

International Travel and Migration: March 2014

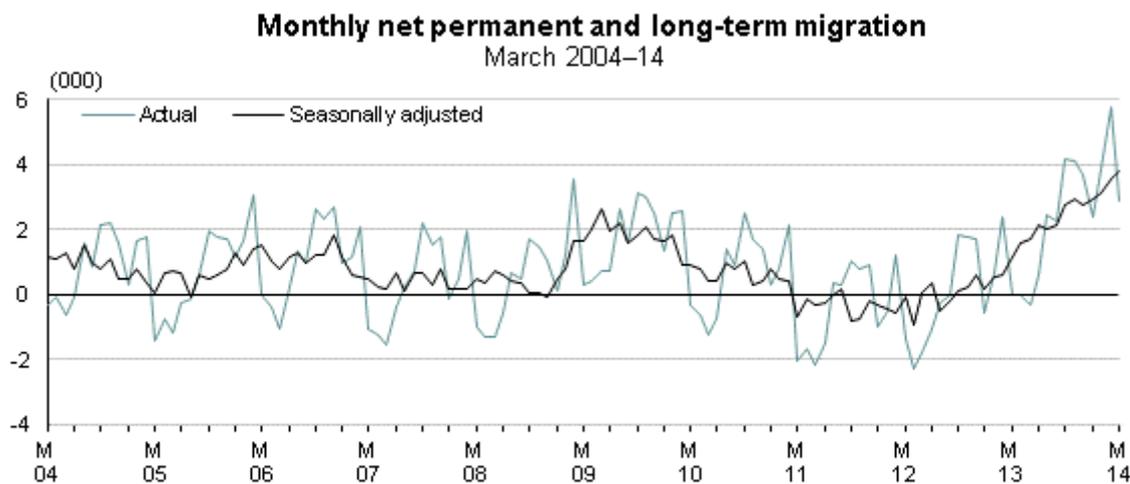
Embargoed until 10:45am – 23 April 2014

Key facts

In March 2014 compared with March 2013:

- Visitor arrivals (253,600) were down 17,200. The biggest changes were in arrivals from:
 - China (up 2,500)
 - the United States (up 2,300)
 - the United Kingdom (down 4,500)
 - Australia (down 15,400).
- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents (148,000) were down 7,900.

In March 2014, seasonally adjusted figures showed a net gain of 3,800 migrants.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Liz MacPherson
Government Statistician

