



for a living planet[®]

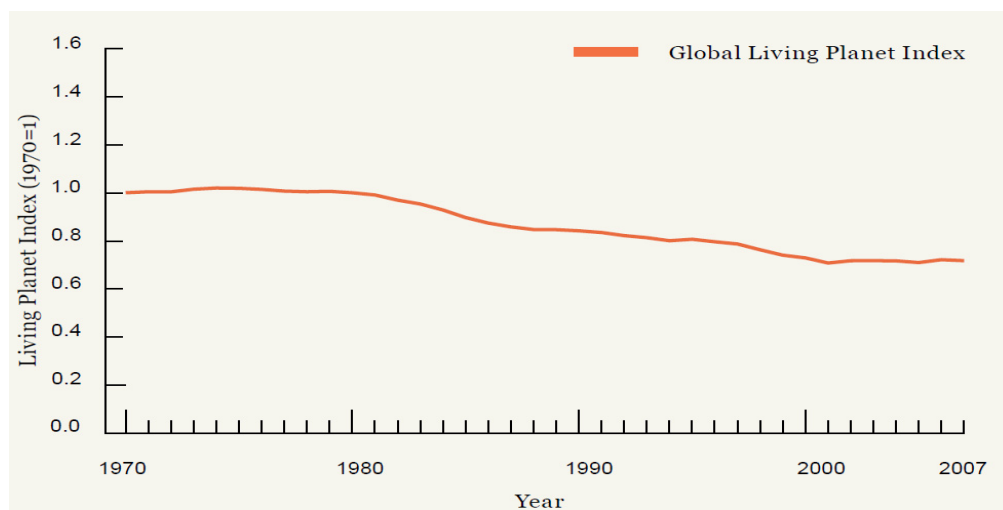
MEDIA BACKGROUNDER LIVING PLANET REPORT 2010

The world's leading, science-based analysis on the health of our only planet and the impact of human activity

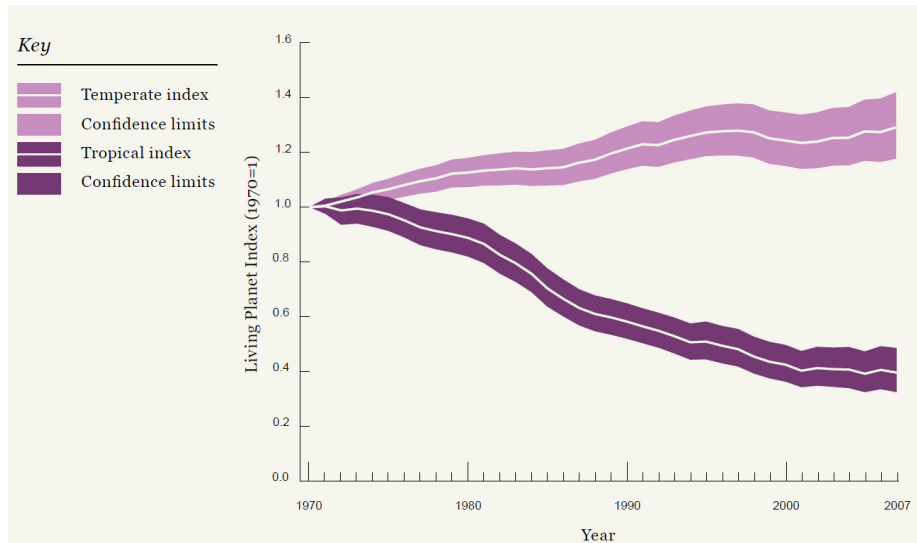
BIODIVERSITY

The Living Planet Report (LPR) documents the changing state of biodiversity, ecosystems and humanity's consumption of natural resources

One of the LPR's longest-running measures of the trends in the state of global biodiversity the **Living Planet Index (LPI)** shows an **alarming and consistent overall trend since the first LPR was published in 1998: a global decline of almost 30 per cent between 1970 and 2007.**



Trends regarding tropical and temperate species' populations are starkly divergent: **the tropical LPI has declined by 60 per cent while the temperate LPI has increased by almost 30 per cent.** Tropical freshwater species have declined by almost 70 per cent.



Biodiversity loss can cause ecosystems to become stressed or degraded, and even eventually to collapse.

This threatens the continued provision of ecosystem services, which in turn further threatens biodiversity and ecosystem health.

