Biocapacity

Biocapacity is the ecosystems' capacity to regenerate biological materials used by people and to absorb waste material generated by humans, under current management schemes and extraction technologies.

Ecological Footprint

The Ecological Footprint adds up all the competing demands on biologically productive areas. They include areas to produce the food, fibre, and timber, to accommodate houses and roads, and to absorb CO₂ from burning fossil fuels.

Living off depletion is not a long-term strategy. Depletion or overuse will end. The question is only whether by design or disaster. Since the 1970 however, humanity's footprint is bigger than what Earth can replenish. In 2021, humanity lived as if we had 1.75 Earths. Dutch consumption is even higher: It would take 3.6 Earths if everyone lived like today's Dutch, and in 2022 the planet's annual budget would already be used up by April 12. This is therefore this year's Dutch Overshoot Day.

The ecological footprint of the Netherlands is not only 3.6 times larger than what is available per person worldwide, but even 7.3 times bigger than the country's biocapacity, as shown below. The Ukraine war has made obvious that this resource imbalance is becoming a growing political and economic risk, particularly in a time of massive ecological overshoot.

The Netherlands was in ecological deficit already in 1961. In the last years, the deficit has been shrinking, but only slowly.

For more data on the Netherlands and all countries from around the world: data.footprintnetwork.org