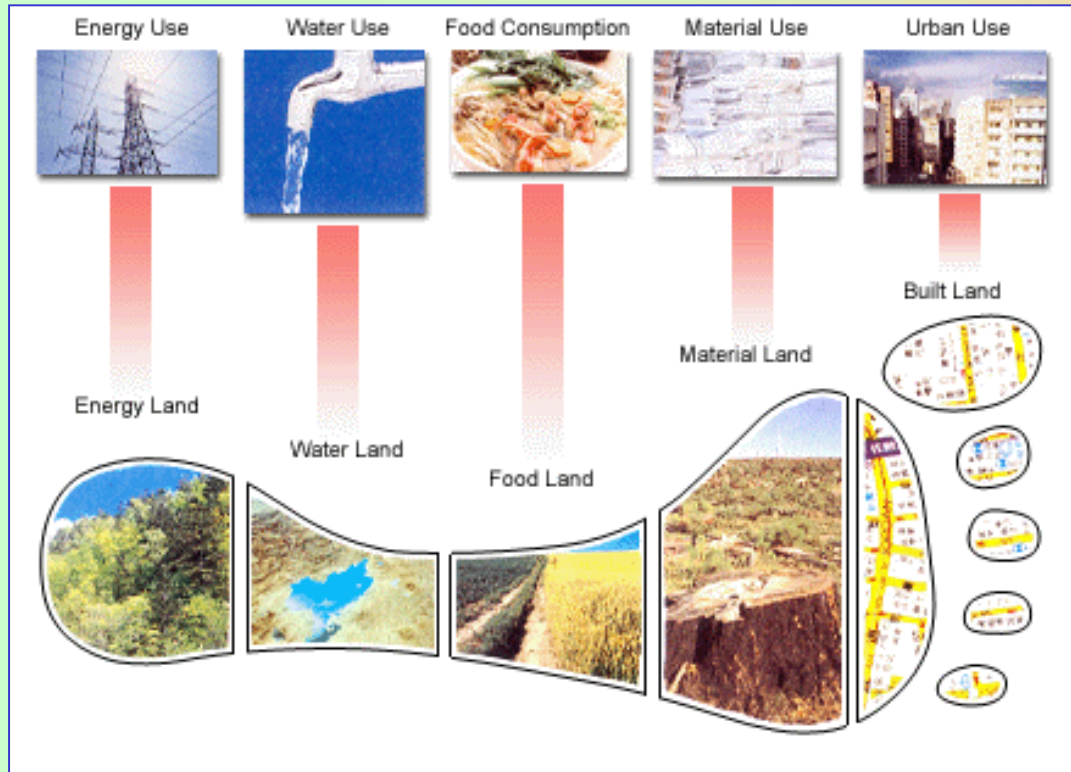


The Ecological Footprint

Footprint Basics - Overview



<http://www.foe.org.hk/welcome/images/en/ecocity/graphs1.gif>

Humanity needs what nature provides, but **how do we know how much we're using and how much we have to use?**

The Ecological Footprint has emerged as the world's premier measure of humanity's demand on nature. It measures how much land and water area a human population requires to produce the resource it consumes and to absorb its wastes, using prevailing technology.

The Ecological Footprint



https://elgg.leeds.ac.uk/socenv/files/-1/55/eco_footrpint.jpg

Footprint Basics - Overview

By measuring the Footprint of a population **we can assess our pressure on the planet**, which helps us manage our ecological assets more wisely and take personal and collective action in support of a world where humanity lives within the Earth's bounds.

