Human Population – Supporting Variable

Question:
How has the population of the Piscataqua Region Watershed changed over time?

Why We Track Population
A growing population often brings with it increased stress on natural resources. This is due to the addition of impervious cover, the loss of open space, and the loading of additional pollutants. Although it is possible to increase the watershed population without stressing the environment, it does require resources and planning.

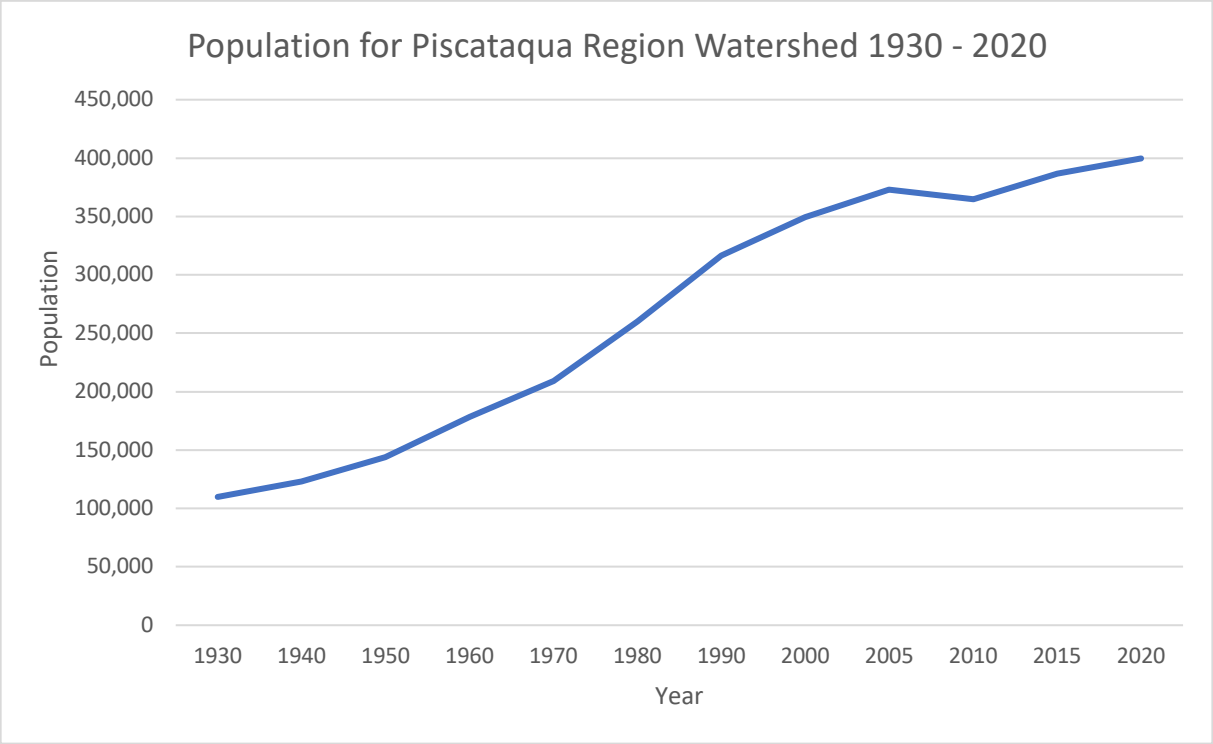

Figure HP-1. Population of the Piscataqua Region Watershed, based on 2020 census data of the 52 individual municipalities.

Explanation
In 2020, the population of the Piscataqua Region Watershed was approximately 399,704, based on adding up the individual populations of the 52 municipalities that make up the Watershed: 42 in New Hampshire and 10 in Maine. In 2015, the population was 386,658, which means that the population increased by 3.3% over five years. In 1990, a time when many of our biological indicators (e.g., migratory fish, oysters, clams) were more abundant, the population of the Watershed was 316,404. The population has grown 21.1% over that 30-year period (Figure HP-1).

