

# **Low Birth Weight**

---

---



## LOW BIRTHWEIGHT

Low and very low birthweights for infants are indicative of the level of pre-natal care, maternal health, and maternal behaviors prevalent in a place. A low weight birth is a baby that weighs less than 2,500 grams (5.5 lbs.). A very low weight baby weighs less than 1,500 grams (3.3 lbs.) at birth. Percentages are derived from the rates of both low and very low weight births. To derive the percentage, the number of live births divides into the number of low or very low weight births. Eastern North Carolina percentages, for both low (8.9%) and very low (1.9%) birth weights, exceed both the state (8.5% and 1.7%, respectively) and the 1992 national (7.1% and 1.3%, respectively) figures. Compared to the rest of the state, low and very low birthweights characterize most of Eastern North Carolina. During the 1991-1993 period, only Tyrrell and Dare counties fared better than the Healthy People 2000 Health Status Objective for low birthweights and four counties (Dare, Perquimans, Carteret, and Hyde) did better for very low birthweights. With the exception of Carteret county, the rates are based on small numbers and should be interpreted with caution.

The interior of Eastern North Carolina has the highest percentages of low weight births with a focus on the southwestern and northwestern corners of the region, and several coastal outliers. This geographic pattern remains (though slightly more dispersed) after a consideration of race as well. The counties with the highest total percentages of low birthweights during 1991-1993 are Gates (13.2%), Bertie (12.9%), and Hertford (12.5%). The lowest meaningful (cases greater than 20) percentages of low birthweight are Dare (4.9%), Perquimans (6.3%), and Onslow (7.0%) counties. For the period 1989-1993, the highest percentages for white low birthweights are found in Hyde (10.2%), Camden (8.4%), and Gates (8.3%) counties. The lowest meaningful percentages for low birthweights are found in Dare (4.0%), Pender (5.0%), and Craven (5.2%) counties. Nonwhite births, for the same period, experience the highest meaningful low weight percentages in Johnston County (15.0%), and both Bertie and Pamlico counties at 14.8%. Meaningful lowest low birthweights for this group is observed for Carteret (9.9%), Perquimans (10.0%), and Pender (10.1%) counties. Using the same percent categories for nonwhites, the low birthweight map for blacks shows a marked shift of county percentages into higher categories for the 1991-1993 period. In this map Pamlico County with a percentage of 20.7, experiences the highest low birthweight. The lowest percentage of low birthweights is found in Washington County at 8.3%.

### *HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 GOAL:*

#### *HEALTH STATUS OBJECTIVE 14.5:*

Reduce low birthweight to an incidence of no more than 5.0 percent of live births and very low birthweight to no more than 1.0 percent of live births. (Baseline: Low birthweight percentage of 6.9 in 1987)

*HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 GOAL:*

*HEALTH STATUS OBJECTIVE 14.5a:*

Reduce low birthweight among blacks to an incidence of no more than 9.0 percent of live births. (Baseline: Low birthweight percentage of 13.0 in 1987)

*HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000 GOAL:*

*HEALTH STATUS OBJECTIVE 14.5b:*

Reduce very low birthweight among blacks to an incidence of no more than 2.0 percent of live births. (Baseline: Low birthweight percentage of 2.8 in 1987)

*HEALTHY CAROLINIANS 2000 GOAL:*

*SPECIAL TARGET OBJECTIVE:*

Reverse trend of low birthweight. Decrease total percent low birthweight to no more than 7.0% and decrease nonwhite percent low birthweight to 10.4%. (Baseline: 8.0% for total low birthweights and 12.4% for nonwhite birthweights in 1990; 8.2% for total low birth weights and 13.7% for nonwhites projected for the year 2000)

The map for the total percent of very low birthweights for the period 1991-1993 is quite similar in distribution to the map portraying total percent low birthweight. Eastern North Carolina's percentage (1.9%) is nearly twice as high as the Healthy People 2000 Goal and exceeds the figure for the state (1.7%). A fourth of the counties in the east record less than 20 very low birthweight events and so the percentages must be interpreted with caution. The meaningful highest percentages of low birthweight counties are found in Bertie (3.7%), Hertford (3.1%), and Hoke (3.0%) counties. The lowest percentages are found in Carteret (0.9%), Wilson (1.2%), and Johnston (1.3%) counties. Most counties (85%) are in the highest percentage category for very low birth weights for blacks. **(Note: The same rate categories for the total percent of very low birthweights are applied to the map of black rates.)** This demonstrates the regional pervasiveness of very low birthweights in black populations.



