



WWF Living Planet Report 2010



The WWF has published its Living Planet Report 2010. It reveals a disturbing catalogue of biodiversity decline – here are the main findings:



Ecological footprint

- Demand on natural resources has doubled since 1966 and we are currently using the equivalent of 1.5 planets to support our activities.
- “Business as usual” projections estimate that by 2030 we will need the equivalent of two planets’ productive capacity to meet annual demands.
- The countries with the 10 biggest ecological footprint per person are the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Denmark, Belgium, United States, Estonia, Canada, Australia, Kuwait and Ireland.
- 4.5 Earths would be required to support a global population living like an average resident of the US.
- High-income countries have a footprint five times that of low-income countries, suggesting that consumption in wealthier nations depends on depleting poorer yet ‘resource rich’ tropical countries.
- While there are twice as many people in BRIC – Brazil, Russia, India and China – countries as there are in OECD countries, their current rate of per-person footprint will see them overtake the OECD bloc if they follow the same development path.

Carbon

- An 11-fold increase in the world’s carbon footprint is the main driver behind the doubling of mankind’s ecological footprint since 1966.
- The world’s carbon footprint has increased by just over a third since 1998.
- The carbon footprint of the 33 OECD nations has increased 10-fold since 1961.
- However, other regions are catching up: the carbon footprint of ASEAN countries increased by more than 100-fold, BRIC countries increased 20 times and African Union countries 30 times over the same period.

Biodiversity

- The Living Planet Index declined almost 30 per cent between 1970 and 2007 and has moved consistently downward since 1998.
- Low-income countries have the steepest decline in biodiversity – a 60 per cent drop in less than 40 years.
- Populations of freshwater tropical species were particularly hard hit and declined by nearly 70 per cent.
- But the LPI in temperate regions has improved by almost 30 per cent, reflecting greater conservation efforts and improvements in pollution and waste control.
- 34 per cent of Asia-Pacific CEOs and 53 per cent of Latin American CEOs expressed concern about the impacts of biodiversity loss on their business growth prospects, compared to just 18 per cent of Western European CEOs.

Water

- Over 70 countries are experiencing stress on blue water sources – sources people use and do not return – with nearly two-thirds of these experiencing moderate to severe stress.
- This has profound implications for ecosystem health, food production and human well-being, and is likely to be exacerbated by climate change.

source: Will Nichols, www.businessgreen.com (October 2010)