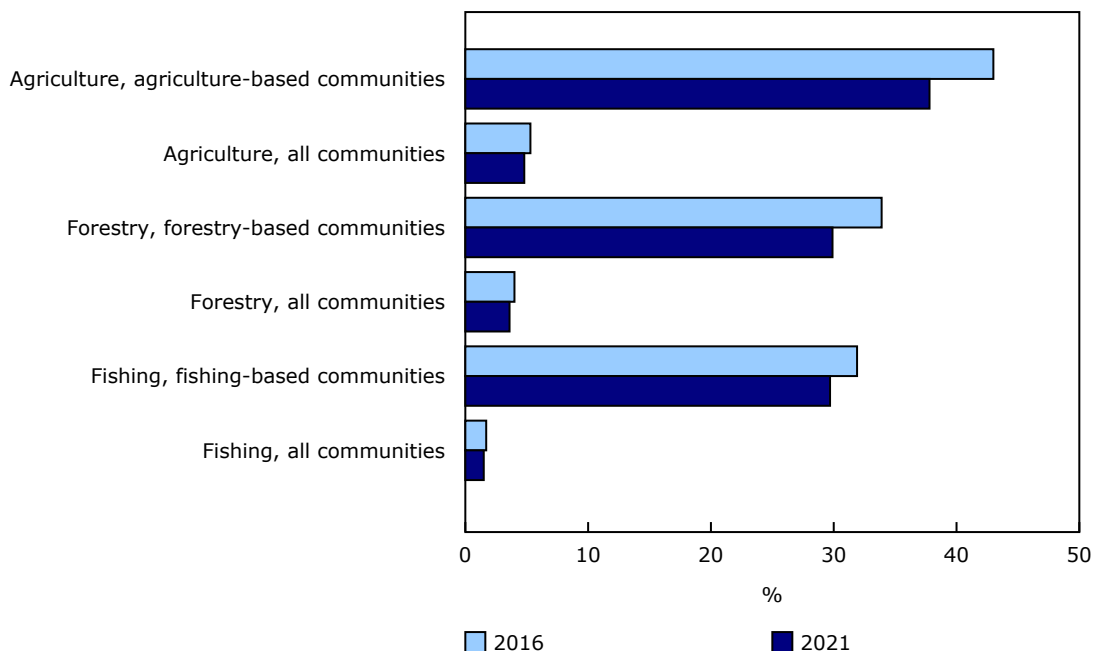
These new statistics, produced as part of the Census of Environment, demonstrate important links between ecosystems, the economy, society and individual well-being.

Resources contribute less to the communities' economic base than in the past

The proportion of resource income in resource-based communities varied by industry and was generally higher in agriculture-based communities. In 2021, the average proportion of resource income was 37.8% for agriculture-based communities, 29.9% for forestry-based communities, and 29.7% for fishing-based communities. From 2016 to 2021, this proportion decreased for each industry. For example, the proportion for agriculture-based communities in 2016 was 43.0%.

Chart 1

Average proportion of resource income, by industry, for all communities and resource-based communities, Canada, 2016 and 2021



Note(s): This chart shows the average proportion of resource income for all communities in the country ("all communities") and for resource-based communities, by industry (fishing, forestry, agriculture).

Source(s): Table 38-10-0169-01.