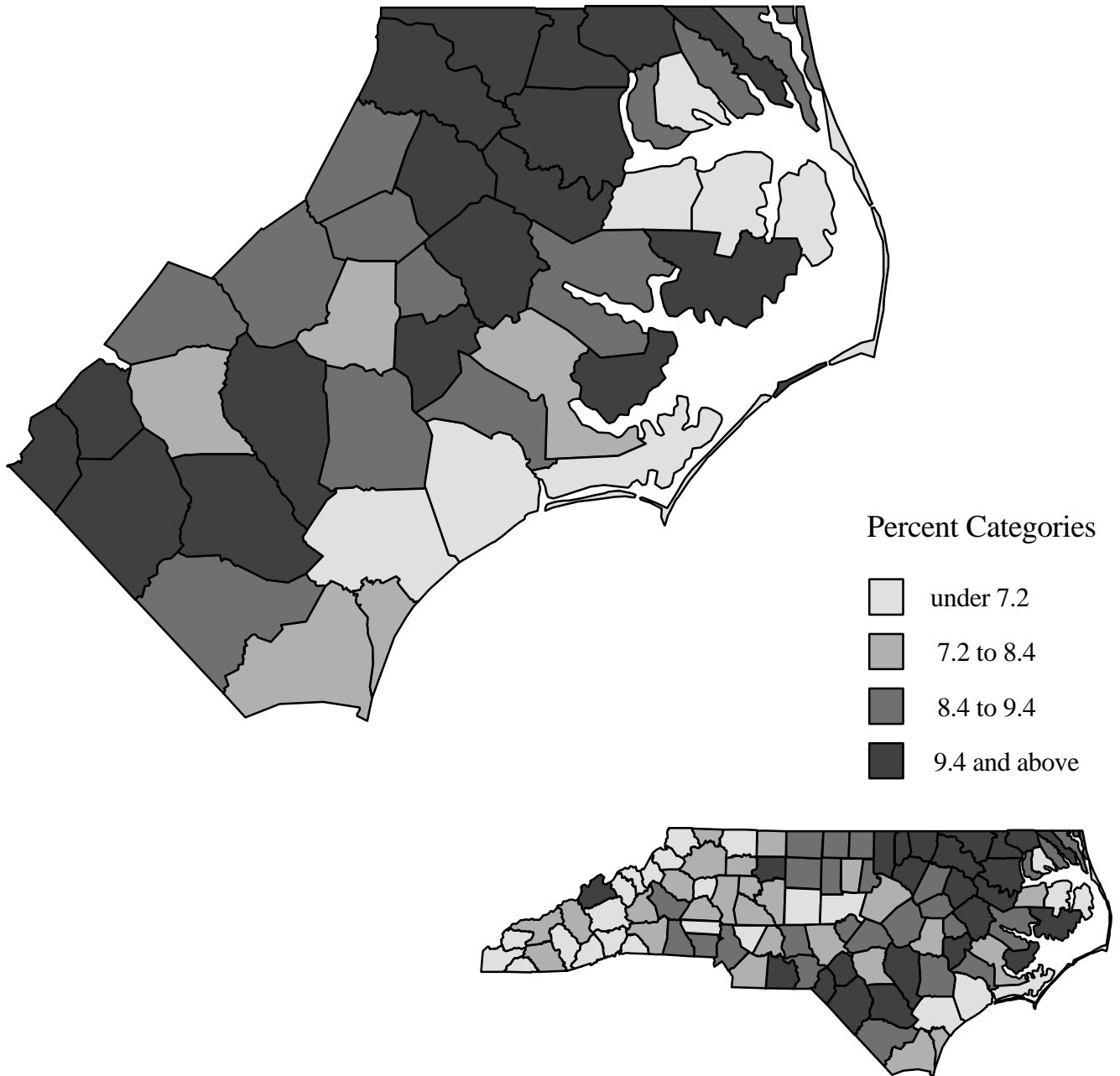
## Percent Low Weight and Very Low Weight Births Eastern North Carolina, 1991 - 1993