23 April 2014
ISSN 1179-0407

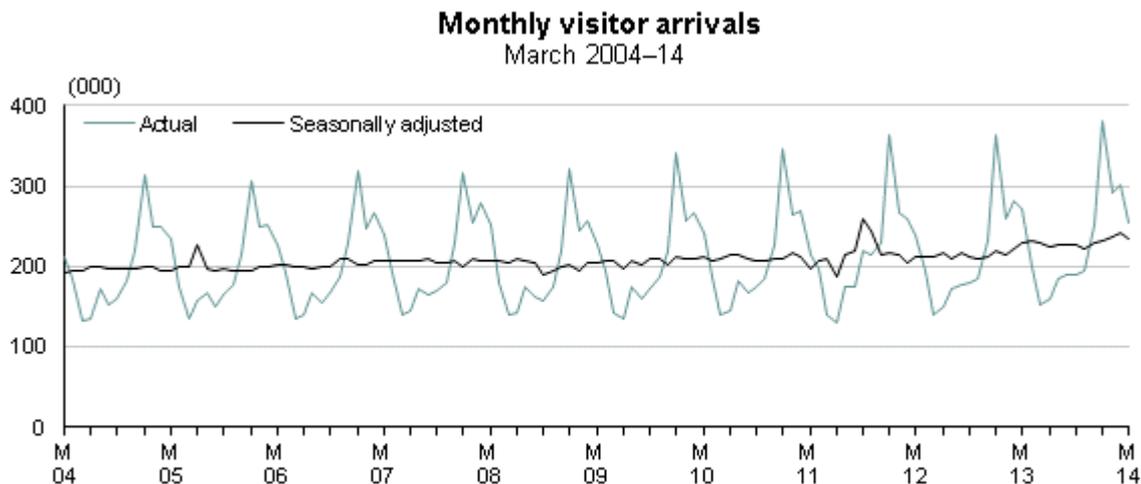
Commentary

- Fewer visitors in March due to later holidays
- More visitors this year from Germany than from Japan
- Fewer trips by New Zealand residents in March due to Easter timing
- Almost half of all trips by New Zealand residents this year were to Australia
- Monthly net gain of migrants continues to increase
- Annual net gain of migrants passes 30,000
- Changes to Provisional international travel statistics and International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand

Fewer visitors in March due to later holidays

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 253,600 in March 2014, down 6 percent from March 2013 (270,700). The later timing of Easter, and school holidays in some key source countries, contributed to the decrease.

Visitor arrivals during 1–20 March 2014 were up 4,000 from the same days in 2013. In contrast, arrivals during 21–31 March were down 21,200 from the previous year. Good Friday was on 29 March 2013, compared with 18 April 2014.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Visitor arrivals by country of residence

The biggest changes in visitors by country of residence between March 2013 and March 2014 were in arrivals from:

- China (up 2,500)
- the United States (up 2,300)
- Hong Kong (down 1,600)
- the United Kingdom (down 4,500)
- Australia (down 15,400).

Visitor numbers from China increased for only the second time in six months, when compared with the same month of the previous year. The other increase was in January, due to the earlier timing of Chinese New Year. The decreases in recent months followed the introduction of a new tourism law in China, which increased the cost of overseas tours.

Visitor arrivals from the United States have increased in 13 of the last 15 months, with an average increase of 2,000 per month over this period.

The decreases from Australia, the United Kingdom, and Hong Kong were related to the later timing of Easter and school holidays. School holidays in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and some Australian states are timed to coincide with Easter, and as a result started in April this year but March last year.

Visitor arrivals by travel purpose

The biggest changes in visitors by travel purpose between March 2013 and March 2014 were in arrivals for:

- business (up 4,200)
- holidays (down 6,400)
- visiting friends and relatives (down 14,800).

The later timing of Easter and school holidays influenced the changes in arrivals by travel purpose. Business trips are less common during such holiday periods, meaning fewer business travellers arrived in March 2013. Trips for a holiday or to visit friends and relatives tend to be more common during Easter and school holidays, explaining the higher numbers in March 2013 compared with March 2014.

Visitors from Australia contributed most of the change in the business (up 3,200), holiday (down 8,600), and visiting friends and relatives (down 9,200) categories between March 2013 and March 2014.

More visitors this year from Germany than from Japan

There were 2.75 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the March 2014 year. This was 5 percent higher than in the March 2013 year (2.61 million).

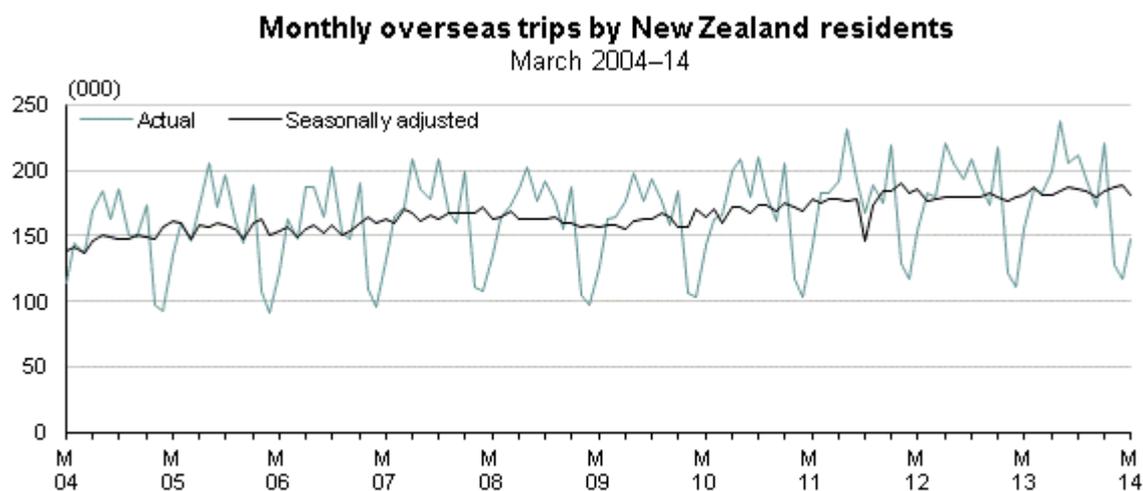
Germany surpassed Japan to become the fifth-biggest source of visitors to New Zealand in the March 2014 year. The 74,200 arrivals from Germany was a record from that country, while the 73,300 arrivals from Japan was well down from a high of 174,800 in the January 2003 year. Japan was once New Zealand's second-biggest source of visitors (in 1996–1998) but is now sixth.

