

**GEOG 340: Environmental Geography
Ecological Footprint Activity & Write-up Instructions
15 Points (Participation)**

Submit to Dropbox by Sept 17, 2:30 pm

Ecological Footprint Calculator Instructions

STEP 1: Familiarize yourself with the concept of an Ecological Footprint:

What is the Ecological Footprint? The Ecological Footprint is a resource accounting tool that measures how much biologically productive land and sea is used by a given population or activity, and compares this to how much land and sea is available. Productive land and sea areas support human demands for food, fiber, timber, energy, and space for infrastructure. These areas also absorb the waste products from the human economy. The Ecological Footprint measures the sum of these areas, wherever they physically occur on the planet. The Ecological Footprint is used widely as a management and communication tool by governments, businesses, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

What does the Ecological Footprint measure? Ecological Footprint accounts answer a specific research question: how much of the biological capacity of the planet is demanded by a given human activity or population? To answer this question, the Ecological Footprint measures the amount of biologically productive land and water area an individual, a city, a country, a region, or all of humanity uses to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb the waste it generates with today's technology and resource management practices. This demand on the biosphere can be compared to biocapacity, a measure of the amount of biologically productive land and water available for human use. Biologically productive land includes cropland, forest, and fishing grounds, and excludes deserts, glaciers & open ocean.

Global hectares are hectares with world-average productivity for all productive land and water areas in a given year.

STEP 2: Use the ecological footprint calculator to measure your ecological footprint: <http://www.footprintcalculator.org>

* You will need to input an email in order to take the test. Make sure *Adobe Flash* is installed and the computer has access to the internet.

*Whenever prompted, always click the "ADD DETAILS TO IMPROVE ACCURACY" link, and answer the questions in order to get a more accurate result.

STEP 3: Write a Response/Reflection to your results and upload it to Dropbox

Reflection Instructions: Write a 150-250 word (2 paragraphs) reflection describing how doing the activity made you feel. Were you surprised by your footprint? Was your footprint bigger or smaller than you expected? Did this activity trigger you to want to modify behaviors?

1. Describe your Ecological Footprint – How many earths would it take for every person to live your lifestyle? What category contributes most to your footprint?
2. What behaviors/activities do you think are most feasible to change to reduce your footprint.
3. What behaviors/activities do you think would be most difficult to change?

Be prepared to discuss this in class as well.