

BLM 5.1 - Ecological Footprints From Around the World

Ecological Footprints From Around the World — Where Do You Fit In?

How Much Land Do You Need to Live?

If you had to get everything you use from your own land — how much land area would you need? This land would have to provide you with all of your food, water, energy and everything else that you use. The amount of land you would need to support your lifestyle is called your *Ecological Footprint*. The ecological footprint is a way of measuring the impact a person has on the environment.

Is the World Big Enough for All of Our BIG Feet?

The size of a person's footprint will depend on many factors. Do you grow your own food? Do you walk or drive to places? Do you use renewable or non-renewable energy sources? All of these factors affect your ecological footprint. Everyone has an ecological footprint. We all need to use the earth's resources to survive. But how much is too much? We must make sure we don't take more resources than the earth can provide.

Different people in the same country will have different sized ecological footprints. You can compare your ecological footprint with someone else in your class after completing the activity.

Different countries have different average sized ecological footprints. For example, a person with the average Canadian lifestyle has an ecological footprint of 83.03 hectares. A person living in Ethiopia, Africa, living an average lifestyle in that country has an ecological footprint of 1.56 hectares. Examine Table 1 below to see Ecological Footprints for the average person from many different countries of the world. What patterns do you see?

BLM 5.1 Continued - Ecological Footprints From Around the World

Table 1: Ecological Footprints of People from Around the World

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Ecological Footprint (hectares per person)</i> |
|--------------------------|---|
| United States of America | 108.95 |
| Canada | 83.03 |
| France | 65.82 |
| United Kingdom | 62.56 |
| El Salvador | 7.57 |
| Ghana | 3.23 |
| Zimbabwe | 9.03 |
| Vietnam | 4.12 |
| Ethiopia | 1.56 |

Source: Ecological Footprint of Nations, 2005.

Table 2 compares some country information for Canada, Ghana, Vietnam and Ethiopia. How would factors such as population density, electricity consumption, and percentage of the population living below the poverty line affect the size of a person's ecological footprint?

Table 2: Country Comparison Statistics

| | <i>Canada</i> | <i>Ghana</i> | <i>Vietnam</i> | <i>Ethiopia</i> |
|--|---------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Country Size (km ²) | 9,985,000 | 239,000 | 330,000 | 1,127,000 |
| Population (million) | 33.5 | 23.8 | 86.9 | 85.2 |
| Population Density (people/ km ²) | 3.4 | 99.5 | 263.9 | 75.6 |
| % Population living below \$1a day (%) * | - | 44.8% | - | 23.0% |
| Electricity Consumption (billion kilowatt- hours) | 530.0 | 6.8 | 48.1 | 2.9 |
| Oil Consumption (barrels/day) | 2,371,000 | 49,300 | 271,100 | 30,450 |
| Roads (km) | 1,042,300 | 62,221 | 222,179 | 36,469 |
| GDP per capita | \$39,300 | \$1,500 | \$2,800 | \$800 |

Source: The World Factbook, 2009. www.cia.gov for all figures except those marked *.

Source for data marked *: United Nations Development Report, 2008. <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/>