The Ecological Footprint

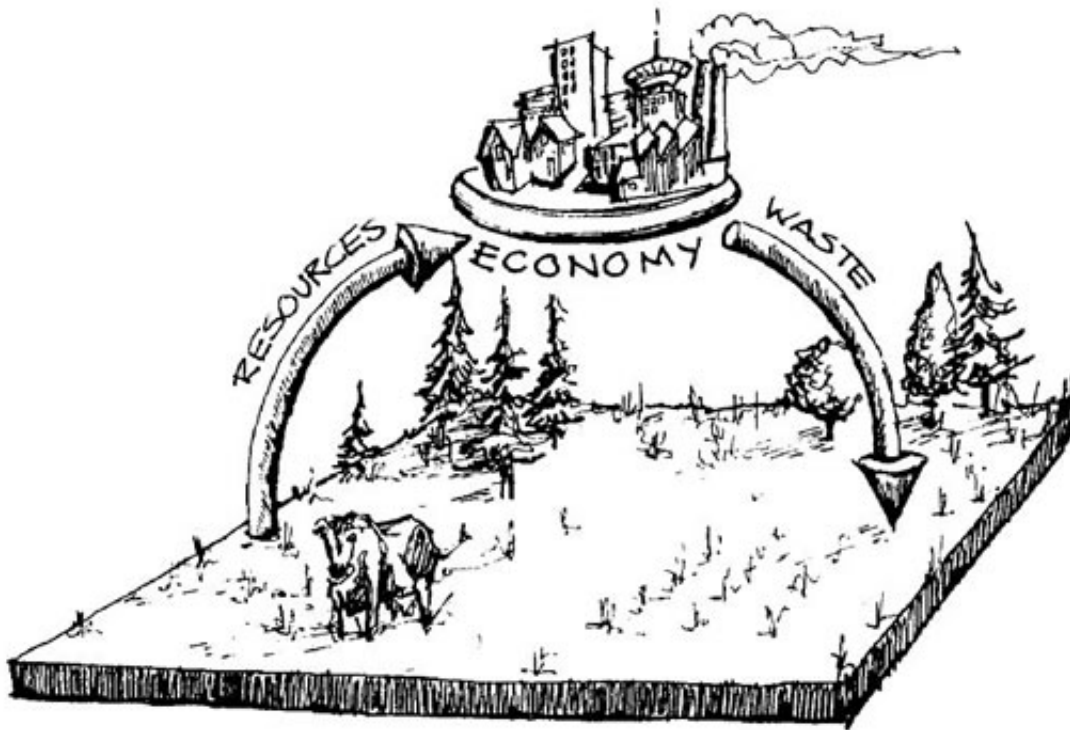


FIGURE 1. What is an ecological footprint? Think of a city as having an “industrial metabolism.” In this respect, it can be compared to a large animal grazing in its pasture. Just like the beast, the city consumes resources and all this energy and matter eventually passes through to the environment again. Thus, the footprint question becomes: “How large a pasture is necessary to support that city indefinitely—to produce all its ‘feed’ and to assimilate all its wastes sustainably” (Source: Wackernagel and Rees 1995).