As well as the increase from Germany (up 9,400), more visitors arrived from Australia (up 50,400), China (up 29,500), the United States (up 19,600), and Singapore (up 6,300) compared with the March 2013 year.

For more detailed data about visitor arrivals, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Fewer trips by New Zealand residents in March due to Easter timing

New Zealand residents departed on 148,000 overseas trips in March 2014, down 5 percent from March 2013 (155,900). The later timing of Easter holidays affected the number of departures. The holidays started on 18 April 2014 compared with 29 March 2013.



Overseas trips by country of main destination

A new departure card was introduced in July 2013, which improved the response rate to the 'country of main destination' question. As a result, the number of passengers in the 'not stated' category decreased by 12,000 (78 percent) in March 2014, compared with March 2013. The improved response rate contributed much of the change in the figures for individual countries.

Almost half of all trips by New Zealand residents this year were to Australia

Trips by New Zealand residents in the March 2014 year (2.20 million) were up 2 percent from the March 2013 year (2.16 million).

Around half of all trips by New Zealand residents in the March 2014 year were to Australia (1.03 million). The next most-visited destinations were the United States (146,100), Fiji (114,200), the United Kingdom (96,100), China (73,800), and the Cook Islands (73,700).

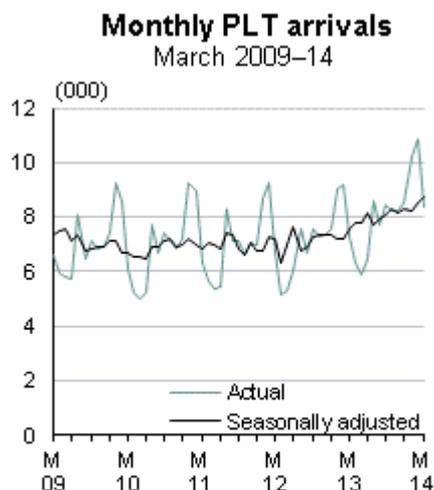
For more detailed data on overseas trips by New Zealand residents, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Monthly net gain of migrants continues to increase

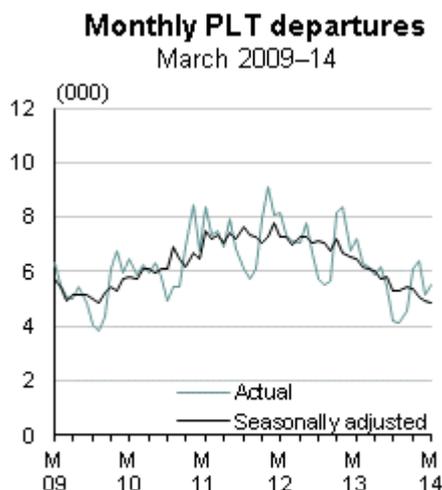
Seasonally adjusted permanent and long-term (PLT) migration figures showed a net gain (more arrivals than departures) of 3,800 migrants in March 2014. This is the second-highest monthly figure on record. The highest net gain was in February 2003 (4,700), when a large number of overseas students arrived to study at New Zealand universities.