The small but steady increase in the Watershed population is reflective of state trends as well (Figure HP-2), with both states adding to their population in 2015 and again in 2020. The

decrease in overall population between 2005 and 2010 was more impacted by Maine decreases more than changes in New Hampshire, which saw continued increases during that period.

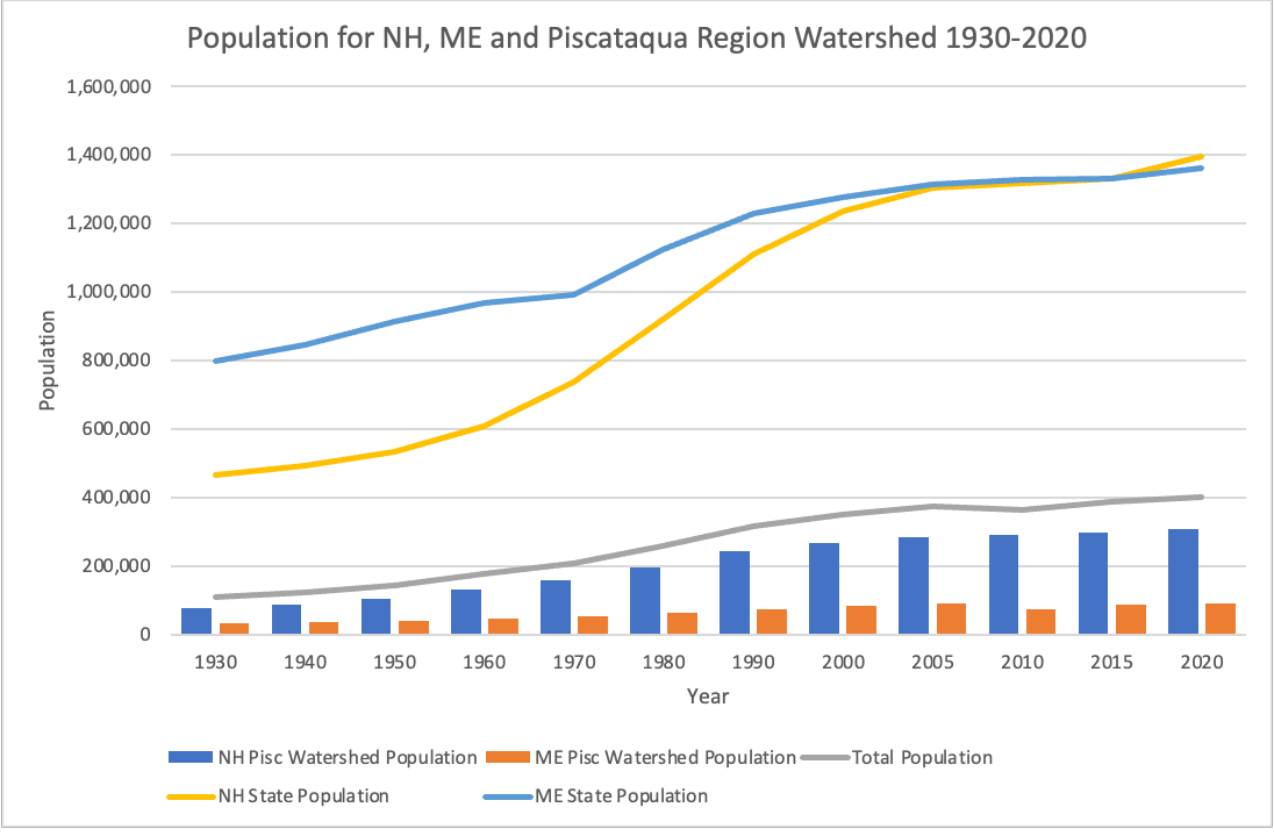

Figure HP-2. Population of the Piscataqua Region Watershed and overall population of New Hampshire and Maine.

Acknowledgements and Credit
Kalle Matso (PREP).