<http://regionalworkbench.org/USP2/jpegs/ecologicalfootpring.jpg>

Footprint Basics - Overview

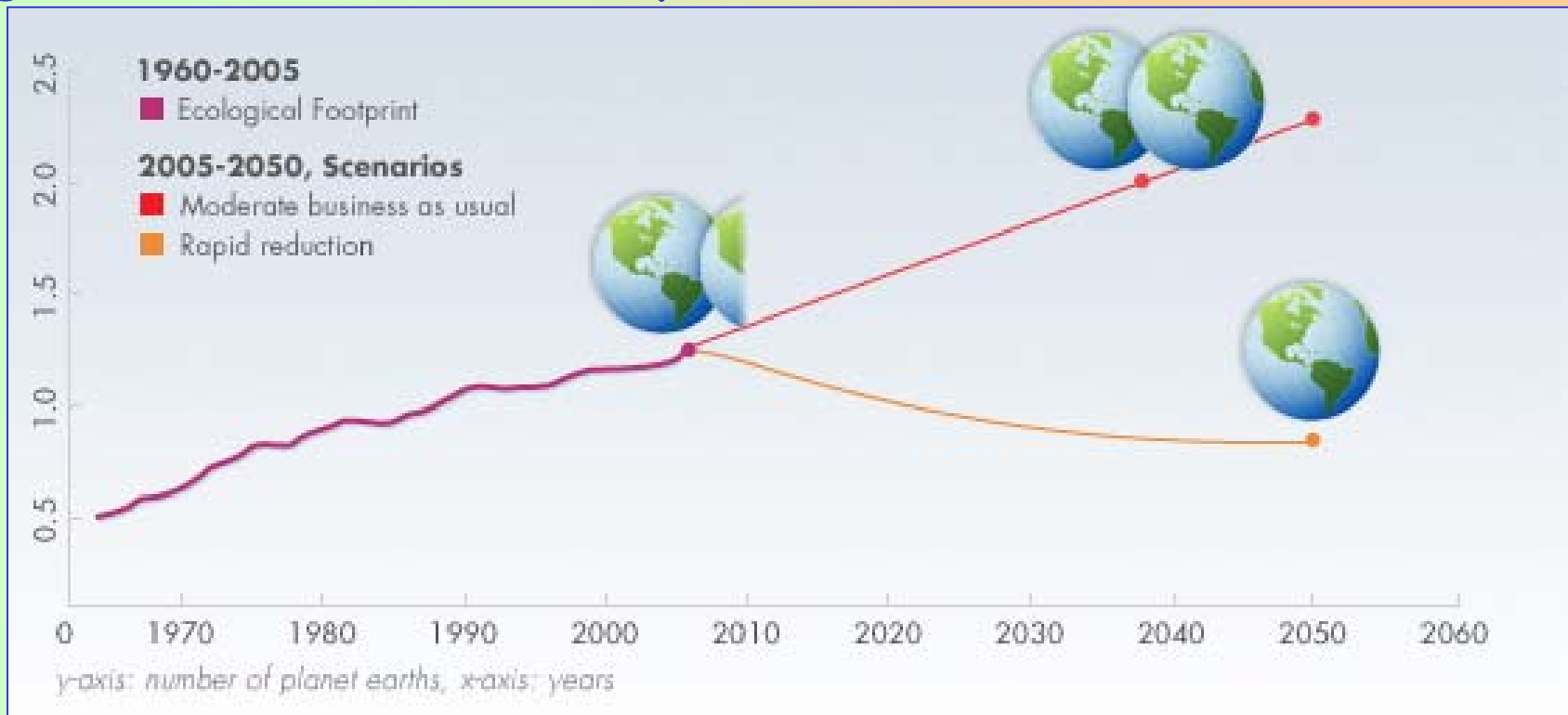
Conceived in 1990 by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees at the University of British Columbia, the Ecological Footprint is now in wide use by scientists, businesses, governments, agencies, individuals, and institutions working to monitor ecological resource use and advance sustainable development.

The Ecological Footprint

Do we fit on the planet?

Today humanity uses the equivalent of 1.3 planets to provide the resources we use and absorb our waste.

This means it now takes the Earth one year and four months to regenerate what we use in a year.

