

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE



MARRIAGES

There were 5,283 marriages performed in Alaska in 1997, involving 4,703 Alaska resident brides and 4,686 Alaska resident grooms. This is a decrease of 0.7% from the 5,319 marriages which occurred in 1996.¹ The crude marriage rate in 1997 was 8.6 marriages per 1,000 residents, down from 8.8 marriages per 1,000 in 1996.

Crude marriage rates varied widely between census areas in Alaska. For instance, the lowest rate of 1.7 marriages per 1,000 residents was in the Lake and Peninsula census area. The highest rate of 13.2 marriages per 1,000 residents was in the Denali Borough census area. Crude marriage rates represent the number of marriages occurring in a census area per 1,000 residents. Some of the more popular tourist destinations will have unusually high marriage rates because they are also popular places to get married; e.g. Denali National Park. Sex-specific marriage rates, also shown on Table 5.1A, reflect the number of resident grooms (or brides) per 1,000 resident males (or females) and more accurately reflect real rates because non-resident marriages are not included.

The average age for brides was 30.4 and the average age for grooms was 32.9. It was the first marriage for 57.6 percent of brides and 61.0 percent of grooms. The average age for first-time brides was 25.0 and the average age for first-time grooms was 27.4.

June, July, and August were the months with the most marriages with 676, 652, and 746 marriages respectively. January and April had the fewest marriages with 282 and 284, respectively.

¹ Crondahl, J., Mitchell, P., and Walden, S. Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, *Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics 1996 Annual Report*, Juneau, Alaska, June 1998, p. 75.

There were 438 marriages in which neither the bride nor the groom was a resident of Alaska, a 5.8 percent increase over the 414 non-resident marriages in 1996. The Anchorage census area had the greatest number of non-resident marriages with 132; Juneau had the second largest number of non-resident marriages with 95.

TABLE 5.1A MARRIAGES AND CRUDE MARRIAGE RATES BY CENSUS AREA OF OCCURRENCE, ALASKA, 1997

CENSUS AREA	OCCURRENCES		RESIDENT GROOMS		RESIDENT BRIDES	
	MARRIAGES	CRUDE RATE	MARRIAGES	SEX-SPECIFIC RATE	MARRIAGES	SEX-SPECIFIC RATE
ALEUTIANS EAST	4	1.8	4	3.3	4	3.9
ALEUTIANS WEST	34	6.3	32	9.8	31	14.8
ANCHORAGE BOROUGH	2,196	8.6	2,026	15.5	2,053	16.6
ANGOON-HOONAH-SKAGWAY	48	12.8	30	14.9	26	15.0
BETHEL	70	4.5	79	9.8	78	10.4
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	7	5.5	5	7.4	4	6.7
DENALI BOROUGH	25	13.2	17	15.9	13	15.7
DILLINGHAM	30	6.6	27	11.4	28	13.0
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	777	9.4	707	16.3	713	18.3
HAINES BOROUGH	18	7.4	15	11.9	16	13.7
JUNEAU BOROUGH	357	12.0	254	16.8	254	17.3
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	478	9.9	389	15.5	377	16.4
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	160	11.0	125	16.5	126	17.9
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	107	7.9	100	13.7	99	15.9
LAKE AND PENINSULA	3	1.7	5	5.3	5	6.0
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	475	9.1	401	14.7	401	15.9
NOME	55	6.0	56	11.5	57	13.2
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	30	4.1	36	9.4	40	11.6
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	33	4.9	33	9.5	35	10.9
PRINCE OF WALES-OUTER KETCHIKAN	47	6.8	54	14.4	53	17.0
SITKA BOROUGH	64	7.3	49	10.9	52	12.2
SOUTHEAST FAIRBANKS	50	7.9	41	12.2	43	14.3
VALDEZ-CORDOVA	85	8.1	76	13.6	73	15.1
WADE HAMPTON	39	5.6	43	12.0	42	12.6
WRANGELL-PETERSBURG	54	7.5	47	12.4	49	14.4
YAKUTAT	6	7.2	6	12.8	4	11.0
YUKON-KOYUKUK	31	4.9	29	8.4	27	9.3
TOTAL	5,283	8.6	4,686	14.7	4,703	16.0

TABLE 5.1B MARRIAGES BY NATIVE REGIONAL CORPORATION OF OCCURRENCE, GROOM'S RESIDENCE, AND BRIDE'S RESIDENCE, ALASKA, 1997

