

# Study: Glum assessment of Amazonian forest

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Scientists at Brazil's Federal University of Minas Gerais say wildlife reserves will not be enough to prevent deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon.

The researchers say unless the destruction of tropical rainforest on private land is curtailed, about 40 percent of the Amazonian forest will be lost by 2050.

Cattle ranching and soy production are booming industries that threaten to destroy much of Brazil's natural forest, said Britaldo Silveira Soares-Filho and colleagues. They argue, in addition to the establishment of publicly protected parks, farmers should be forced to certify they're managing their land in a sustainable way. Farmers failing to do so, say the researchers, should be denied access to lucrative international markets for their produce.

The scientists used a computer model to predict future trends under a range of different conservation practices. If deforestation continues unchecked, the model shows eight of the Amazon River's 12 major watersheds would lose more than half of their forest cover, and nearly 100 of the region's native mammal species would lose more than 50 percent of their habitat.

The study appears in this week's issue of the journal *Nature*.

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