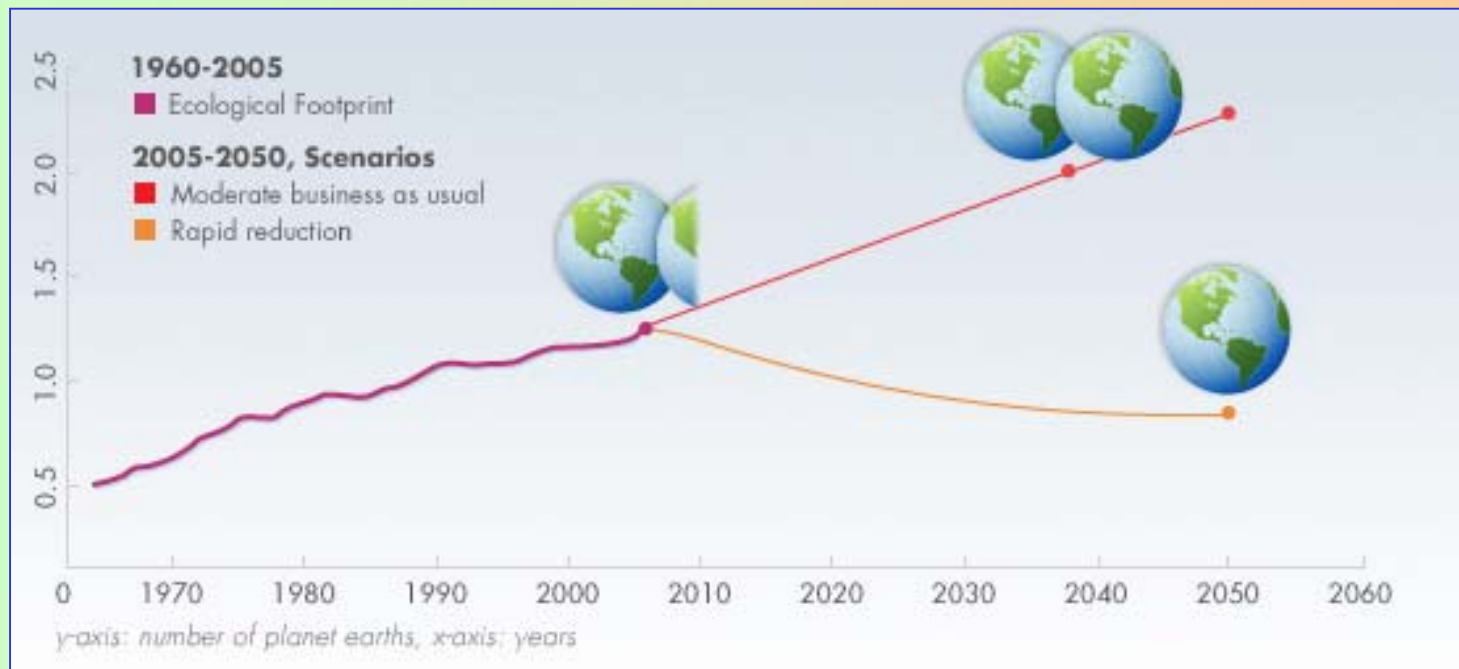


The Ecological Footprint

Do we fit on the planet?

Moderate UN scenarios suggest that if current population and consumption trends continue, **by the mid 2030s we will need the equivalent of two Earths to support us.**