County	Low Weight		Very Low Weight	
	Births < 2500 grams	Rate	Births < 1500 grams	Rate
Beaufort	179	9.8	31	1.7
Bertie	114	12.9	33	3.7
<b>Bladen</b>	141	11.0	31	2.4
<b>Brunswick</b>	166	7.5	38	1.7
Camden	21	10.8	7	3.6
Carteret	130	6.4	20	0.9
Chowan	52	8.7	12	2.0
<b>Columbus</b>	174	8.0	49	2.3
Craven	347	7.3	83	1.8
<b>Cumberland</b>	1,435	8.4	336	2.0
Currituck	59	10.7	17	3.1
Dare	45	4.9	7	0.8
Duplin	171	9.1	38	2.0
Edgecombe	348	12.3	61	2.2
Gates	47	13.2	4	1.1
Greene	63	10.5	18	3.0
Halifax	282	10.1	55	2.0
<b>Harnett</b>	339	9.0	65	1.7
Hertford	127	12.5	31	3.1
<b>Hoke</b>	131	10.5	37	3.0
Hyde	22	10.0	2	0.9
<b>Johnston</b>	364	9.0	54	1.3
Jones	34	8.7	8	2.1
Lenoir	275	10.4	73	2.8
Martin	111	9.9	23	2.0
Nash	343	9.3	78	2.1
<b>New Hanover</b>	439	8.2	79	1.5
Northampton	74	8.5	11	1.3
Onslow	683	7.0	137	1.4
Pamlico	42	11.5	10	2.7
Pasquotank	144	10.1	32	2.2
<b>Pender</b>	107	8.1	24	1.8
Perquimans	24	6.3	3	0.8
Pitt	495	9.5	113	2.2
<b>Robeson</b>	611	10.4	131	2.2
<b>Sampson</b>	191	9.1	39	1.9
<b>Scotland</b>	180	10.6	46	2.7
Tyrrell	7	4.7	2	1.3
Washington	41	6.6	11	1.8
Wayne	392	8.0	75	1.5
Wilson	274	9.3	36	1.2
29 County Region	4,946	8.8	1,031	1.8
41 County Region	9,224	8.9	1,960	1.9
North Carolina	26,132	8.5	5,252	1.7
United States	Not Calculated			