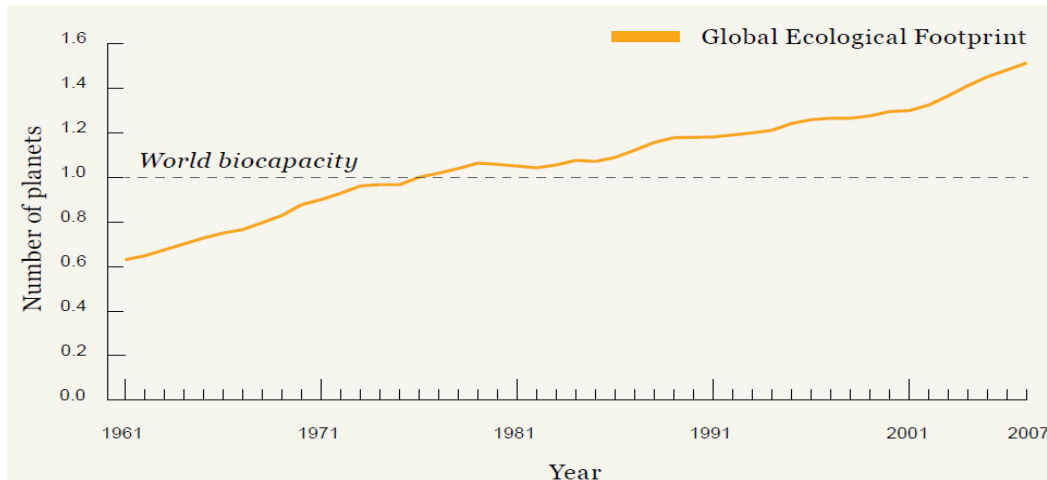
Crucially, the dependency of human society on ecosystem services makes the loss of these services a serious threat to the future well-being and development of all people, all around the world.

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

The Ecological Footprint tracks the area of biologically productive land and water required to provide the renewable resources people use, and includes the space needed for infrastructure and vegetation to absorb waste carbon dioxide (CO₂). **It shows an alarming and consistent trend: one of continuous growth.**

In 2007, the most recent year for which data is available, the Footprint exceeded the Earth's biocapacity — the area actually available to produce renewable resources and absorb CO₂ — **by 50 per cent.**

Overall, humanity's Ecological Footprint has doubled since 1966.



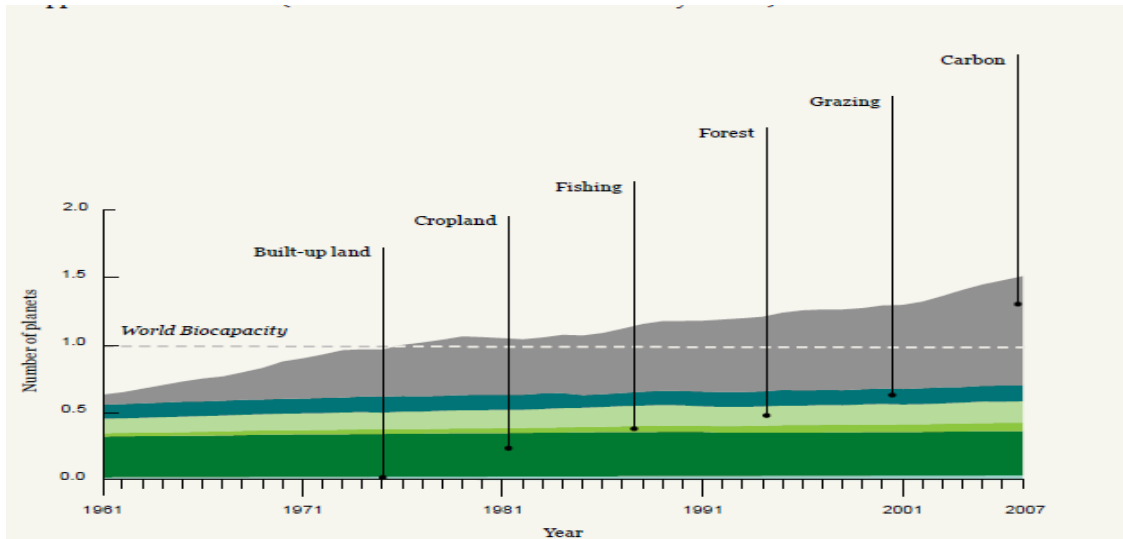
- **The Water Footprint of Production** provides a second measure of human demand on renewable resources, and shows **that 71 countries are currently experiencing some stress on blue water sources** — that is, sources of water people use and don't return.
- This Living Planet Report includes an **ecosystem service indicator for terrestrial carbon storage**. This map of carbon density in forests and other ecosystems not only quantifies and locates current carbon stocks in a globally consistent way, but also helps to quantify potential emissions from land-use changes in different areas.

CARBON

This growth in ecological overshoot is largely attributable **to the carbon footprint, which has increased 11-fold since 1961 and by just over one-third since the publication of the first Living Planet Report in 1998**. Carbon emissions (in particular), and food demand, are the major drivers of the escalating Footprint. Carbon is crippling the planet's life support system – carbon is the single largest demand on the biosphere – accounting for over half of the Ecological Footprint.

