



**For Immediate Release
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**September 23 is Earth Overshoot Day:
The day our demand surpasses nature's budget**

Takoma Park, MD – On September 23, humanity will have used up all the resources nature will provide this year, according to data from Global Footprint Network, a research organization that measures how much nature we have, how much we use, and who uses what.

Just like any company, nature has a budget – it can only produce so many resources and absorb so much waste each year. The problem is, our demand on nature's services is exceeding what it can provide. Since the 1980s, humanity has been in *ecological overshoot*, using resources faster than they can be regenerated and putting carbon into the air faster than it can be reabsorbed.

Globally, we now demand the biological capacity of 1.4 planets, according to Global Footprint Network. But of course, we only have one. The result is that our supply of natural resources – like trees and fish – continues to shrink, while our waste – primarily carbon dioxide – accumulates.

Each year, Global Footprint Network calculates humanity's Ecological Footprint (its demand on cropland, pasture, forests and fisheries and space for infrastructure), and compares this with global biocapacity, the ability of these ecosystems to generate resources and absorb waste. Ecological Footprint accounting can be used to determine the exact date we, as a global community, begin living beyond the means of what the planet produces every year.

"If we think of Earth's resources as a bank account," says Lisa Wise, Executive Director of New American Dream, "then right now we are drawing down on the principal, depleting our account. We need to get back to living off the interest the Earth naturally generates for us when we are living in balance."

Ecological overshoot is at the root of many of the most pressing environmental problems we face today: climate change, declining biodiversity, shrinking forests, fisheries collapse, and many of the factors contributing to the current worldwide food crisis.

Earth Overshoot Day is creeping ever earlier as human consumption grows

Humanity's first Earth Overshoot Day was December 31, 1986. Ten years later, humanity was using 15 percent more resources in a year than the planet could supply, with Earth Overshoot Day falling in November. This year, more than two decades since we first went into overshoot, Earth Overshoot Day has moved up to September 23, and our rate of overshoot stands at 40 percent more than the planet can renewably supply.

Global Footprint Network and its international partner network including the Center for a New American Dream is focused on solving the problem of overshoot, working with businesses and government leaders around the world to make ecological limits a central part of decision-making everywhere.

Citizens can take action to get out of overshoot in their own lives: eating less meat, driving and flying less, and using less energy in the home. They can also encourage government and business leaders to build communities that help to end overshoot with smart infrastructure planning and best-practice green technology. To determine your own Ecological Footprint and learn what you can do to reduce it, go to www.footprintnetwork.org.

With international commitment to end overshoot, Earth Overshoot Day can become history instead of news.

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About the Center for a New American Dream

The Center for a New American Dream helps Americans consume responsibly to protect the environment, enhance quality of life, and promote social justice. We work with individuals, institutions, communities, and businesses to conserve natural resources, counter the commercialization of our culture, and promote positive changes in the way goods are produced and consumed. Visit us at www.newdream.org.

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