

Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada by air, second quarter 2020

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Highlights

The number of international arrivals to Canada by air, which began to decline sharply in the second half of March 2020 because of international travel restrictions, remained flat for the entire second quarter.

Border restrictions imposed to slow spread of virus

International travel was among the first areas of the economy to experience the impact of COVID-19, as governments across the world closed their borders to contain the spread of the virus.

On March 16, 2020, the federal government closed its international borders to foreign nationals and, as of March 18, international flights to Canada were redirected to four airports: Toronto Pearson, Vancouver International, Montréal Trudeau and Calgary International. These travel restrictions have been extended until at least July 31, 2020.

A 30-day restriction on non-essential travel across the Canada–US border took effect on March 21 and was extended for another 30 days on April 18. On May 19, this restriction was extended until June 22 and, on June 16, it was extended once again until July 21, 2020.

In response, major Canadian airlines initially suspended many transborder and international flights to focus on repatriation, and then began reducing all services or ceasing operations entirely.

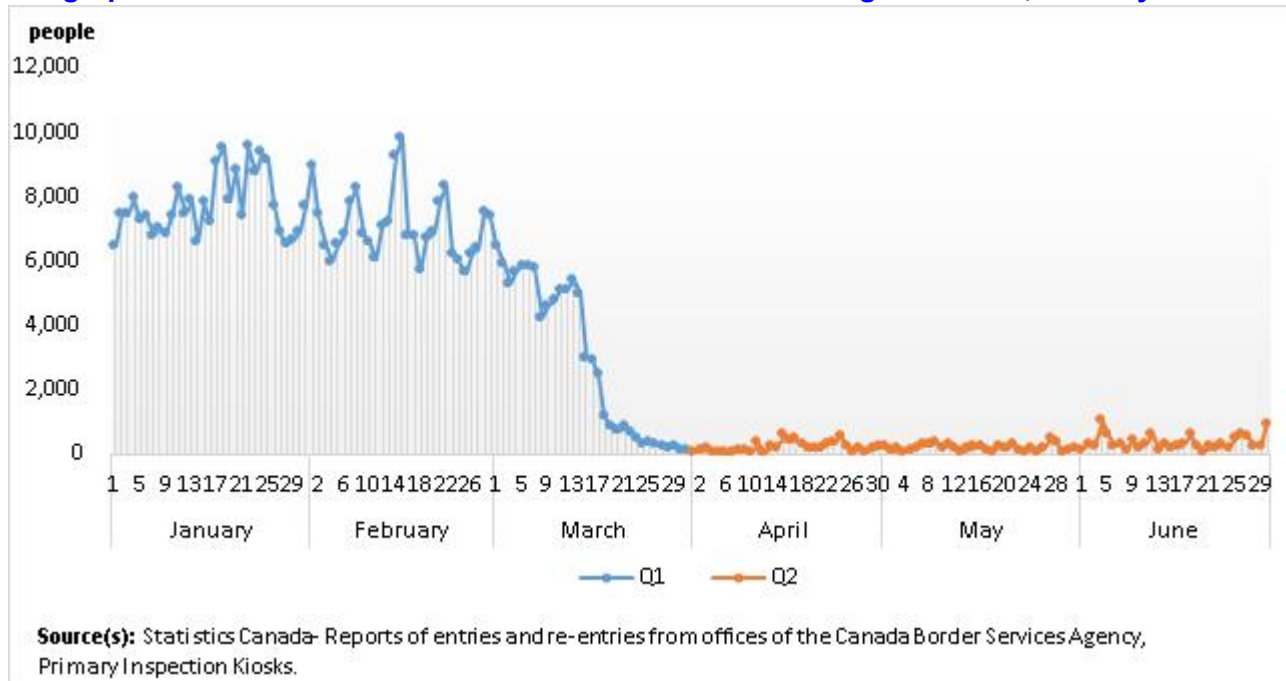
Arrivals from overseas countries remain at a near standstill

The number of residents from overseas countries who arrived at Canadian airports equipped with Primary Inspection Kiosks during the second quarter of 2020 (April to June) fell 95.7%, to 22,839, from 534,677 in the first quarter.

