



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • Social and Economic Statistics Administration • BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in August were estimated at \$38.1 billion. The Bureau, part of the Department's Social and Economic Statistics Administration (SESA), said this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, was \$38.0 billion, about 1½ percent above July and about 9½ percent above August sales last year. Adjusted total June-through-August sales averaged about 2 percent above the prior 3 months and 10 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for July was about \$0.1 billion more than the \$37.4 billion published earlier in the July Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released August 10, 1972. The seasonally adjusted sales for July as revised were about 2 percent above June.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

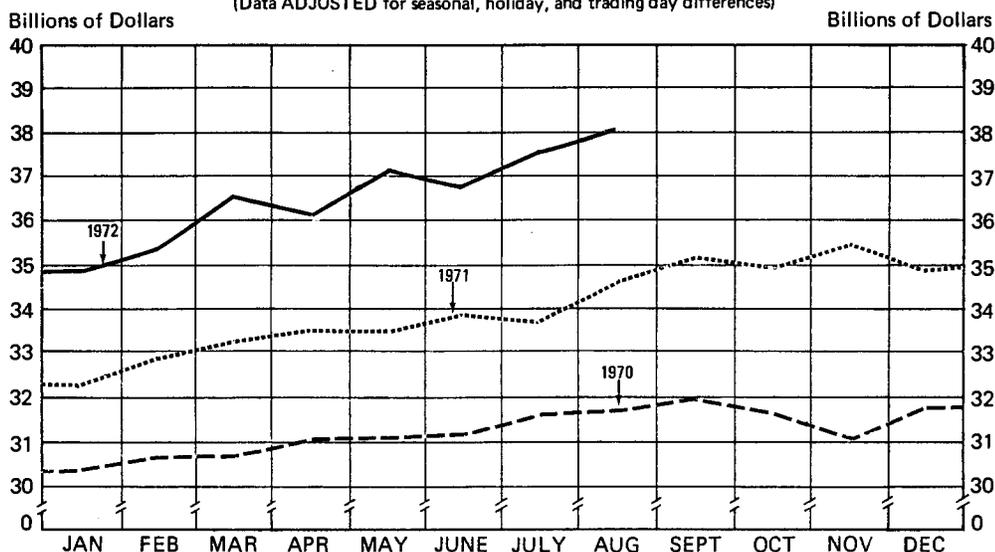
from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability between sub-sample and later full sample results can be a cause of difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimate, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between the month-to-month change in advance and full-sample estimates for total retail sales seldom exceed 1.0 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.4 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.6 percent for the general merchandise group to 2.4 percent for the Lumber group.

Even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements from one month to the next can be relatively irregular. Data for 3 months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES

(Data ADJUSTED for seasonal, holiday, and trading day differences)



Annual subscription to current retail trade reports are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription.) Price: \$6.00. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report are available only from the Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 10 cents each.

Table 1. Sales of Retail Stores in the United States, by Kind-of-Business Group

Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1972		1971
	August ¹	July ²	August
Total, retail stores ³	38,064	37,092	33,840
Total (excluding automotive group).....	30,679	29,600	27,487
Durable goods stores, total ³	12,849	12,664	10,923
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	25,215	24,428	22,917
Food group.....	8,110	8,145	7,284
Grocery stores.....	7,566	7,543	6,748
Eating and drinking places.....	3,153	3,095	2,889
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	6,235	5,672	5,569
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	5,762	5,220	5,085
Department stores.....	3,828	3,501	3,371
Apparel group.....	1,748	1,579	1,637
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,816	1,778	1,527
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,567	2,383	2,112
Automotive group.....	7,385	7,492	6,353
Gasoline service stations.....	2,740	2,721	2,626
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,168	1,174	1,132

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change July 1972 from--	
	1972			1971		June 1972	July 1971
	August ¹	July ¹	June	August	July		
Total, retail stores ³	38,024	37,477	36,802	34,655	33,688	+2	+11
Total (excluding automotive group).....	30,323	30,072	29,536	27,825	27,257	+2	+10
Durable goods stores, total ³	12,900	12,508	12,246	11,298	10,747	+2	+16
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	25,124	24,969	24,556	23,357	22,941	+2	+9
Food group.....		8,008	7,824	7,478	7,411	+2	+8
Eating and drinking places.....		2,847	2,794	2,614	2,567	+2	+11
General merchandise group with nonstores.....		6,281	6,143	5,757	5,653	+2	+11
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....		5,815	5,632	5,251	5,150	+3	+13
Apparel group.....		1,800	1,786	1,749	1,729	+1	+4
Furniture and appliance group.....		1,811	1,735	1,542	1,518	+4	+19
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....		2,213	2,142	1,967	1,862	+3	+19
Automotive group.....		7,405	7,266	6,830	6,431	+2	+15
Gasoline service stations.....		2,548	2,495	2,511	2,433	+2	+5
Drug and proprietary stores.....		1,215	1,227	1,167	1,124	-1	+8

¹Advance sample estimates. ²Preliminary estimates of full sample. ³Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	August 1972 from--		June 1972 through August 1972 from--	
	July 1972	August 1971	March 1972 through May 1972	June 1971 through August 1971
Total, retail stores.....	+1 ¹ / ₂	+9 ¹ / ₂	+2	+10
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+1	+9	+2	+9
Durable goods stores, total.....	+3	+14	+4	+15
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+1 ¹ / ₂	+7 ¹ / ₂	+2	+8

Source: Bureau of the Census