# Percent Low Birth Weight

## Eastern North Carolina

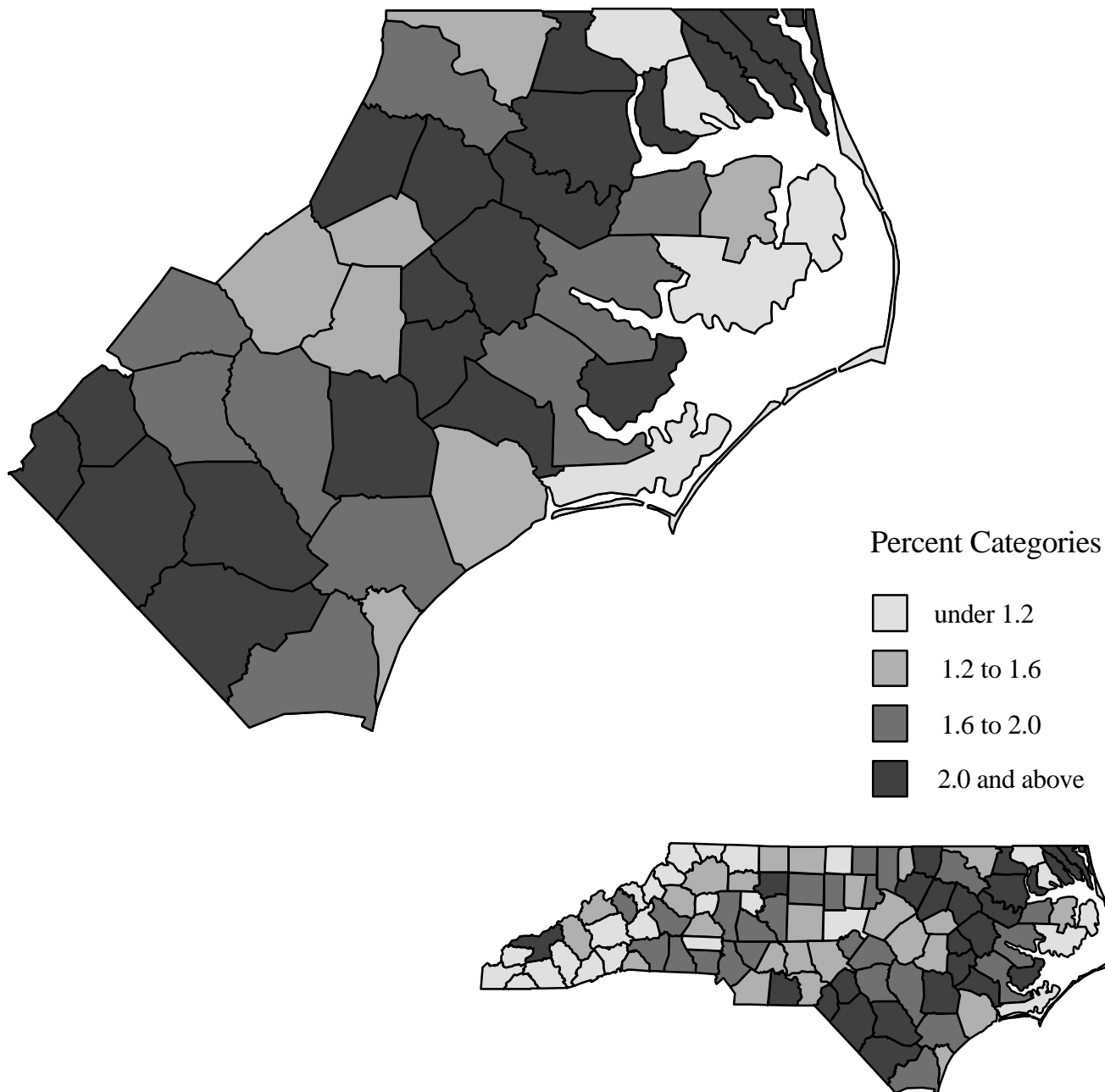
Total Percent Low Birth Weight: 1991 - 1993