In June, the third full month with travel restrictions in place, the number of average daily air arrivals reached 358, up from 190 in May. Indeed, air arrivals from overseas countries peaked on June 4 (1,048 arrivals) and June 30 (943 arrivals).



Infographic 1 – Air travellers from overseas countries arriving in Canada, January to June 2020



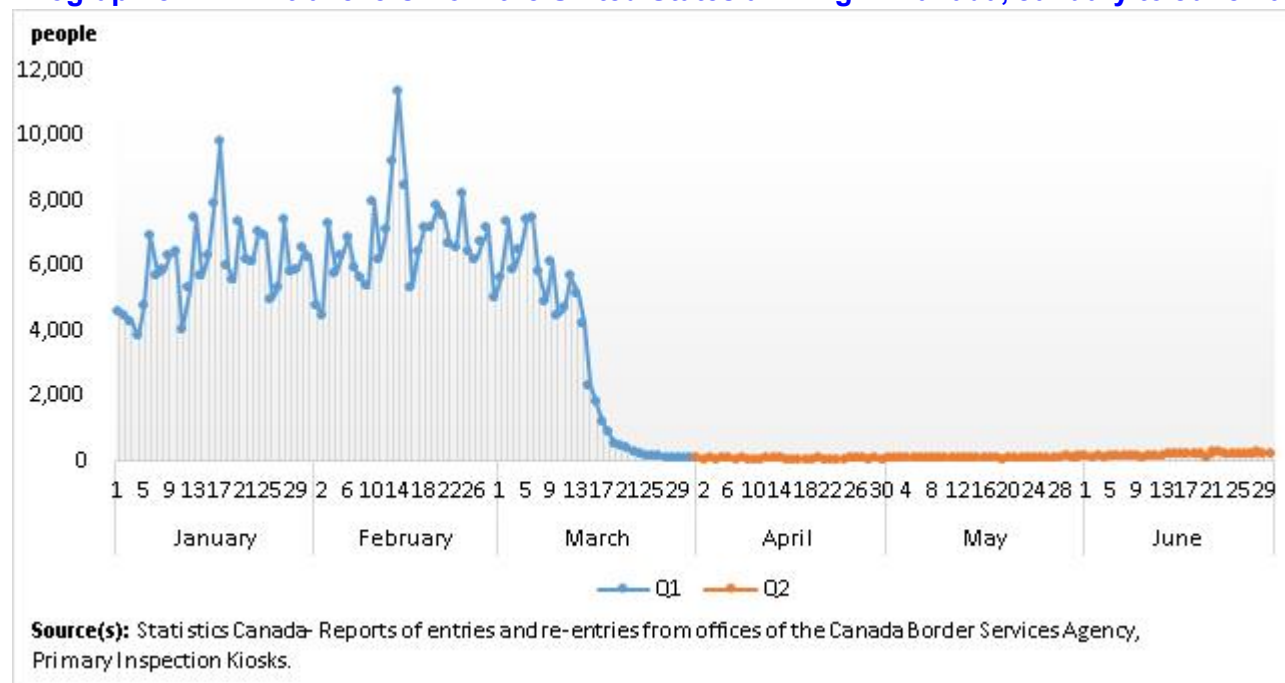
The number of air arrivals from the United States remains low

The number of US residents who arrived in Canada by air had started a steep decline even before the March 21 border closure announcement, and was a small fraction of its normal volume through to the end of June.

In the second quarter of 2020, the number of US residents arriving in Canada by air was down 98.2% from the first quarter, dropping from 472,396 arrivals to 8,414.

However, during the second quarter of 2020, the average daily number of air arrivals increased from 69 arrivals in May to 164 arrivals in June.

