

Humanity exhausts its annual ecological budget in less than eight months

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Credit: WWF Thailand

Humanity has exhausted its annual ecological budget in less than eight months, according to data from Global Footprint Network, an international sustainability think tank and WWF partner.

For the rest of 2014, we are "in the red" – effectively overdrawn on the balance sheet of nature's goods and services that we require to survive.

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's footprint in a

given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate. The date is moving progressively earlier from 1 October in 2000 to 19 August this year.

"Nature is the foundation of our well-being and our prosperity, but we are using up far too much of the Earth's finite resources," said Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International. "For a healthy and bright future for our children, we must preserve the natural capital that is left – and be better stewards of this one precious planet we call home,"

Based on ecological footprint data – measuring the quantity of Earth's natural resources, how much we use, and who uses what – Earth Overshoot Day is an opportunity to raise awareness and inspire action around our ecological overspending.

Next month, WWF will release the Living Planet Report 2014, the tenth edition of WWF's biennial flagship publication. The report measures the health of our planet and the impact of human activity.

"While trends clearly show that humanity's demands exceed our planet's capacity to sustain us, we can still take bold action now and build a prosperous future based on sustainable resource use," said Lambertini.

In 1961, the year WWF was established, humanity used only two-thirds of the Earth's available natural resources. In that same year, most countries had ecological reserves – meaning our footprint was lighter and more sustainable. Current rates have us operating way outside that window of sustainability.

Forests are shrinking, freshwater resources are dwindling, land is degrading, and biological diversity is being depleted. At the same time, the continued reliance on fossil fuels creates harmful [carbon dioxide emissions](#) that the planet simply cannot absorb.

By taking action now we can reverse the trend. We each play an important role in creating a world where we all live within our ecological limits.

Choosing sustainable goods like seafood labelled with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) logo, and wood that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) helps ensure products come from well-managed sources.

Switching to clean, renewable, abundant energy sources like sun and wind will reduce dirty emissions that pollute our air and strain our oceans and forests.

Provided by WWF

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