# Percent Very Low Birth Weight

## Eastern North Carolina

Total Percent Very Low Birth Weight: 1991 - 1993





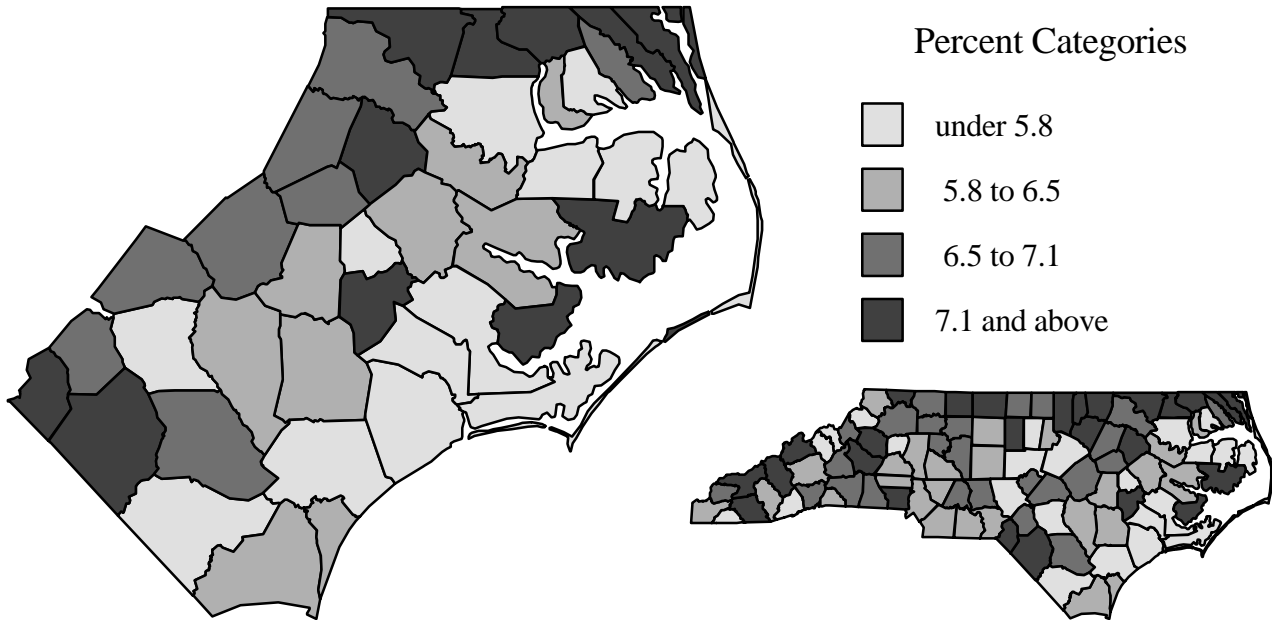
## Percent of Low Weight Births, by Race Eastern North Carolina, 1989 - 1993

County	White		Nonwhite		Total	
	Births < 2500 grams	Rate	Births < 2500 grams	Rate	Births < 2500 grams	Rate
Beaufort	106	6.1	176	13.4	282	9.3
Bertie	19	4.7	163	14.8	182	12.1
<b>Bladen</b>	66	6.5	164	14.6	230	10.7
<b>Brunswick</b>	172	6.3	108	11.8	280	7.7
Camden	22	8.4	13	13.0	35	9.7
Carteret	175	5.7	37	9.9	212	6.2
Chowan	29	5.8	52	11.2	81	8.4
<b>Columbus</b>	114	5.6	203	11.7	317	8.4
Craven	289	5.2	288	11.9	577	7.3
<b>Cumberland</b>	939	5.5	1,325	11.6	2,264	7.9
Currituck	71	8.2	14	13.9	85	8.8
Dare	61	4.0	16	18.0	77	4.8
Duplin	114	6.2	166	12.9	280	9.0
Edgecombe	112	7.2	469	14.5	581	12.1
Gates	25	8.3	46	14.2	71	11.4
Greene	27	5.6	66	12.8	93	9.3
Halifax	103	6.5	357	11.6	460	9.8
<b>Harnett</b>	277	6.5	245	12.6	522	8.4
Hertford	32	7.2	181	14.0	213	12.2
<b>Hoke</b>	54	6.5	147	11.2	201	9.4
Hyde	22	10.2	15	9.9	37	10.1
<b>Johnston</b>	348	7.0	246	15.0	594	9.0
Jones	22	5.7	37	12.3	59	8.6
Lenoir	164	7.6	291	13.4	455	10.5
Martin	46	5.8	134	12.5	180	9.7
Nash	223	6.5	329	12.2	552	9.0
<b>New Hanover</b>	370	6.1	346	12.8	716	8.2
Northampton	32	7.7	122	10.9	154	10.0
Onslow	725	5.7	390	10.1	1,115	6.7
Pamlico	31	7.2	32	14.8	63	9.7
Pasquotank	87	6.5	137	12.4	224	9.2
<b>Pender</b>	68	5.0	81	10.1	149	6.9
Perquimans	13	3.5	30	10.0	43	6.4
Pitt	278	6.0	534	13.4	812	9.5
<b>Robeson</b>	182	7.2	812	11.3	994	10.2
<b>Sampson</b>	121	6.0	209	14.3	330	9.5
<b>Scotland</b>	99	8.0	197	12.0	296	10.3
Tyrrell	2	1.6	11	8.7	13	5.2
Washington	18	4.1	64	10.0	82	7.6
Wayne	304	6.1	373	11.4	677	8.2
Wilson	155	6.5	312	12.0	467	9.3
<b>29 County Region</b>						
	3,307	6.0	4,855	12.4	8,162	8.7
<b>41 County Region</b>						
	6,117	6.1	8,938	12.2	15,055	8.6
<b>North Carolina</b>						
	21,782	6.3	20,986	12.7	42,768	8.3
<b>United States</b>						
	Not Calculated					

