



DATA & APPLICATIONS ONLINE

The Human Footprint and The Last of the Wild, *version 2*

Overview

Changes to the Earth's land surface due to human activities constitute a critical global driver of ecological processes on the planet—on par with climatic trends, geological forces, and astronomical variations. How do we define and assess this influence?

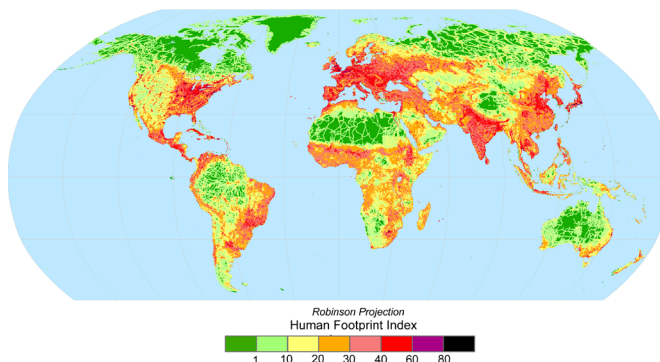
Developed in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society, *The Human Footprint* and *The Last of the Wild* data sets shed needed light on this question. These new versions build on work produced in 2002, enabling the systematic mapping and measurement of human influence on the Earth's land surface.

Data

Go to <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/wildareas/> to download the Human Influence Index and The Human Footprint data in Band Interleaf (BIL) and ArcInfo Grid formats. The Last of the Wild data set is available in shapefile format. A readme file explains how to use the data, and a methods page describes the data set construction. A full metadata record in HTML format provides additional information on data sources.

Project Highlights

- 83.7% of the Earth's land surface, not including Antarctica, is influenced directly by human beings (the "human footprint") through direct occupancy or human land use.



- The human footprint varies across geopolitical and biogeographic regions, with the level of human footprint in a country closely associated with the level of infrastructure development.
- More than 80% of the tropical and subtropical moist broadleafed forest biome that falls within the "wild places" is in South America; half of this is in Brazil.
- The Human Footprint data have been used in a variety of global modeling research efforts and priority-setting exercises.

To learn more, go to <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/wildareas/>