Net migration has been positive and mostly increasing since September 2012. The increase since then was mainly due to fewer departures of New Zealand citizens to Australia, as well as more non-New Zealand citizens arriving.

The seasonally adjusted net loss of 400 migrants to Australia in March 2014 was the lowest ever for this series, which began in January 1996. The highest net loss to Australia was 4,300 in February 2001, just before an immigration policy change that restricted access to welfare benefits for New Zealand citizens arriving after that date.



Source: Statistics New Zealand



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Annual net gain of migrants passes 30,000

Unadjusted figures showed 98,000 migrants arrived in the March 2014 year, up 14 percent from the March 2013 year (86,000). Migrant departures numbered 66,100, down 21 percent from the previous year (83,500). This resulted in a net gain of 31,900 migrants in the March 2014 year, compared with a net gain of just 2,500 in the March 2013 year. The latest net gain was the highest annual gain since the January 2004 year (33,300).

Net migration can vary significantly from year to year. The highest net inflow ever recorded was 42,500 in the May 2003 year. The highest net outflow was 43,600 in the July 1979 year. Over the last 20 years (December 1994–2013 years), New Zealand's annual net inflow of migrants has averaged 11,700.

The net loss of 12,900 people to Australia in the March 2014 year was well down from the loss of 35,500 in the March 2013 year. The latest year's loss resulted from 34,000 departures to Australia (down from 51,300 in the March 2013 year), partly offset by 21,100 arrivals (up from 15,800). In both directions, most migrants were New Zealand citizens.

New Zealand recorded net gains of migrants from most other countries in the March 2014 year, led by:

- China (6,200)
- India (6,100)
- the United Kingdom (5,800)
- the Philippines (2,600)
- Germany (2,300)
- France (1,800).

Within New Zealand, 11 out of 16 regions had a net gain of international migrants, led by Auckland (14,800), Canterbury (5,200), Otago (700), and Wellington (600).

For more detailed data about permanent and long-term migration, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Changes to Provisional international travel statistics and International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand

The following changes to the Provisional international travel statistics took effect from 21 March 2014:

- The Provisional international travel statistics are usually released each Friday after 2pm, rather than 3pm.
- A new one-page summary Excel file, 'Overview of latest international travel trends' is available.
- You can subscribe on the Statistics NZ subscription page to receive email notifications after the latest Provisional international travel statistics are released.

You can also now subscribe to receive the International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand report in your inbox. This report is released two working days after each International Travel and Migration information release and contains detailed tables about the number and characteristics of visitor arrivals.

Definitions

About the international travel and migration statistics

International travel and migration statistics count passengers arriving into and departing from New Zealand. Passengers are split into one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

Arrivals and departures of overseas visitors and New Zealand resident travellers are key indicators of tourism and travel. Permanent and long-term migration is a component of New Zealand's population change (along with births and deaths), measuring changes in the characteristics of the population as well as population size.

More definitions

Citizenship: determined from the country that issued the passport the person uses when arriving or departing. A person may hold passports from more than one country.

Country of main destination: the country where a New Zealand-resident traveller will spend the most time while overseas. Departure cards do not ask travellers which other countries they intend to visit on the same trip.

Country of residence: this is the country where the person last lived or will next live for 12 months or more.

New Zealand-resident travellers: people who live in New Zealand and are travelling overseas for less than 12 months.

Overseas visitors: people who live overseas and are visiting New Zealand for less than 12 months.

Passenger type: each passenger is classed as an overseas visitor, a New Zealand-resident traveller, or a permanent and long-term migrant. Passenger type is not related to legal permanent residence in a country or the visa type a person holds. It is based on the time spent in and out of New Zealand. This is primarily determined from responses on the arrival and departure cards to questions about how long the person is in or away from New Zealand, and where they are living for 12 months or more.

Permanent and long-term arrivals: people from overseas arriving to live in New Zealand for 12 months or more (including permanently), and New Zealanders returning after an absence of 12 months or more overseas.

Permanent and long-term departures: New Zealanders departing for an absence of 12 months or more (including permanently), and people from overseas who are departing after a stay of 12 months or more in New Zealand.

