

Earth's resources consumed in ever greater destructive volumes

Notes & Cues:	Article: <p>Humanity is devouring our planet's resources in increasingly destructive volumes, according to a new study that reveals we have consumed a year's worth of carbon, food, water, fibre, land and timber in a record 212 days.</p> <p>As a result, the Earth Overshoot Day – which marks the point at which consumption exceeds the capacity of nature to regenerate – has moved forward two days to 1 August, the earliest date ever recorded.</p> <p>To maintain our current appetite for resources, we would need the equivalent of 1.7 Earths, according to Global Footprint Network, an international research organisation that makes an annual assessment of how far humankind is falling into ecological debt.</p> <p>The overshoot began in the 1970s, when rising populations and increasing average demands pushed consumption beyond a sustainable level. Since then, the day at which humanity has busted its annual planetary budget has moved forward.</p> <p>Our current economies are running a Ponzi scheme with our planet, according to Mathis Wackernagel, chief executive and co-founder of Global Footprint Network.</p> <p>“We are borrowing the Earth's future resources to operate our economies in the present. Like any Ponzi scheme, this works for some time. But as nations, companies, or households dig themselves deeper and deeper into debt, they eventually fall apart.”</p> <p>The situation is reversible. Research by the group indicates political action is far more effective than individual choices. It notes, for example, efficiency improvements in building and industry could make a difference of three weeks, and a 50% reduction of the carbon component of the footprint would give an extra three months of breathing space.</p>
Summary:	