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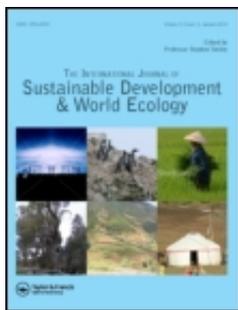
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Abstract

Human activities have become so extensive that all ecosystems on the planet have been altered to some extent. The fate of humankind will be determined by how sustainable ecosystems and renewable resource species in them are managed. The implication of this is obvious: humanity must live within nature's carrying capacity. In recent years, we have recognized that economic growth depends on natural capital, the importance of identifying ourselves as a part of the international ecological economics community, and positive integration of economy and ecology. The aim of this paper is to describe a method for integrated analysis of economic growth and natural carrying capacity through linking the concept of ecological footprint with valuation of ecosystem services. When applied to China for the period 1987–2003, empirical evidence suggests that the Chinese economy surpassed its carrying capacity after 1992. Perhaps we should abandon our high-growth predilection and initiate the transition to a steady-state economy.

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Keywords

- ecological footprint,
- ecosystem services,
- carrying capacity,
- GDP,
- steady-state economy

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