

advance monthly RETAIL SALES

A UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE
PUBLICATION



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

For Release 2:30 P. M. May 10, 1973

CB-73-119

(301) 763-7040

APRIL 1973

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in April were estimated at \$40.8 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 \$41.3 billion, more than 1 percent below March but about 1.4 percent above April sales last year. Adjusted total February-through-April sales averaged about 5 percent above the prior 3 months and 15 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for March was about \$0.3 billion less than the \$42.3 billion published earlier in the March Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released April 10, 1973. The seasonally adjusted sales for March as revised were about 2 percent above February.

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

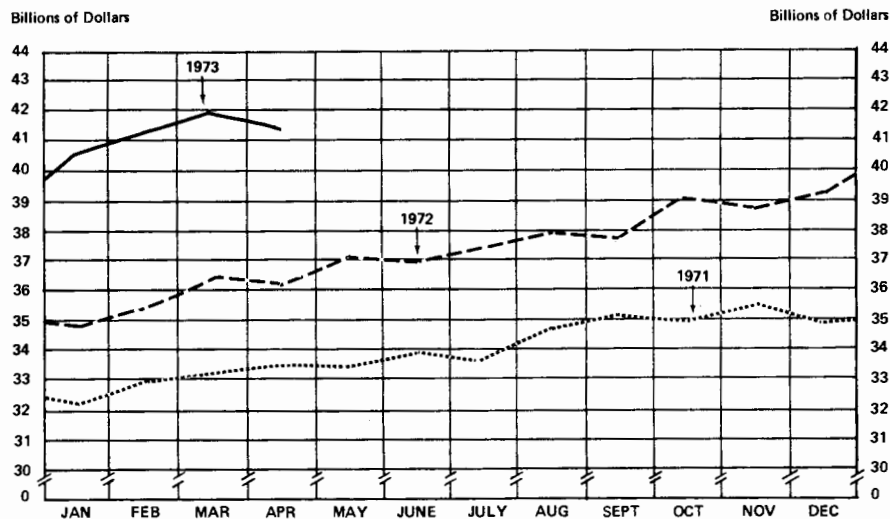
from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability 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 0.7 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.7 percent for the Food group to 2.7 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
	April ¹	March ²	April
Total, retail stores ³	40,831	41,272	35,389
Total (excluding automotive group).....	31,880	31,901	28,017
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,551	14,868	12,095
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	26,280	26,404	23,294
Food group.....	8,010	8,788	7,588
Grocery stores.....	7,452	8,202	7,069
Eating and drinking places.....	2,984	2,980	2,699
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	6,658	6,277	5,496
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,156	5,757	5,037
Department stores.....	4,152	3,851	3,348
Apparel group.....	2,118	1,834	1,665
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,850	1,939	1,595
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,650	2,467	2,154
Automotive group.....	8,951	9,371	7,372
Gasoline service stations.....	2,752	2,730	2,457
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,202	1,241	1,141

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change March 1973 from--	
	1973			1972		February 1973	March 1972
	April ¹	March ²	February	April	March		
Total, retail stores ³	41,328	41,939	41,242	36,296	36,450	+2	+15
Total (excluding automotive group).....	32,811	33,173	32,667	29,229	29,377	+2	+13
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,356	14,628	14,405	11,976	12,087	+2	+21
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	26,972	27,311	26,837	24,320	24,363	+2	+12
Food group.....	8,427	8,427	8,409	7,795	7,720	0	-10
Eating and drinking places.....	3,094	3,094	3,057	2,763	2,814	+1	+10
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,103	7,103	6,753	6,025	6,088	+5	-17
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,598	6,598	6,223	5,533	5,546	+6	+19
Apparel group.....	2,179	2,179	2,012	1,834	1,767	+8	+23
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,026	2,026	2,021	1,743	1,780	0	+14
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,636	2,636	2,625	2,079	2,200	0	+20
Automotive group.....	8,766	8,766	8,575	7,067	7,073	+2	+24
Gasoline service stations.....	2,777	2,777	2,821	2,489	2,534	-2	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,260	1,260	1,254	1,205	1,178	0	+7

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	April 1973 from--		February 1973 through April 1973 from--	
	March 1973	April 1972	November 1972 through January 1973	February 1972 through April 1972
Total, retail stores.....	-1	+14	+5	+15
Total (excluding automotive group).....	-1	+12	+5	+13
Durable goods stores, total.....	-2	+20	+6	+22
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-1	+11	+4	+12

Source: Bureau of the Census