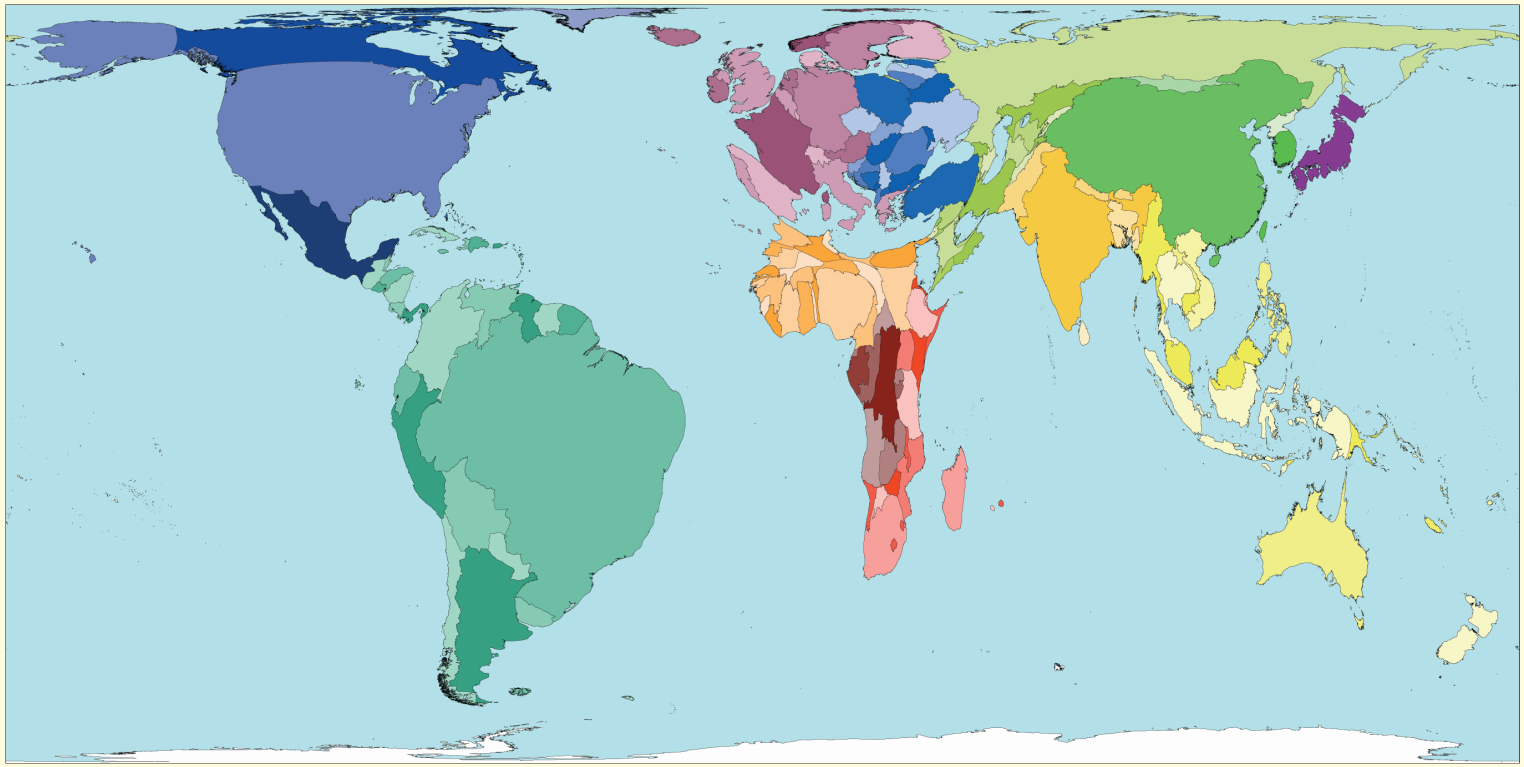
Biocapacity

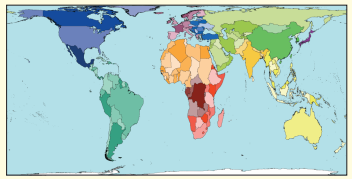
The University Of Sheffield. The Leverhulme Trust Geographical Association
Produced by the SASI group (Sheffield) and Mark Newman (Michigan)



Biocapacity measures how biologically productive land is. It is measured in 'global hectares': a hectare with the world average biocapacity. Biologically productive land includes cropland, pasture, forests and fisheries. 16% of the world's biocapacity is in Brazil.

The biocapicity of a territory is affected by physical conditions and people's actions. A pertinent example of this is Iraq, the Mesopotamian marshes were once part of the fertile crescent. Much of this marshland has been drained and become desert. Trade sanctions and social upheavals also reduce people's ability to use land productively. Iraq's land is now estimated to be the least productive in the world.

Territory size shows the proportion of all biocapacity that is found there.



Land area

Technical notes

- Data are from the WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature) International and Institute of Zoology.
- *Biocapacity is measured in global hectares. One global hectare is an area that has the world average biologically productivity of one hectare.
- See website for further information.

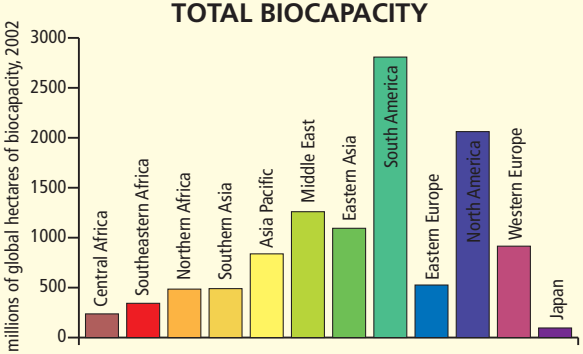
HIGHEST AND LOWEST BIOCAPACITY

Rank	Territory	Value
1	Malta	699
2	Mauritius	687
3	Germany	429
4	Denmark	427
5	United Kingdom	403
6	Luxembourg	378
6	Belgium	378
8	Czech Republic	362
9	Netherlands	357
10	France	351

Rank	Territory	Value
191	Botswana	14.4
192	Mali	13.1
193	Afghanistan	11.2
194	Niger	11.1
195	Somalia	11.0
196	Saudi Arabia	10.5
197	Namibia	10.5
198	Algeria	8.3
199	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	3.1
200	Iraq	1.8

*biocapacity in global hectares per 100 hectares, 2002**

TOTAL BIOCAPACITY



"... land is 'not only' the ground, it is 'not only' a means of production and it is 'not only' the material reality that one knows ..."

Claudia Briones, 2006

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