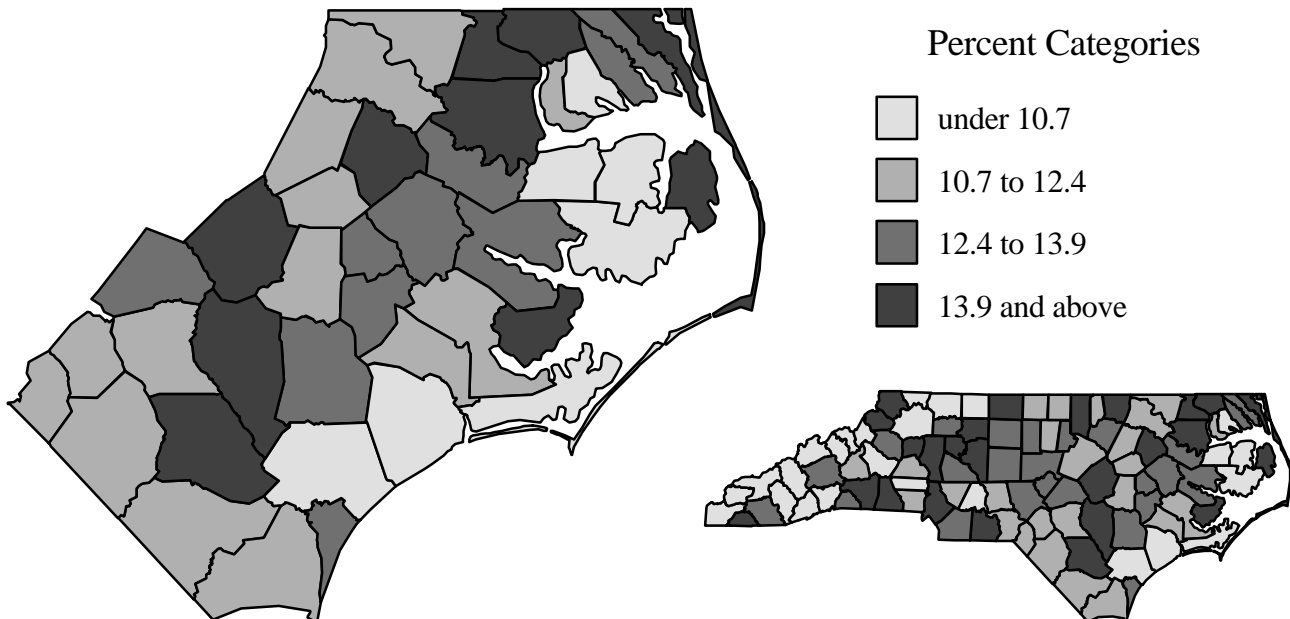
# Percent Low Birth Weight

## Eastern North Carolina

White Percent Low Birth Weight: 1989 - 1993



Nonwhite Percent Low Birth Weight: 1989 - 1993



## Percent Low Weight and Very Low Weight Black Births Eastern North Carolina, 1991-93

County	Live Births < 2500 grams and < 1500 grams	
	Low Weight Rate	Very Low Weight Rate
Beaufort	13.4	3.0
Bertie	16.0	4.7
<b>Bladen</b>	15.9	3.2
<b>Brunswick</b>	10.1	2.7
Camden	12.2	6.1
Carteret	12.4	3.6
Chowan	11.3	2.8
<b>Columbus</b>	11.3	3.0
Craven	12.4	3.1
<b>Cumberland</b>	12.5	3.4
Currituck	15.3	6.8
Dare	18.0	4.0
Duplin	12.7	2.7
Edgecombe	15.0	2.8
Gates	13.7	0.6
Greene	14.9	5.1
Halifax	11.4	2.6
<b>Harnett</b>	13.8	2.9
Hertford	14.1	3.2
<b>Hoke</b>	15.1	4.8
Hyde	10.5	1.2
<b>Johnston</b>	15.7	2.7
Jones	12.3	2.9
Lenoir	13.3	3.7
