

4. General Situation in Each Prefecture

■ General Situation in Each Prefecture

The “Japanese Film Industry Statistics” of the Japanese Film Producers Association does not include the statistics of the film attendance of each prefecture. The governmental documents, the “Special Service Industry Status Research Report: Film Theaters” (until 2019) and the “Special Service Industry Status Research Report” of the “Economic Census Activities Research” (from 2020) include the number of film theater attendance in each prefecture.

In this almanac, we calculated the average share of the attendance in each prefecture against Japan’s total attendance in each year, based on the “Special Service Industry Status Research Report” and the “Economic Census Activities Research” released in 2015-2023 (including the most recent data of 2021 and released in March 2023). We then multiplied these percentages by Japan’s total attendance in the “Japanese Film Industry Statistics” in order to obtain the rough attendance of each prefecture.

The average number of films a person went to see annually was obtained for each prefecture. The total attendance nationwide in 2023 was 155,535,000, showing a 3.9% increase from that in 2022, almost recovering to that of 169,210,000 in 2018 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The average number of films a person went to see annually was 1.3 films, recovering to the level in the first half of the 2010s.

8 prefectures scored above the national average of 1.3 films: Tokyo (2.0), Yamagata (1.9), Kyoto (1.6), Osaka (1.5), Kanagawa (1.5), Fukuoka (1.4), Chiba (1.4), and Aichi (1.4).

The number of screens in each prefecture was predictably high, like that of attendance, in the prefectures with big cities. From 2022 to 2023, the total number of screens nationwide increased by 10. Until 2020, this number had been constantly increasing between 30 to 50 screens annually; from 2019 to 2020, 42 screens; from 2018-2019, 57 screens; from 2017 to 2018, 39 screens; from 2016 to 2017, 30 screens, were added. However, from 2021 to 2022, the number decreased by 15, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, from 2022 to 2023, the number increased.

The national average population per screen was 36,600. When this figure is lower, it means that there are more screens in the area, and the inhabitants feel that the screens are easily accessible. The numbers in only two prefectures, Ishikawa (17,896) and Yamagata (19,004), were between 10,000 and 19,999, and these are the “prefectures with many movie houses.” In Yamagata, the average number of films a person went to see annually was also largely above the national average. They are followed by four Kyushu prefectures of Oita (24,914), Kumamoto (25,114), Okinawa (27,705) and Fukuoka (27,605), adding more screens during the last 5 years.

On the other hand, 7 prefectures whose average population per screen exceeded 50,000 were: Yamanashi (66,295), Kochi (60,572), Fukushima (53,543), Okayama (54,310), Akita (50,751), Nagasaki (50,653), and Iwate (50,566), the same prefectures as those of the last years. In these prefectures, the number of theaters is small, and the number of films a person went to see annually was also low, below the national average. However, in these areas with a lower number of theaters, as described in this book, there have been a number of other independent film exhibition activities. These include film festivals and screenings at cinematheques, traveling screenings at public auditoriums, and screenings at newly opened exhibition spaces. Often, such activities are not reflected in their number of theater screenings. We must keep in mind that rich film exhibition environments could be uncounted in these film business statistics.

fig.27

General Situation in Each Prefecture (2023)

■ In Each Prefecture [Number of Screens]

The nationwide number of screens in Japan increased by 274 from 3,408 to 3,682 during the 10 years from 2014 to 2023. Under the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2023, the number of screens did not decrease, changing from 3,669 to 3,682, however, increasing only little. The Great East Japan Earthquake took place on March 11, 2011; and around the same time, a big change took place in the form of the theatrical digitalization (transition from film projection to DCP [Digital Cinema Package] projection). Because of these elements, the number of screens decreased by as many as 88 from 3,496 in 2011 to 3,408 in 2014. As for the number of theaters, that in 2011 was 789, while that in 2013 was 609, as a result of closing of 180 theaters in two years, occupying about 25% of the total number. Currently, there have not been significant decreases in the number of theaters and screens. However, theaters must face the renewal of their digital cinema projectors and large-scale investment in facilities, and not having completely recovered from the 3-year period of the COVID-19 pandemic could become a source of serious concern.

The prefectures where the number of screens has notably increased during the last 10 years are: Tokyo (by 69 screens), Osaka (by 35 screens), Saitama (by 26 screens), Okinawa (by 21 screens), Chiba (by 21 screens), Oita (by 19 screens), and Kumamoto (by 18 screens). During these 10 years, 64 multi-screen sites with 609 screens were added, with 21 sites in the 4 prefectures of Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama, and Kanagawa, and 5 sites in Aichi and Osaka each, all around the big cities. The two cinema chains that are the main forces behind these increases during the past 10 years are TOHO Cinemas and Aeon Cinemas, occupying 40% of the total number of screens in 2023.

During the last 10 years, 24 multi-screen sites and 203 screens have

closed. The prefectures where the number of screens has decreased by 8 or more during the last 10 years are Gunma (10 screens) and Aomori (8 screens), due to the closing of multi-screen sites (Korona World Aomori and Previ Theater Isezaki Cinema). As for other types of theaters, 87 sites with 132 screens have closed nationwide.

fig.28

[Chart: Changes in Number of Screens in Each Prefecture \(2014-2023\)](#)

■ Changes in Number of Theaters and Screens According to Theater Types in Each Prefecture (2013-2022)

- [Hokkaido / Tohoku Region](#)
[Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima]
- [Kanto Region](#)
[Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo]
- [Chubu Region](#)
[Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka, Aichi]
- [Kinki Region](#)
[Mie, Shiga, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, Nara, Wakayama]
- [Chugoku / Shikoku Region](#)
[Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime, Kochi]
- [Kyushu Okinawa Region](#)
[Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Okinawa]