Travel purpose: the main purpose for the visit to New Zealand or trip overseas. Categories are holiday, visiting friends and relatives, business, conferences and conventions, education, and other.

Related links

Upcoming releases

International Travel and Migration: April 2014 will be released on 21 May 2014.

[Subscribe to information releases](#), including this one, by completing the online subscription form. You can also subscribe to receive International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand, and our weekly Provisional international travel statistics.

[The release calendar](#) lists all our upcoming information releases by date of release.

Past releases

[International Travel and Migration](#) has links to past releases.

Related information

Information about international travel

[International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand](#) contains detailed tables about the number and characteristics of visitor arrivals. It is released two working days after each International Travel and Migration information release.

[Provisional international travel statistics](#) provide the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. These are released weekly, usually at 2pm on a Friday.

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analyses of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Tourism](#) web page lists tourism-related data sources, such as the Accommodation Survey and the Tourism Satellite Account.

[Tourism research and data](#) from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment includes results from the International Visitor Survey, Domestic Travel Survey, and tourism forecasts.

[Tourism New Zealand](#) provides guides to New Zealand's key tourism markets, which include the outlook for future months.

Information about international migration

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analyses of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Migration](#) web page lists migration-related data sources, such as the Longitudinal Immigration Survey.

Labour and Immigration Research Centre, part of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, publishes research reports and information about the immigration research programme.

Immigration New Zealand statistics include application and approval numbers for the main immigration visa types.

Data quality

- [Data source](#)
- [Accuracy of the data](#)
- [Interpreting the data](#)
- [Timing of published data](#)
- [Confidentiality](#)
- [More information](#)

Data source

International travel and migration statistics are based on electronic arrival and departure records for each international passenger, supplied to Statistics NZ by the New Zealand Customs Service. These electronic records include flight and passport details, such as date of travel, date of birth, sex, and country of citizenship.

The New Zealand Customs Service also supplies Statistics NZ with arrival and departure cards completed by passengers. Additional detail such as country of residence and travel purpose is captured from these cards and added to the information from electronic records.

Immigration New Zealand owns the arrival and departure cards, which are used to administer numerous New Zealand laws in addition to producing statistics. Statistics NZ only captures information from the cards for statistical purposes, and passes the cards to Immigration New Zealand after it has captured the data.

See the [arrival card](#) (PDF, 84kb). See the [departure card](#). These are for reference only.

Accuracy of the data

Data collection

Statistics NZ scans every arrival and departure card, and uses image recognition technology to automatically recognise and code responses. Processing staff then manually capture any required information not captured automatically – as automated software cannot clearly recognise every response.

The imaging system automatically determines all of the information required for around 9 in every 10 cards, meaning about 1 million records are completed manually each year.

Some response fields are required from every card. These include passport number and birth date, which are used to match each card with the corresponding electronic record containing flight and passport details. Some fields are only required for certain passenger types, or for a sample of passengers.

Changes in recorded passenger intentions

Statistics NZ processes all arrivals and departures and allocates them to one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

A person may change their intentions after their arrival or departure, which may mean the recorded passenger type becomes incorrect. Statistics NZ does not revise published statistics for such changes.

Sampling

Some fields are only collected for a sample of passengers. Data from the sample is used to estimate the characteristics of the full population. This still provides a good picture of the characteristics of travellers, while greatly decreasing the time and cost of capturing the data.

All figures for permanent and long-term migrants are actual counts (not derived from a sample). Arrival and departure totals for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers are also actual counts. More detailed data for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers, such as figures by country or travel purpose, are derived from a sample.

The sample ratios currently used are:

- Overseas visitor arrivals: 1 in 16
- Overseas visitor departures: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller departures: 1 in 20.

Figures derived from a sample may contain sample error (a difference from the actual figure). Small numbers are more likely to contain a large sample error as a percentage of the actual figure, and should be used with caution.

Seasonally adjusted and trend series

The purpose of seasonally adjusting a time series is to measure and remove the varying seasonal components in the series (for example, there are more visitor arrivals during the New Zealand summer, due to the warmer weather and longer daylight hours). This makes the data for adjacent periods more comparable.

