

# 5-POPULATION

The first estimations of New Caledonia's population date back to the 1850's. At the time, there were between 30 and 40 000 individuals ; Melanesians were the only inhabitants of New Caledonia. Up until about 1900, the **native** population experienced rapid demographic decline. From early in the century to around 1920, this same population stabilised, then experienced slow growth that intensified after the Second World War, to the point of a demographic explosion after 1956.

From a population of 23 500 in 1900, the number of Europeans diminished greatly over the next two decades (less than 17 000 in 1920). Up until the Second World War, the European population was stable, then slowly began to increase, reaching 18 500 in 1945.

According to the 1996 census, the last in which questions relating to ethnicity were asked, there were 86 788 Melanesians and 67 151 Europeans, respectively 44.1% and 34.1% of the total population.

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The 2004 census showed a population of 230 789 inhabitants in New Caledonia, being 116 485 men and 114 304 women.

Almost all New Caledonia's inhabitants were of French **nationality**. Foreign nationals were mainly from Asian and Oceanian countries.

71.2% of the New Caledonia's population lived in the Southern province, 19.3% in the Northern province and 9.6% in the Loyalty islands province.

Average population **density** was 12.4 inhabitants per square km. The figure was only 4.6 in the Northern province, but went up to 11.1 in the Loyalty islands province and 23.4 in the Southern province. Maximum density was recorded in Nouméa with 2 000 inhabitants per square kilometre.

At current growth rates, New Caledonia's population will pass the 250 000 mark in 2008, 300 000 in 2018, and will double in 36 years.

► **Native.** *Descendant of the first inhabitants of a region or specific area.*

► **Nationality.** *Status of a person, who is a member of a defined, recognised nation.*

► **Density.** *Ratio between the number of inhabitants and the land area (expressed in km<sup>2</sup>) for a given entity.*

## SOURCES

[1] INSEE-ISEE, *Résultats du Recensement de la Population de la Nouvelle-Calédonie 2004*.

[2] ORSTOM, *Atlas de la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, Nouméa, 1981.

[3] INSEE-ITSEE, *Résultats des Recensements de la Population de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, 1956, 1963, 1969, 1976, 1983, 1989, 1996*.

## SEE ALSO

ITSEE, *Recensement de la Population de la Nouvelle-Calédonie/Principaux tableaux 1996*, Notes et Documents n°77, novembre 1997.

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Baudchon G. et Rallu J.-L., *Changement démographique et social en Nouvelle-Calédonie après les accords de Matignon*, Population, n°54 (3), INED, 1999.

Communauté du Pacifique, *Profil démographique de la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, 2001.

Ouvrage Collectif, *L'Outre-Mer français dans le Pacifique*, Île de Lumière, 2003.

## Population, land area and density by municipality and province (2004 census) [1]

|                                 | Land area       | Population     | % total population | Density     |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Belep                           | 69.5            | 930            | 0.4                | 13.4        |
| Boulouparis                     | 865.6           | 2 089          | 0.9                | 2.4         |
| Bourail                         | 797.6           | 4 779          | 2.1                | 6.0         |
| Canala                          | 438.7           | 3 512          | 1.5                | 8.0         |
| Dumbéa                          | 254.6           | 18 602         | 8.1                | 73.1        |
| Farino                          | 48.0            | 459            | 0.2                | 9.6         |
| Hienghène                       | 1 068.8         | 2 627          | 1.1                | 2.5         |
| Houaïlou                        | 940.6           | 4 537          | 2.0                | 4.8         |
| Île-des-Pins (L')               | 152.3           | 1 840          | 0.8                | 12.1        |
| Kaala-Gomen                     | 718.2           | 1 881          | 0.8                | 2.6         |
| Koné                            | 373.6           | 4 500          | 1.9                | 12.0        |
| Kouaoua (b)                     | 383.0           | 1 586          | 0.7                | 4.1         |
| Koumac                          | 550.0           | 3 003          | 1.3                | 5.5         |
| La Foa                          | 464.0           | 2 903          | 1.3                | 6.3         |
| Lifou                           | 1 207.1         | 10 320         | 4.5                | 8.5         |
| Maré                            | 641.7           | 7 401          | 3.2                | 11.5        |
| Moindou                         | 321.9           | 602            | 0.3                | 1.9         |
| Mont-Dore (Le)                  | 643.0           | 24 195         | 10.5               | 37.6        |
| Nouméa                          | 45.7            | 91 386         | 39.6               | 1 999.7     |
| Ouvéa                           | 656.8           | 2 114          | 0.9                | 3.2         |
| Ouvéa                           | 132.1           | 4 359          | 1.9                | 33.0        |
| Paila                           | 699.7           | 12 062         | 5.2                | 17.2        |
| Poindimié                       | 673.1           | 4 824          | 2.1                | 7.2         |
| Ponérihouen                     | 707.3           | 2 726          | 1.2                | 3.9         |
| Pouébo                          | 202.8           | 2 381          | 1.0                | 11.7        |
| Pouembout                       | 674.3           | 1 471          | 0.6                | 2.2         |
| Poum                            | 469.4           | 1 390          | 0.6                | 3.0         |
| Poya (a)                        | 845.8           | 2 600          | 1.1                | 3.1         |
| Sarraméa                        | 106.4           | 610            | 0.3                | 5.7         |
| Thio                            | 997.6           | 2 743          | 1.2                | 2.7         |
| Touho                           | 283.0           | 2 274          | 1.0                | 8.0         |
| Voh                             | 804.9           | 2 240          | 1.0                | 2.8         |
| Yaté                            | 1 338.4         | 1 843          | 0.8                | 1.4         |
| <b>Loyalty islands province</b> | <b>1 980.9</b>  | <b>22 080</b>  | <b>9.6</b>         | <b>11.1</b> |
| <b>Northern Province</b>        | <b>9 582.6</b>  | <b>44 474</b>  | <b>19.3</b>        | <b>4.6</b>  |
| <b>Southern Province</b>        | <b>7 012.0</b>  | <b>164 235</b> | <b>71.2</b>        | <b>23.4</b> |
| <b>New Caledonia</b>            | <b>18 575.5</b> | <b>230 789</b> | <b>100.0</b>       | <b>12.4</b> |

(a) The municipality of Poya's division between the Northern and Southern provinces was set by decree dated April 26, 1989. The 2004 census recorded 122 inhabitants of Poya resident in the Southern province and 2 478 in the Northern province. (b) The municipality of Kouaoua is the result of a division of Canala in 1995, officially created by decree n°95-454 dated April 25, 1995.

Units : km<sup>2</sup>, inhabitant, %, inh/km<sup>2</sup>

## New Caledonia's population according to previous censuses [1 to 3]