HOW MANY PLANETS?

The Ecological Footprint exceeded the earth's biocapacity by 50 per cent – meaning **it takes 1.5 years for the Earth to produce the resources humanity consumes in a single year**.



Humanity used the equivalent of 1.5 planets in 2007 to support its activities. If everyone in the world lived like an average resident of the United States or the United Arab Emirates, then a biocapacity equivalent to more than 4.5 Earths would be required to keep up with humanity's consumption and CO₂ emissions. By 2030 humanity will need the capacity of 2 Earths to absorb CO₂ waste and keep up with natural resource consumption, and just over 2.8 planets each year by 2050.

WHO HAS THE BIGGEST FOOTPRINT?

Not everybody has an equal footprint and there are enormous differences between countries, particularly those at different economic levels and levels of development. Therefore, for the first time, this edition of the Living Planet Report looks at how the Ecological Footprint has changed over time in different political regions, both in magnitude and relative contribution of each footprint component.

The countries with the biggest Ecological Footprint per country, per person are: United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Denmark, Belgium, United States of America, Estonia, Canada, Australia, Kuwait, Ireland.

POOR, RICH

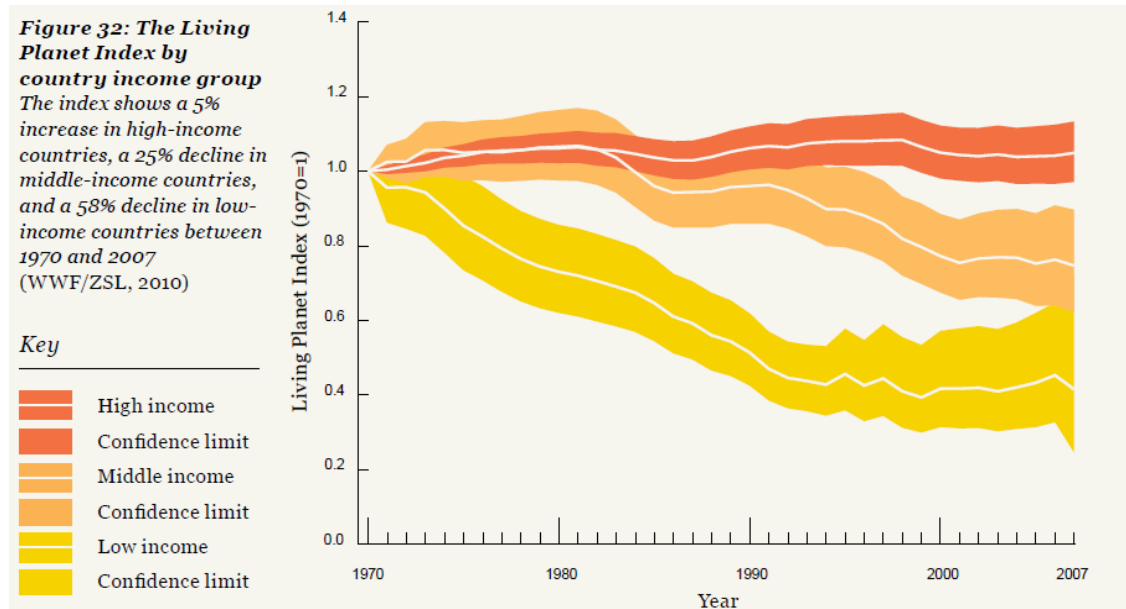
For the first time this year's Living Planet Report looks at trends in biodiversity by country income, which highlights an alarming rate of biodiversity loss in low-income countries.

This has serious implications for people in these countries: although all people depend on ecosystem services for their well-being, the impact of environmental degradation is felt most directly by the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Without access to clean water, land and adequate food, fuel and materials, vulnerable people cannot break out of the poverty trap and prosper.

Wealthy nations continue to depend on resources from other countries, contributing to an alarming rate of biodiversity loss in low-income, often still high-biodiversity countries.

An analysis of the Ecological Footprint according to four political groupings shows that developed countries generally make higher demands on the Earth's ecosystems than poorer, less developed countries.



In 2007, the 31 OECD countries — which include the world's richest economies — accounted for 37 per cent of humanity's Ecological Footprint. In contrast, the 10 ASEAN countries and 53 African Union countries — which include some of the world's poorest countries — accounted for only 11 per cent of the global Footprint. The average per-person Footprint in OECD countries is also much higher than in the other three political regions.

The Ecological Footprint of all four political groups more than doubled between 1961 and 2007. In all groups, the greatest increase has been in the carbon footprint.

