

Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon 'surges 450%'

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Imazon's Deforestation Alert System found that clearcutting in Brazil's nine Amazon basin states hit 244 square kilometers for October

Deforestation in Brazil's storied Amazon basin region skyrocketed more than 450 percent in October from a year earlier, a non-governmental group warned Monday.

The alarming loss was the equivalent of 24,000 football pitches, said

Imazon, which works to support [sustainable development](#) in the massive and unique ecosystem.

The group's Deforestation Alert System found that clearcutting in Brazil's nine Amazon basin states hit 244 square kilometers (94 square miles) for October. In October 2013 the damage was just 43 square kilometers.

About 60 percent of deforestation took place on privately owned land or land that is occupied by squatter-farmers, the group said.

Reducing the loss of tree cover in the Amazon basin is seen as vital to addressing global warming and climate change.

Brazilian authorities are stepping up surveillance to crack down on deforestation, using satellite images.

The news comes as Peru readies to welcome the annual UN climate meeting December 1-12, and after Brazil reduced its [deforestation](#) in 2011-2012. The data are not yet available for 2013-2014.

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