

advance monthly RETAIL SALES

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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 \$43.5 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 \$42.7 billion, virtually unchanged from July, but about 12 percent above August sales last year. Adjusted total June-through-August sales were about 1 percent above the prior 3 months and 13 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 \$42.6 billion published earlier in the July Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released August 10, 1973. The seasonally adjusted sales for July as revised were about 4 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

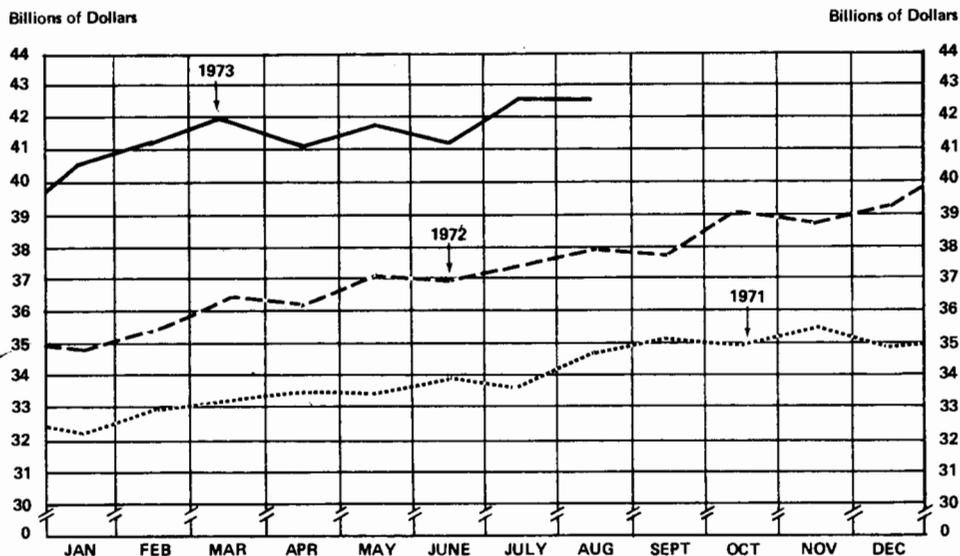
from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability 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 0.8 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.8 percent for the Food group to 2.8 percent for the Building materials 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: \$13.00. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report are available only from the Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 15 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)		
	1973		1972
	August ¹	July	August
Total, retail stores ³	43,489	41,612	37,994
Total (excluding automotive group).....	35,001	32,896	30,588
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,655	14,524	12,785
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	28,834	27,088	25,209
Food group.....	9,435	9,022	8,100
Grocery stores.....	8,777	8,389	7,494
Eating and drinking places.....	3,467	3,311	3,127
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	6,920	6,221	6,224
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,401	5,751	5,735
Department stores.....	4,265	3,868	3,787
Apparel group.....	2,008	1,756	1,759
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,106	1,956	1,817
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,854	2,728	2,492
Automotive group.....	8,488	8,716	7,406
Gasoline service stations.....	3,122	3,060	2,758
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,322	1,252	1,222

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change July 1973 from--	
	1973			1972		June 1973	July 1972
	August ¹	July ²	June	August	July		
Total, retail stores ³	42,707	42,712	41,179	37,969	37,342	+4	+14
Total (excluding automotive group)..	34,098	34,050	33,236	30,246	29,943	+2	+14
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,478	14,413	13,731	12,842	12,468	+5	+16
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	28,229	28,299	27,448	25,127	24,874	+3	+14
Food group.....		9,174	8,598	8,039	7,956	+7	+15
Eating and drinking places.....		3,077	3,085	2,797	2,818	0	+9
General merchandise group with nonstores.....		6,997	6,939	6,288	6,267	+1	+12
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....		6,484	6,430	5,772	5,801	+1	+12
Department stores.....		2,047	2,009	1,813	1,801	+2	+14
Apparel group.....		2,016	2,006	1,797	1,781	0	+13
Furniture and appliance group.....		2,541	2,572	2,246	2,206	-1	+15
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....		8,662	7,943	7,723	7,399	+9	+17
Automotive group.....		2,881	2,843	2,622	2,377	+1	+12
Gasoline service stations.....		1,318	1,314	1,246	1,204	0	+9
Drug and proprietary stores.....							

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 1973 from--		June 1973 through August 1973 from--	
	July 1973	August 1972	March 1973 through May 1973	June 1972 through August 1972
	Total, retail stores.....	0	+12	+1
Total (excluding automotive group).....	0	+13	+2	+13
Durable goods stores, total.....	0	+13	-1	+13
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+12	+3	+13

Source: Bureau of the Census