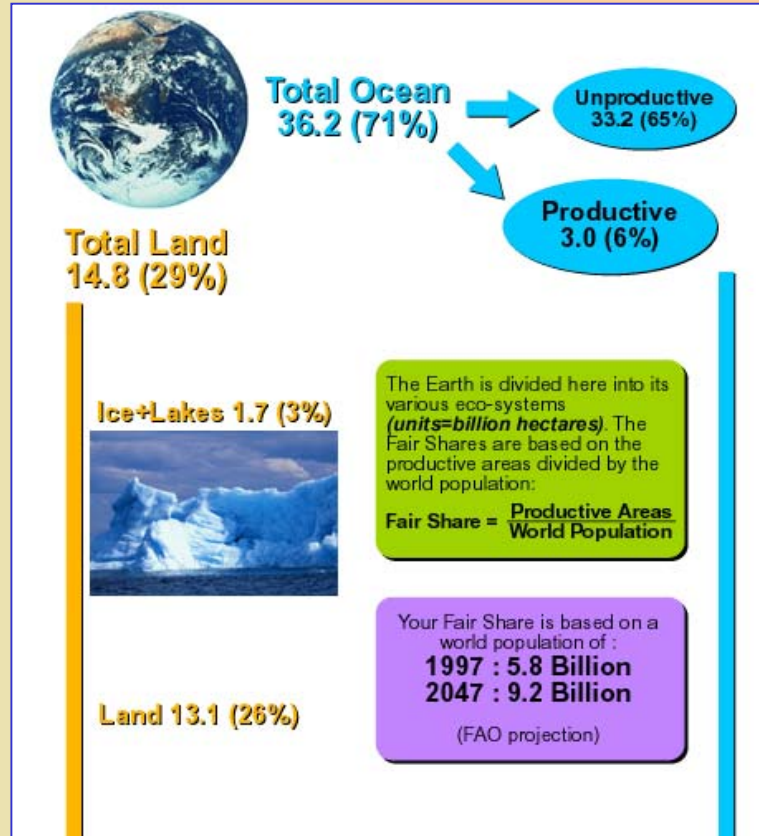
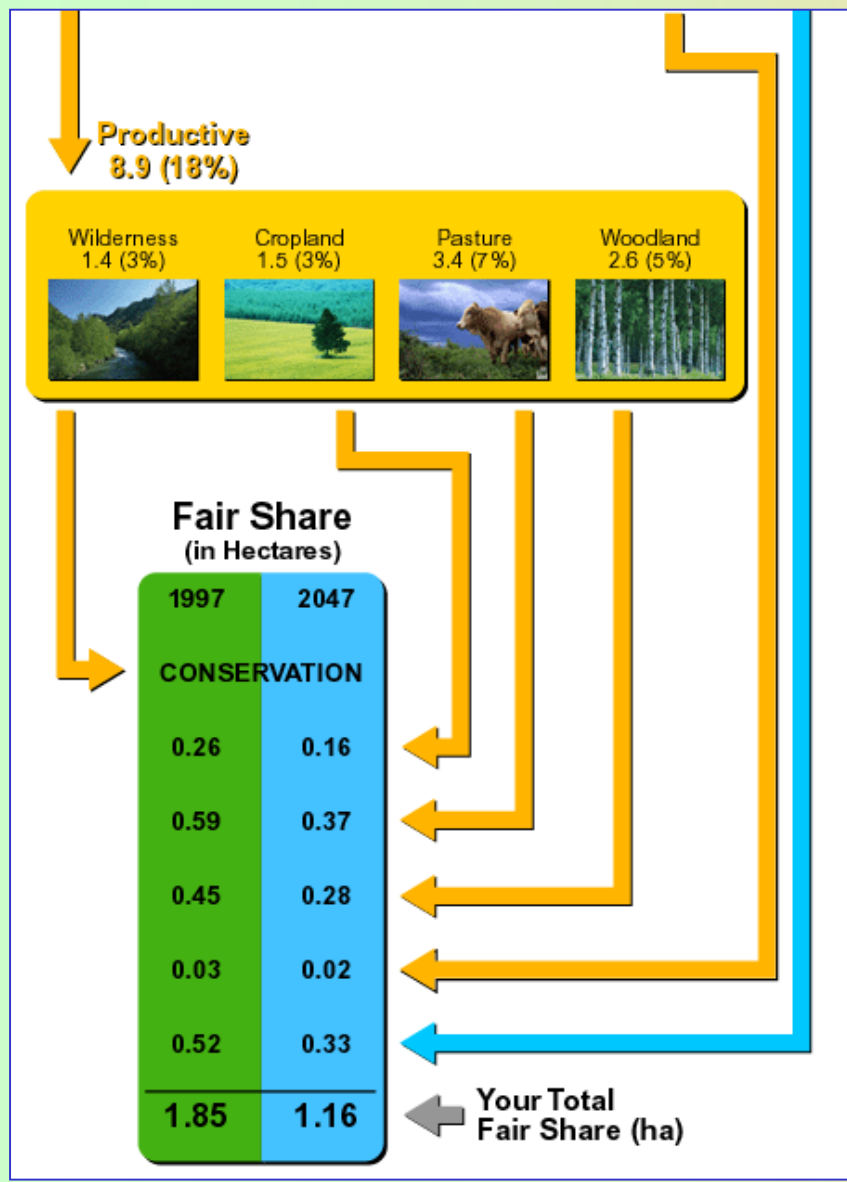
Turning resources into waste faster than waste can be turned back into resources puts us in global ecological overshoot, depleting the very resources on which human life and biodiversity depend.