The seasonal adjustment process for international travel and migration statistics uses Statistics NZ's standard seasonal adjustment package, X-12-ARIMA, with enhancements that allow Statistics NZ to specify and adjust additional calendar effects. These include the number and type of trading days in the month (as more people generally arrive and depart on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), and holiday periods, which have important effects on travel but can occur in different months each year (eg Easter can be in March or April).

Both monthly and quarterly seasonally adjusted series are available. The quarterly series are adjusted independently of the adjustments made to the monthly series. Hence, quarterly figures may not equal the sum of monthly seasonally adjusted figures.

Seasonally adjusted and trend data back to January 1996 is subject to revision each period. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the periods immediately before the current month or quarter. Data before January 1996 is not revised. This cut-off is used because of the change to a four-term school year in 1996, which resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand-resident traveller series.

Interpreting the data

Passenger counts

The statistics in this release relate to the number of passenger movements to and from New Zealand, rather than to the number of people – that is, the multiple movements of individual people during a given reference period are each counted separately. For example, a New Zealand resident making five business trips overseas within a year would be counted as five arrivals and five departures.

Timing of published data

Final international travel and migration statistics: released approximately three weeks after the end of the reference month. This delay is longer for December and January data due to the peak travel period coinciding with the Christmas and New Year holidays.

New Zealand and overseas port data: becomes available two working days after the international travel and migration release.

Provisional international travel statistics: normally released at 2pm every Friday on the [Provisional international travel statistics](#) web page. These show the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. No further data is available until the monthly release of final statistics.

Confidentiality

Statistics NZ releases statistics derived from arriving and departing passenger records. It does not release the records of individual passengers.

More information

[International travel and migration](#) in DataInfo+ has more information. [DataInfo+](#) is the main source of information about our statistical activities and data.

Liability

While all care and diligence has been used in processing, analysing, and extracting data and information in this publication, Statistics NZ gives no warranty it is error-free and will not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the use directly, or indirectly, of the information in this publication.

Timing

Our information releases are delivered electronically by third parties. Delivery may be delayed by circumstances outside our control. Statistics NZ does not accept responsibility for any such delay.

Crown copyright©



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence. You are free to copy, distribute, and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to Statistics NZ and abide by the other licence terms. Please note you may not use any departmental or governmental emblem, logo, or coat of arms in any way that infringes any provision of the Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981. Use the wording 'Statistics New Zealand' in your attribution, not the Statistics NZ logo.

Contacts

For media enquiries contact:

Nicholas Thomson

Christchurch 03 964 8700

Email: info@stats.govt.nz

For technical information contact:

Nicholas Thomson or Rosalia Rohwer

Christchurch 03 964 8700

Email: info@stats.govt.nz

For general enquiries contact our Information Centre:

Phone: 0508 525 525 (toll-free in New Zealand)

+64 4 931 4600 (outside New Zealand)

Email: info@stats.govt.nz

Subscription service:

Subscribe to information releases, including this one, by completing the online subscription form.

Correction notifications:

Subscribe to receive an email if a correction notice is published for International Travel and Migration.

Unsubscribe to correction notifications for International Travel and Migration.

Subscribe to all to receive an email if a correction notice is published for any of our information releases.

Unsubscribe to all if you change your mind.

Tables

The following tables are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box. If you have problems viewing the files, see [opening files and PDFs](#).

1. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, actual counts
2. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, seasonally adjusted and trend series
3. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
4. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by travel purpose and country of last permanent residence
5. Short-term New Zealand-resident traveller departures, by country of main destination
6. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
7. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
8. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence
9. Permanent and long-term migration, by citizenship, actual counts
10. Permanent and long-term migration, by citizenship, seasonally adjusted series

Access more data on Infoshare

Infoshare allows you to organise data in the way that best meets your needs. You can view the resulting tables onscreen or download them.

Use Infoshare

For this release, select the following categories from the Infoshare homepage:

Subject category: **Tourism**

Group: **International Travel and Migration**