Martin	12.8	2.5
Nash	12.8	3.2
<b>New Hanover</b>	12.8	2.5
Northampton	9.3	1.6
Onslow	11.6	2.7
Pamlico	20.7	6.3
Pasquotank	13.7	3.5
<b>Pender</b>	12.0	3.5
Perquimans	9.6	1.3
Pitt	13.7	3.4
<b>Robeson</b>	14.9	3.5
<b>Sampson</b>	13.8	2.8
<b>Scotland</b>	13.1	3.7
Tyrrell	9.4	3.1
Washington	8.3	1.9
Wayne	10.8	2.2
Wilson	11.5	1.7
29 County Region	Not Calculated	
41 County Region	Not Calculated	
<b>North Carolina</b>	13.3	3.1
<b>United States</b>	Not Calculated	

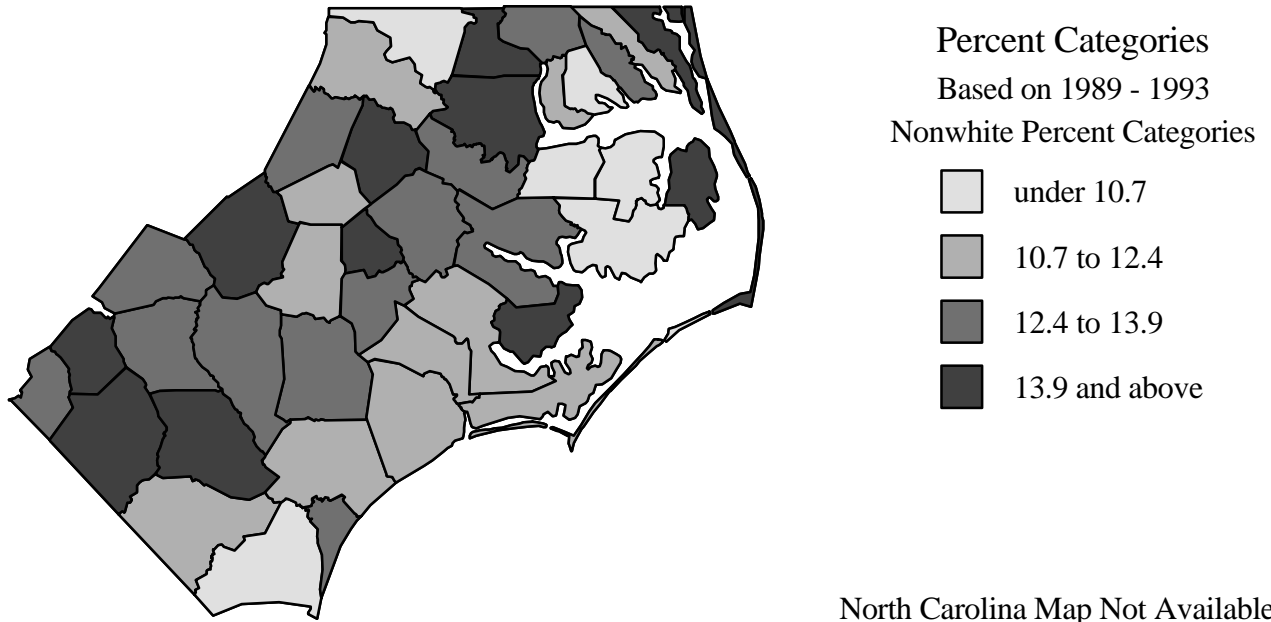
\* Number of live births < 2500 grams/total live births

\*\* Number of live births < 1500 grams/total live births

# Percent Low Birth Weight

## Eastern North Carolina

Black Percent Low Birth Weight: 1991 - 1993



# Percent Very Low Birth Weight

## Eastern North Carolina

Black Percent Very Low Birth Weight: 1991 - 1993

