



## 10 Minutes For The Planet

### Earth Overshoot Day©

by Valentine Rinner



Hi everyone! And welcome to this week's episode of Ten minutes for the Planet.

August 2nd was 2017's Earth Overshoot Day, for about a decade it has been 5 or 6 days earlier each year!

Earth Overshoot Day is not the most fun day of all as it marks the day when we the Earth's inhabitants have used up more from nature than our planet can renew in a whole year. More specifically it is when we have used "more ecological resources and services than nature can regenerate; through overfishing, overharvesting forests and emitting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than forests can sequester".

The earlier the Earth Overshoot Day falls, the more rapidly we've been consuming the Earth's natural resources generated during the year. If Earth Overshoot Day were to fall on December 31st, it would mean that we had managed to take exactly what the Earth had to offer all of us for the year, no more no less.

When it was first conceived by the UK-based New Economics Foundation, in partnership with the Global Footprint Network in 2006, Earth Overshoot Day fell in October. In only 10 years it has moved forward by 2 and a half months... however if we calculate the Earth Overshoot Day country by country the results are quite different.

The Global Footprint Network estimates how many Earths would be needed if the global population lived like any given population. Today we consume 1.6 times the Earth's capacity but if we all lived the same way as Americans or Australians we would need about 5 planet Earths to fulfill our needs. Earth Overshoot Day would fall mid-March. If everyone lived as the French do, we would need 3 planet Earths. Earth Overshoot Day would fall early May.

Countries such as India are still under the consumption limit of what the Earth produces in a year - meaning that Earth Overshoot Day doesn't exist - but those countries are very few.

As a whole, we are rapidly draining the Earth's resources and even entering a vicious circle as we are slowly hindering its capacity to renew and provide for us.

We need to make a whole lot of progress in terms of how we manage our resources if we want to move Earth Overshoot Day back towards New Year's Eve. And unfortunately it's going to take a heck of a lot more than recycling our Christmas champagne bottles.

Getting involved in the environmental debate in our daily lives can be quite difficult and sometimes uncomfortable, as we all know there are many stereotypes attached to the issues and those who fight them. There is also large-scale disinformation as a lot is at stake for various major industries, but also more fundamentally for the way we conduct our collective lives in the Western world.

For me the first step is to increase our own awareness; start noticing how we personally relate to what the Earth provides, namely 99% of what we eat, wear, build and use; to look at a specific habit we have that we may question and makes us uneasy at times and get informed on how it affects the Earth; and of course to continue listening to Ten minutes for the planet!

Bye everyone, see you next week!