

Handout: Ecological Footprints From Around the World

(Adapted from: "How big is your footprint," *Energy for a Sustainable Future* — Education Project, www.esfep.org/)

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

How Much Land Do You Need to Live?

If you had to provide 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 one 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 Ecological Footprint will depend on many factors. Do you grow your own food? Do you walk or drive? Do you use renewable or non-renewable energy sources? Everyone has an ecological footprint because we all need to use the earth's resources to survive. But 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. Different countries also have different ecological footprints. For example, a person with the average Canadian lifestyle has an ecological footprint of 8.56 hectares. A person living in Ethiopia, Africa, has an average ecological footprint of 0.67 hectares.

Examine *Table 1* below to see Ecological Footprints for the average person from many different countries of the world.

Table 1: Global Ecological Footprints

Country	Ecological Footprint (hectares per person)
United States of America	9.57
Canada	8.56
France	5.74
United Kingdom	4.72
El Salvador	1.72
Ghana	1.23
Vietnam	0.76
Ethiopia	0.67

Source: *Ecological Footprint of Nations, 2004.*

Table 2 compares some information for four countries. How would factors such as population density, electricity use, and oil consumption affect the size of a person's ecological footprint?

Table 2: 2005 Country Comparison Statistics

	Canada	Ghana	Vietnam	Ethiopia
Country Size (km ²)	9,985,000	239,000	330,000	1,127,000
Population (million)	32	21	83	73
Population Density (people/ km ²)	3.2	87.9	251.5	64.8
Yearly Electricity Use (billion kilowatt-hours)	487.3	6.2	32.0	2.0
Oil Consumption (barrels/day)	2,200,000	38,000	185,000	23,000
Highways (km)	1,408,800	46,200	93,300	33,300
GDP* per capita	\$31,500	\$2,300	\$2,700	\$800

Source: The World Factbook, 2005. www.cia.gov for all figures except those marked.

**Gross Domestic Product*: The value of current production of goods and services coming from within a country (doesn't include all the goods and services being imported).



Student Worksheet

Calculating Your Ecological Footprint

One method of calculating your ecological footprint is the Ecological Footprint Calculator hosted by Earth Day Network. This calculator has some simple questions that are used to calculate your ecological footprint.

Go to www.earthday.org and click on **Your Ecological Footprint (online survey)**.

Complete the on-line survey for the ecological footprint calculations and then answer the questions below.

1. How does your footprint compare to the average Canadian?

2. List three things you do currently that help to minimize your footprint.

3. List three things you do that increase your ecological footprint.

4. What are three things that you could do differently now to reduce the size of your ecological footprint?

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5. How does the size of your footprint compare to the average person living in Ghana?

6. How many Ethiopians would use the same amount of resources as found in your Ecological Footprint?

7. What are some of the factors that may contribute to Canadians having larger Ecological Footprints than people in developing countries, such as Ghana or Vietnam? Explain how those factors would affect the size of the ecological footprint.