The Ecological Footprint

What the Footprint Measures

It measures how much area is necessary to support meat, our cities, our economies...

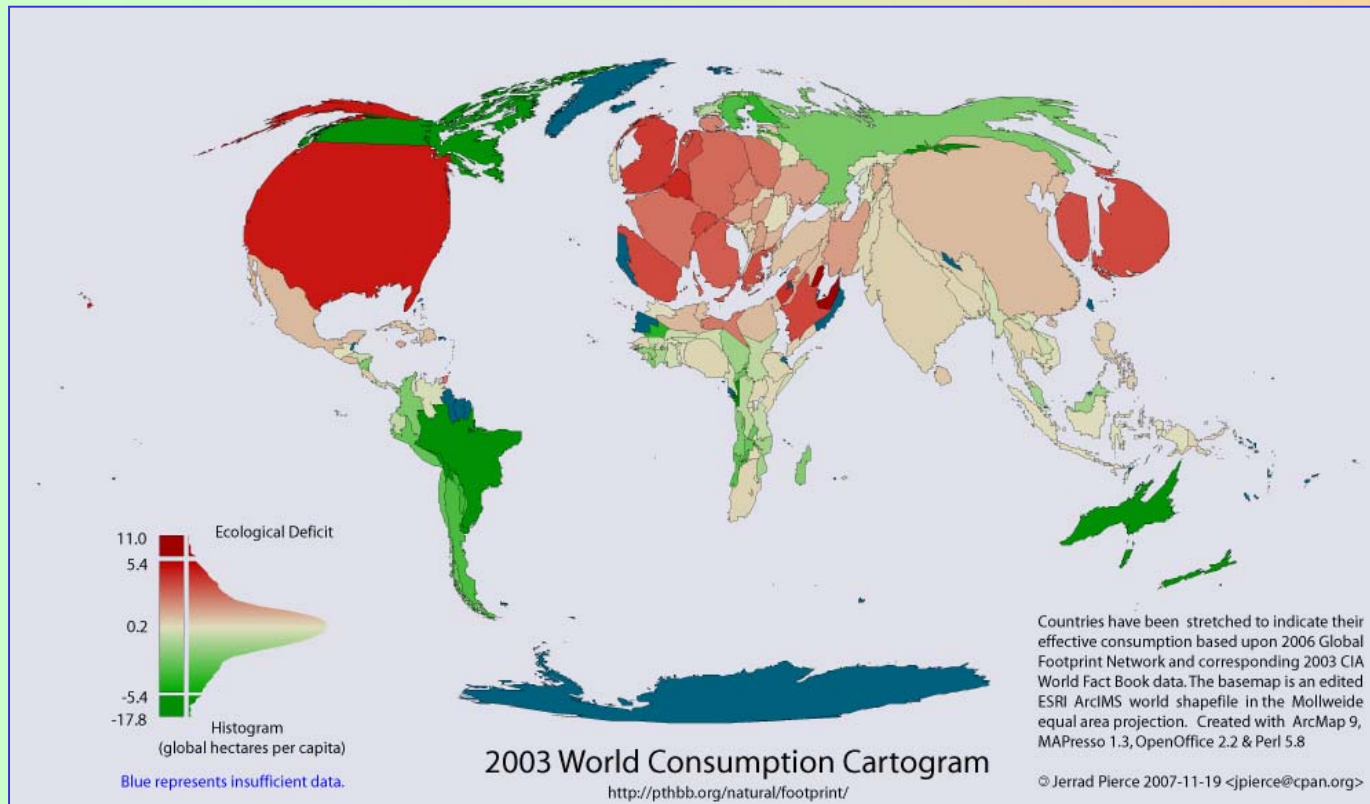


The Ecological Footprint

Ending Overshoot

The Earth provides all that we need to live and thrive. So what will it take for humanity to live within the means of one planet?