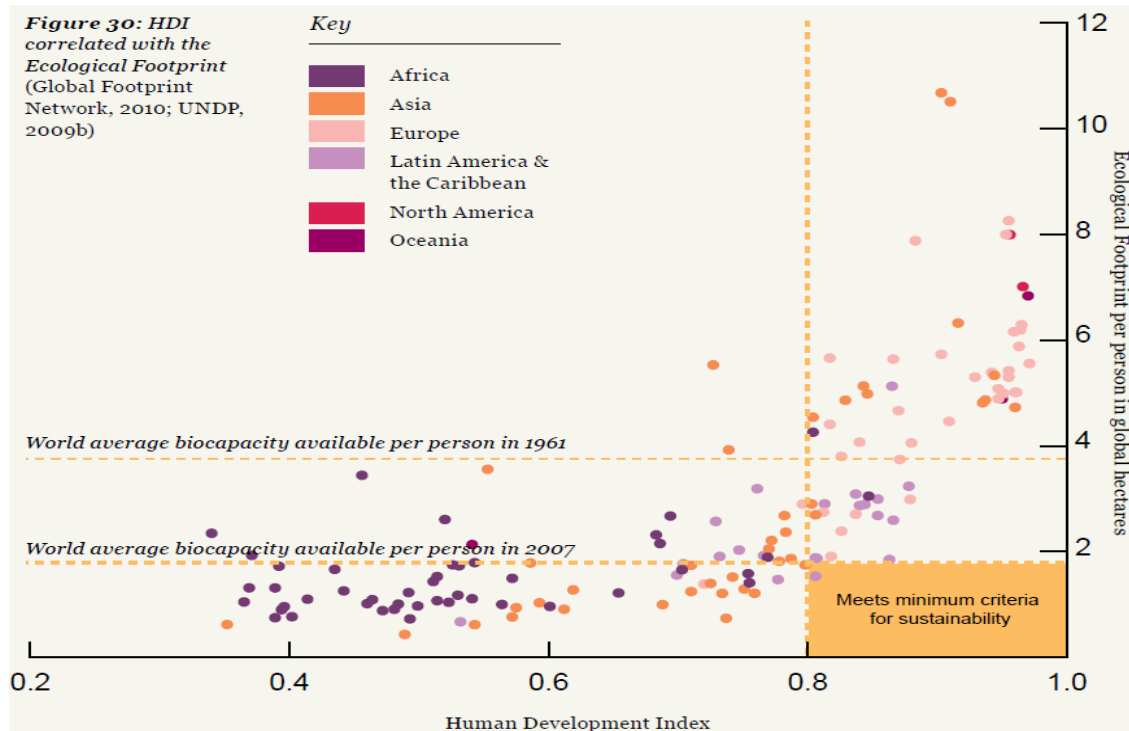
INCREASED CONSUMPTION VS. INCREASED DEVELOPMENT

The LPR shows that **individuals from different countries consume vastly different amounts, with richer countries tending to consume more than poorer, less developed countries.**

An important question to ask is whether a high level of consumption is necessary for a high level of human development.

The relation between the Ecological Footprint and the Human Development Index, a key indicator which looks at income, life expectancy and educational attainment, shows that in countries with a low development, the level of development is independent of per capita Footprint.

However, as development increases beyond a certain level, so does per person Footprint — eventually to the point where small gains in HDI come at the cost of very large Footprint increases.



Moreover, several countries with a high level of development have a similar per person Footprint to countries with a much lower level of development. Together with the breakdown in connection between wealth and well-being above a certain level of GDP per capita. **Conclusion : A high level of consumption is not necessarily required for a high level of development or well-being**

GREEN ECONOMY. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Through aggressive energy efficiency efforts, backed by investments in renewable energy it is possible to reduce the world's carbon footprint in the future.

It is also possible to reduce the global footprint on agricultural land – though if, by 2050, 9.2 billion people demand a high-calorie, high-meat-and-dairy diet, the world will run-out of suitable land. This means that the **combined food choices of billions of people will be crucial** to all eating adequately.

To tackle the planet's most urgent problems, WWF asks the following issues to be addressed:

Investing in our natural capital – WWF calls on the world to:

- Increase the proportion of Protected Areas to 15% across all ecoregions should be designated as protected area¹

¹ Applies to IUCN Categories I-IV. WWF has recently adopted a position of 20% protection across all IUCN categories for the 2010 CBD COP.

- **Achieve zero net deforestation - through a worldwide effort involving traditional means (protected areas), new initiatives (REDD+) and market mechanisms (best practice in commodity supply chains) to achieve this**
- **Halt overuse of water and fragmentation of freshwater systems**
- **Eliminate over-fishing and destructive fishing practices**
- **Invest in biocapacity**
- **Value biodiversity and ecosystem services**
- **Resolve the energy and food dilemma**
- **Pay attention to land allocation and land-use planning issues**
- **Share limited resources**