NATIVE REGIONAL CORPORATION	OCCURRENCES	RESIDENT GROOMS	RESIDENT BRIDES
AHTNA INC.	26	23	22
ALEUT CORP.	38	36	35
ARCTIC SLOPE CORP.	30	36	40
BERING STRAITS CORP.	55	56	57
BRISTOL BAY CORP.	40	37	37
CALISTA CORP.	109	122	120
CHUGACH NATIVES INC.	113	84	79
COOK INLET REG CORP.	3,096	2,787	2,804
DOYON LTD.	882	792	795
KONIAG INC.	107	100	99
NANA REGIONAL CORP.	33	33	35
SEALASKA CORP.	754	580	580
TOTAL	5,283	4,686	4,703

TABLE 5.2 MARRIAGES BY CENSUS AREA OF BRIDE'S RESIDENCE, AND BY CENSUS AREA OF GROOM'S RESIDENCE, ALASKA, 1997

BRIDE'S RESIDENCE	GROOM'S RESIDENCE														
	ALE	ALW	ANC	AHS	BET	BBB	DEN	DIL	FBK	HNS	JUN	KPB	KET	KOD	LKP
ALEUTN EAST	4														
ALEUTN WEST		30													1
ANCHORAGE			1,929		1				7		1	11			4
ANG-HNH-SKG				24							1				
BETHEL			1		74										
BRISTOL BAY						4									
DENALI							13								
DILLINGHAM			1					25							
FAIRBANKS			3		1		1		660			1			
HAINES				1						14					
JUNEAU			1	2							245				
KENAI PEN			3					1	4			360			1
KETCHIKAN													120		
KODIAK		1										1		92	
LAKE-PENIN															5
MAT-SU			17						2		1				
NOME			2												
NORTH SLOPE			3		1				1						
NW ARCTIC			1												
PRINCE-WALES				1									1		
SITKA				1											
SE FAIRBANKS									1						
VALDEZ-CORDV			1												
WADE HAMPTON					1										
WRANGELL-PBG						1									
YAKUTAT															
YUKON-KOY					1				2						
OUTSIDE AK		2	63	1			3	1	30	1	6	16	4	2	
TOTAL	4	32	2,026	30	79	5	17	27	707	15	254	389	125	100	5

Continued ➞

TABLE 5.2 CONTINUED

BRIDE'S RESIDENCE	GROOM'S RESIDENCE													TOTAL
	MSB	NOM	NSB	NAB	POW	SIT	SEF	VAL	WAH	WRP	YAK	YUK	OOS	
ALEUTN EAST														4
ALEUTN WEST														31
ANCHORAGE	20	1	1					2		1	1		74	2,053
ANG-HNH-SKG													1	26
BETHEL									3					78
BRISTOL BAY														4
DENALI														13
DILLINGHAM													2	28
FAIRBANKS	1						1	1				4	40	713
HAINES													1	16
JUNEAU													6	254
KENAI PEN	1					1							6	377
KETCHIKAN					2			1					3	126
KODIAK													5	99
LAKE-PENIN														5
MAT-SU	371										1		9	401
NOME		54											1	57
NORTH SLOPE			34										1	40
NW ARCTIC		1		32									1	35
PRINCE-WALES					51									53
SITKA			1			47							3	52
SE FAIRBANKS							40	1					1	43
VALDEZ-CORDV								68				1	3	73
WADE HAMPTON	1								40					42
WRANGELL-PBG						1				45			2	49
YAKUTAT											4			4
YUKON-KOY												24		27
OUTSIDE AK	7			1	1			3		1			438	580
TOTAL	401	56	36	33	54	49	41	76	43	47	6	29	597	5,283

TABLE 5.3 MARRIAGES BY AGE OF GROOM AND AGE OF BRIDE, ALASKA, 1997

AGE OF BRIDE	AGE OF GROOM										TOTAL
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55+		
15-19	151	350	49	13	7	1					571
20-24	52	705	401	132	35	12	8	2	1	1,348	
25-29	3	140	421	285	123	35	14	7	6	1,034	
30-34	1	39	134	222	194	82	33	12	9	726	
35-39		8	43	97	187	163	61	37	15	611	
40-44		4	16	36	68	116	86	52	29	407	
45-49			4	14	31	60	93	65	41	308	
50-54		2		4	1	13	26	49	46	141	
55+				2	2	3	7	13	110	137	
TOTAL	207	1,248	1,068	805	648	485	328	237	257	5,283	

DIVORCES

There are three administrative methods for terminating a marriage in Alaska:

- **Divorce** is an adversarial process in which the terms of the decree are decided by the courts based upon evidence, testimony, and in accordance with Alaska statutes. These terms include disposition of property, living arrangements, and custody and support for any minor children involved. In 1997, there were 1,040 divorces granted in Alaska. This is a 7.2 percent increase from 1996.

Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics (continued) MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

- A **dissolution** of marriage is a cooperative agreement between the husband and wife in which both parties agree to the terms for distribution of property, living arrangements, and support and custody of minor children. The agreement is reviewed by the court, which can amend it if it determines the terms are not equitable. In 1997, there were 2,065 dissolutions of marriage in Alaska. This is a 0.8 percent increase from the 2,049 dissolutions in 1996.
- An **annulment** is a judicial pronouncement declaring a marriage never existed. In 1997, there were 9 annulments granted in Alaska; in 1996 there were 11 annulments granted in Alaska.

When not otherwise stated, the term *divorce* refers to all three methods collectively.

In 1997, the total of 3,114 divorces, dissolutions, and annulments resulted in a crude divorce rate of 5.1 divorces per 1,000 population, compared with 5.0 in 1996.

Because divorces are granted by the courts, Table 5.4A shows the number of decrees by judicial district. For a map showing the locations of each judicial district, see page 168.

TABLE 5.4A DIVORCES, DISSOLUTIONS AND ANNULMENTS BY JUDICIAL DISTRICT, ALASKA, 1997

JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF DECREE	DECREE TYPE			TOTAL
	DIVORCE	DISSOLUTION	ANNULMENT	
01-FIRST	99	245		344
02-SECOND	12	21		33
03-THIRD	706	1,428	7	2,141
04-FOURTH	223	371	2	596
TOTAL	1,040	2,065	9	3,114

TABLE 5.4B DIVORCES BY NUMBER OF MARRIAGES FOR WIFE AND HUSBAND, ALASKA, 1997

WIFE'S MARRIAGE NUMBER	HUSBAND'S MARRIAGE NUMBER						TOTAL
	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE+	UNKN	
ONE	1,464	299	52	7	3	15	1,840
TWO	335	267	81	13	10	16	722
THREE	89	102	58	18	7	4	278
FOUR	22	30	13	7	3	2	77
FIVE OR MORE	10	10	7	3	2		32
UNKNOWN	17	12	7	1		128	165
TOTAL	1,937	720	218	49	25	165	3,114

TABLE 5.5 DIVORCES AND DIVORCE RATES FOR WOMEN AND MEN BY CENSUS AREA OF RESIDENCE, ALASKA, 1997

CENSUS AREA	WOMEN		MEN	
	NUMBER	RATE	NUMBER	RATE
ALEUTIANS EAST	2	2.0	4	3.3
ALEUTIANS WEST	14	6.7	15	4.6
ANCHORAGE BOROUGH	1,282	10.3	1,193	9.1
ANGOON-HOONAH-SKAGWAY	7	4.0	7	3.5
BETHEL	9	1.2	14	1.7
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	4	6.7	5	7.4
DENALI BOROUGH	5	6.0	10	9.3
DILLINGHAM	9	4.2	12	5.1
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	461	11.8	432	10.0
HAINES BOROUGH	12	10.3	14	11.1
JUNEAU BOROUGH	127	8.7	124	8.2
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	194	8.5	193	7.7
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	77	10.9	69	9.1
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	75	12.0	77	10.5
LAKE AND PENINSULA	4	4.8	7	7.4
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	231	9.2	236	8.6
NOME	14	3.2	12	2.5
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	10	2.9	13	3.4
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	5	1.6	6	1.7
PRINCE OF WALES-OUTER KETCHIKAN	27	8.7	21	5.6
SITKA BOROUGH	36	8.5	24	5.3
SOUTHEAST FAIRBANKS	20	6.7	24	7.2
VALDEZ-CORDOVA	45	9.3	44	7.9
WADE HAMPTON			4	1.1
WRANGELL-PETERSBURG	24	7.1	26	6.8
YAKUTAT	2	5.5	2	4.3
YUKON-KOYUKUK	12	4.1	12	3.5
CENSUS AREA UNKNOWN	13		20	
TOTAL	2,721	9.3	2,620	8.2

TABLE 5.6 DIVORCES INVOLVING CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS BY JUDICIAL DISTRICT, ALASKA, 1997

JUDICIAL DISTRICT	CHILDREN UNDER 18			
	NO		YES	
	DIVORCES	PERCENT	DIVORCES	PERCENT
FIRST	138	40.1	206	59.9
SECOND	17	51.5	16	48.5
THIRD	1,050	49.0	1,091	51.0
FOURTH	301	50.5	295	49.5
TOTAL	1,506	48.4	1,608	51.6