Individuals and institutions worldwide must begin to recognize ecological limits.



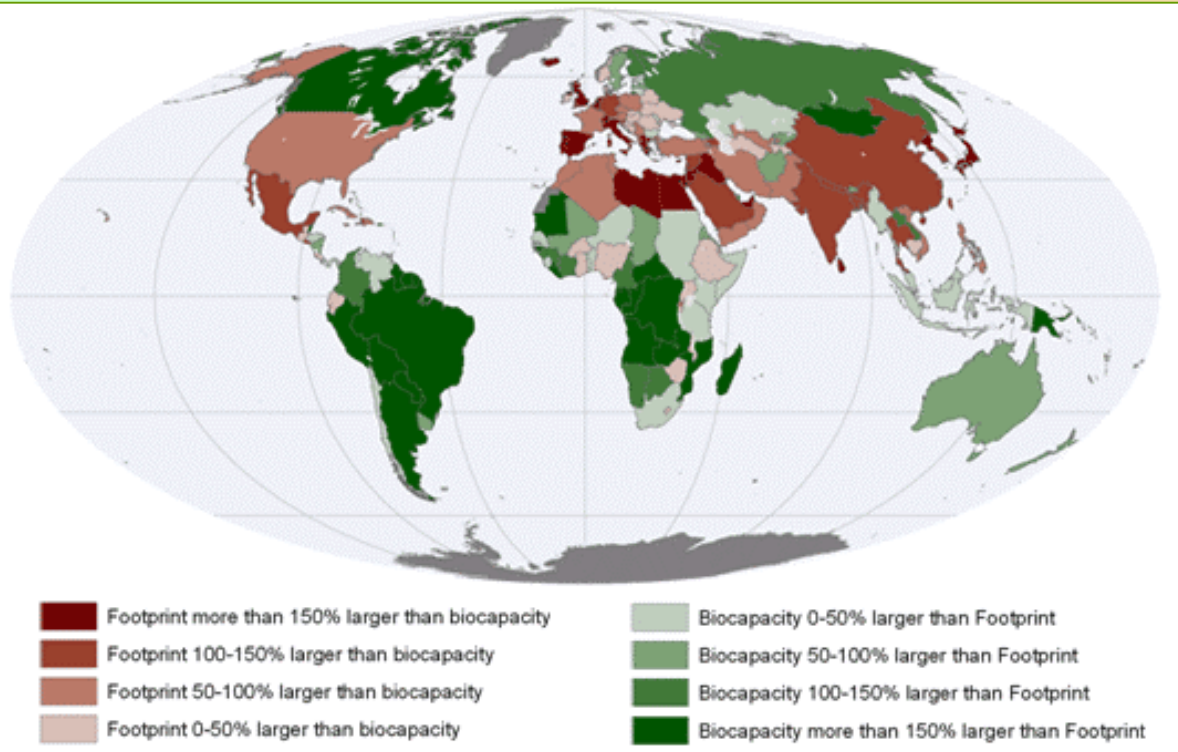
<http://pthbb.org/natural/footprint/2003/cartogram.png>

The Ecological Footprint

Creditors and Debtors

Today, **80 percent of the world's population lives in countries that are ecological debtors** - they use more resources than what is available within their own borders.

These countries rely for their needs on resource surpluses concentrated in ecological creditor countries, which use less biocapacity than they have.



http://www.footprintnetwork.org/images/article_uploads/debtors-creditors-550.gif