Infographic 2 – Air travellers from the United States arriving in Canada, January to June 2020



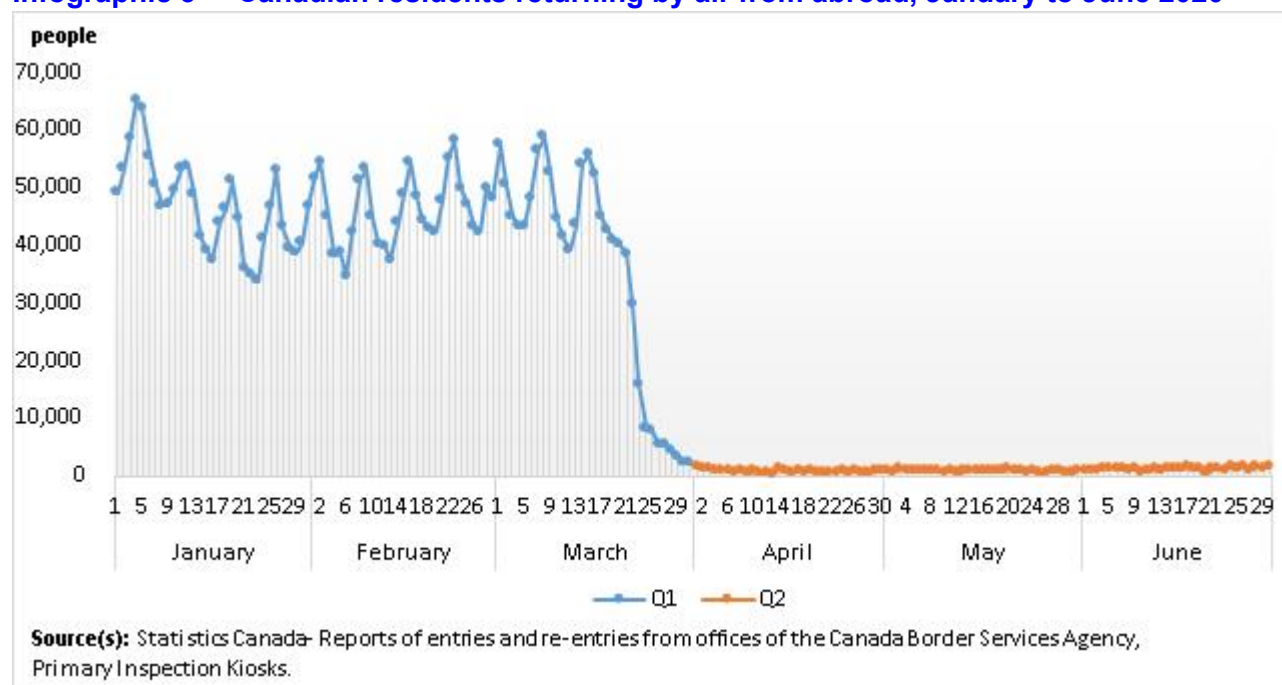
Few Canadian residents returning from abroad

The number of Canadian residents returning from the United States and overseas countries began a steep decline in March.

In the second quarter of 2020, 97.9% fewer Canadian residents returned to Canada by air compared with the first quarter, down from 3.9 million to 80,725. Just over two-thirds (68.3%) of these Canadian residents were returning from overseas countries.

On average, there were 1,131 daily air arrivals by Canadian residents from abroad to Canada in June, up from 775 in May.

Infographic 3 – Canadian residents returning by air from abroad, January to June 2020



Note to readers

Statistics Canada's [Frontier Counts](#) program uses data from the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). One source on travellers entering the country by air is the Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK) system, which, at most major airports, has replaced the paper E311 Declaration Cards that were completed by travellers and submitted to CBSA officers upon arrival in Canada.

Note that the data used in this analysis exclude Toronto Terminal 1, where PIK has not been fully deployed.

The indicator also excludes air travellers who enter Canada using a NEXUS card, as they are not required to complete PIK or E311, and travellers arriving by private aircraft.

The following variables are available from PIK: date, work location, arriving by, arriving from, duration of trip, country of residence, crew indicator, trip purpose by trip duration, traveller citizenship, document type, province or state of residence, trip purpose.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).