



# Report Highlights

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## 2008 Living Planet Report

### Canada's Footprint

- Canada has the 7th largest ecological footprint
- If everyone on Earth consumed the equivalent resources as Canadians, it would take 3 Earths to meet this demand!

#### Carbon footprint

- Roughly half of Canada's total footprint is a result of its carbon footprint, derived predominately from transportation, heating and electricity consumption (Figure 22).

#### Water footprint

- Canada also has the 12<sup>th</sup> largest water footprint (Figure 28) and the average Canadian consumes more than 2,000,000 litres of water per year. Another way to think about this is that it is the equivalent of 5,400 litres of water per person per day. Or, to put it into other terms, it is the equivalent of running your kitchen tap for over 10 hours a day every day, or flushing your toilet nearly 1000 times each day.
- While Canada has large volumes of available freshwater on a per capita basis, the challenge is that the vast majority of this water is not easily accessible to most Canadians. In other words, our water is distributed throughout the northern parts of our country while our population is in a thin band along the US-Canada border. Accordingly, there are regional water shortages, for both humans and species.

#### Biocapacity

- Canada is an ecological creditor country. In other words, Canada's biocapacity (Figure 25) is greater than its ecological footprint. However, Canadians are not the only ones drawing on Canada's resources; the rest of the world's footprint also lands in our country as natural resource exports dominate our economy.
- With the world's 7<sup>th</sup> largest ecological footprint, Canada's consumption remains incredibly high relative to the world's biocapacity and Canadian lifestyles are furthering the decline of biodiversity in other countries where Canada's ecological footprint often lands.

## Global Situation

- The Living Planet Index continues to fall while the world's average ecological footprint continues to rise.
- A country's footprint is the sum of all the cropland, grazing land, forest and fishing grounds required to produce the food, fibre and timber it consumes, to absorb the carbon emitted when it uses energy, and to provide space for its infrastructure.
- If our demands on the planet continue to increase at the same rate, by the mid-2030s we would need the equivalent of two planets to maintain our lifestyles.

### **Carbon Footprint**

- Carbon emissions from fossil fuel use and land conversion are the greatest component of humanity's footprint, underlining the key threat of climate change.

### **Water Footprint**

- New this year, the water footprint (Figure 28) highlights the significance of water traded in the form of commodities. It is a measure not only of the water we consume directly from the tap, but more significantly, the water embedded in the products we produce and import for consumption. For example, a cotton T-shirt requires 2,900 litres of water in its production and one kilogram of beef consumes 15,500 litres of water.
- On average, each person consumes 1.24 million litres (about half an Olympic swimming pool) of water a year, but this varies from 2.48 million litres per person a year (USA) to 619,000 litres per capita annually (Yemen).
- Around 50 countries are currently facing moderate or severe water stress and the number of people suffering from year-round or seasonal water shortages is expected to increase as a result of climate change.

### **Species**

- The report shows a nearly 30 per cent decline since 1970 in nearly 5000 measured populations of 1,686 species. These dramatic losses in our natural wealth are being driven by deforestation and land conversion in the tropics (50% decline in Tropical LPI) and the impact of dams, diversions and climate change on freshwater species (35% decline). Pollution, over-fishing and destructive fishing in marine and coastal environments are also taking a considerable toll.

### **USA and China have largest ecological footprint**

- The USA and China have the largest national footprints, each in total about 21 per cent of global biocapacity, but US citizens each require an average of 9.4 global ha (or nearly 4.5 Planet Earths if the global population had US consumption patterns) while Chinese citizens use on average 2.1 global ha per person (one Planet Earth).

### **Global Biocapacity**

- Biocapacity is unevenly distributed, with eight nations – the United States, Brazil, Russia, China, India, Canada, Argentina and Australia - containing more than half the world total. Population and consumption patterns make three of these countries ecological debtors, with footprints greater than their national biocapacity - the USA (footprint 1.8 times national biocapacity), China (2.3 times) and India (2.2 times).



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## Solutions

- The good news is that we have the means to reverse the ecological credit crunch. It is not too late to prevent an irreversible ecological recession
- The path forward is to balance the books – to change our spending habits and reduce the footprint impact we’re having on other countries (and help other countries reduce their impact on Canada).
- The report suggests some key “sustainability wedges” which if combined could stabilise and reverse the worsening slide into ecological debt and enduring damage to global support systems.
- For the single most important challenge – climate change – the report shows that a range of efficiency, renewable and low emissions “wedges” could meet projected energy demands to 2050 with reductions in carbon emissions of 60 to 80 per cent.

To reduce Canada’s ecological footprint, WWF-Canada is calling on:

**The Canadian Government** – to work to aggressively reduce Canada’s carbon footprint by implementing measures that would predictably reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as increasing energy efficiency standards, and ensure that Canada signs a new global climate agreement in Copenhagen in December 2009.

**Canadian industry** – to become more efficient in how resources are used – especially carbon and water

**Individual Canadians** – to take responsibility for our own consumption and reduce our ecological footprint through such actions as joining WWF’s *The Good Life* at [wwf.ca](http://wwf.ca).

“If humanity has the will, it has the ways to live within the means of the planet, but we must recognize that the ecological credit crunch will require even bolder action than that now being mustered for the financial crisis,” says WWF International Director-General James Leape.

## About the Living Planet Report

WWF’s Living Planet Report has been published every two years since 1998 and has become accepted as a leading statement on the planet’s health. It describes the changing state of global biodiversity and the pressure on the planet arising from human consumption of natural resources.

It is built around two indicators:

- The Living Planet Index, which reflects the health of the planet’s ecosystems; and
- The Ecological Footprint, which shows the extent of human demand on these ecosystems and the state of the planet’s ability to provide biological goods and services.

These measures are tracked over several decades to reveal past trends and provide insight into what might lie ahead.

The Living Planet Report is produced with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the Global Footprint Network (GFN). In 2008, it adds for the first time new measures of global, national and individual water footprint to existing measures of the Ecological Footprint of human demand on natural resources and the Living Planet Index, a measure of the state of nature.

**About WWF**

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

**About ZSL**

Founded in 1826, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity: our key role is the conservation of animals and their habitats. ZSL runs ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, carries out scientific research in the Institute of Zoology and is actively involved in field conservation in over forty countries worldwide. [www.zsl.org](http://www.zsl.org)

**About GFN**

The Global Footprint Network promotes a sustainable economy by advancing the Ecological Footprint, a tool that makes sustainability measurable. Together with its partners, the network coordinates research, develops methodological standards, and provides decision makers with robust resource accounts to help the human economy operate within the Earth's ecological limits. [www.footprintnetwork.org](http://www.footprintnetwork.org)