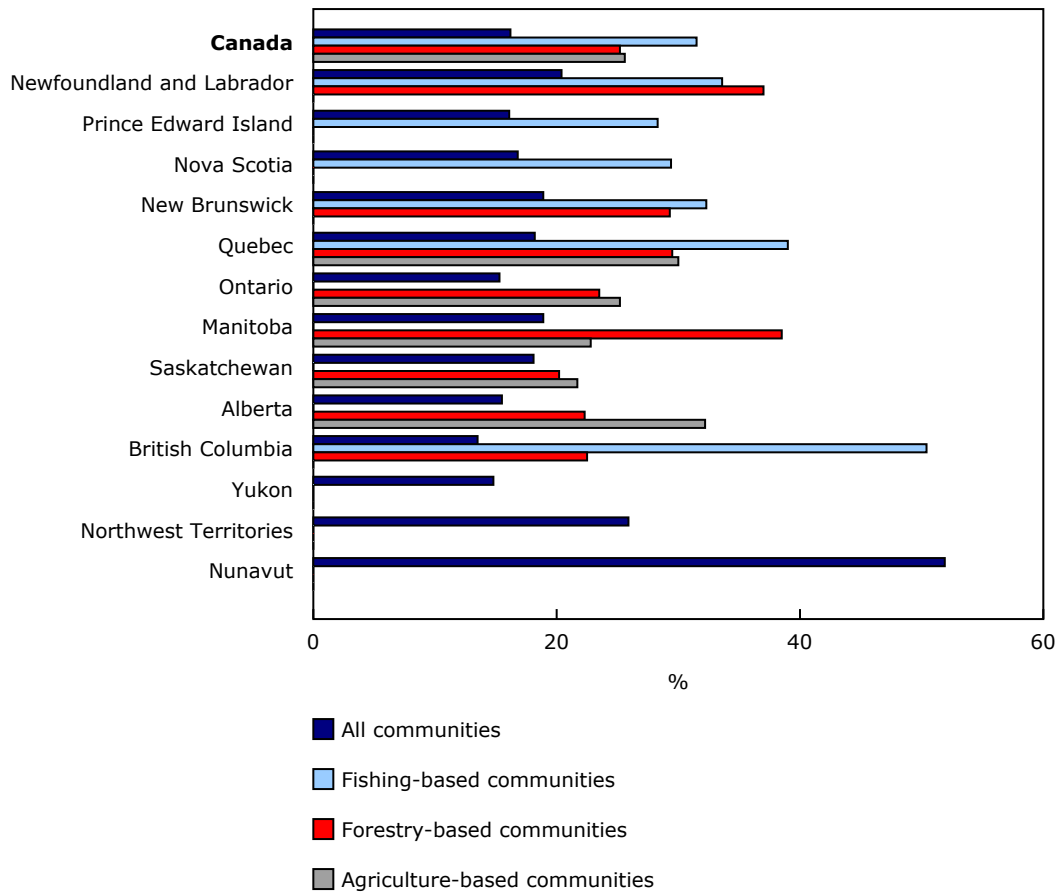
Differing sociodemographic characteristics of people living in resource-based communities

Not only do the residents of resource-based communities depend on these resources economically, but some of their characteristics—such as education, age and language—may also make them more vulnerable than the general population to changes in the state of ecosystems.

In 2021, a higher proportion of the population living in resource-based communities had no certificate, diploma or degree compared with the overall population of the community's province. The differences ranged from 2.1 percentage points for forestry-based communities in Saskatchewan to 36.9 percentage points for fishing-based communities in British Columbia.

In addition, most resource-based communities had a higher proportion of people aged 65 years and older than the provincial proportion. The biggest difference was observed in fishing-based communities in Quebec; in 2021, 31.1% of their population was aged 65 years and older compared with 20.6% of the entire province.

Chart 2
Proportion of the population with no certificate, diploma or degree, Canada, provinces and territories, 2021



.. not available for a specific reference period
 Source(s): Table 38-10-0166-01.

In some provinces, the proportion of the population whose first official language spoken is the minority language was higher in resource-based communities than in the province overall. For example, while 30.0% of the New Brunswick population's first official language spoken was French in 2021, this proportion was 69.1% in the province's forestry-based communities and 46.9% in their fishing-based communities. Meanwhile, in fishing-based communities in Quebec, 37.5% of the population had English as their first official language spoken, compared with 13.0% of the Quebec population as a whole.

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Note to readers

Statistics Canada's Census of Environment program reports on the state of Canada's ecosystems. It provides information that enables Canadians to make evidence-based decisions in order to protect, restore, enhance and preserve the environment. This program follows the internationally accepted environmental-economic accounting standard for producing information on the extent and condition of ecosystems and the services they provide.

Data on resource-based communities are now available for the years 2016 and 2021 in tables [38-10-0166-01](#), [38-10-0167-01](#), [38-10-0168-01](#), and [38-10-0169-01](#). These data help Canadians to better understand the reality of communities that depend directly on biomass provisioning services from ecosystems. For more information on these data, see the [methodological guide](#).

Resource-based communities are defined as the top 2% of census subdivisions (CSDs) in Canada with the highest proportion of employment income from a resource industry. This definition corresponds to 103 CSDs in Canada (based on the 2016 or 2021 Census of Population geography) for each resource industry (fishing, forestry or agriculture). CSDs with resource-based economies are identified using the employment income from the resource industry, based on the North American Industry Classification System. Data on resource-based communities are taken from the Census of Population.

Available tables: [38-10-0166-01](#) to [38-10-0169-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5331](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).