

Over 80% of future deforestation confined to just 11 places

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Over 80% of future deforestation confined to just 11 places. Credit: Zig Koch / WWF

Eleven places in the world – 10 of which are in the tropics – will account for over 80 per cent of forest loss globally by 2030, according to

research released today by WWF.

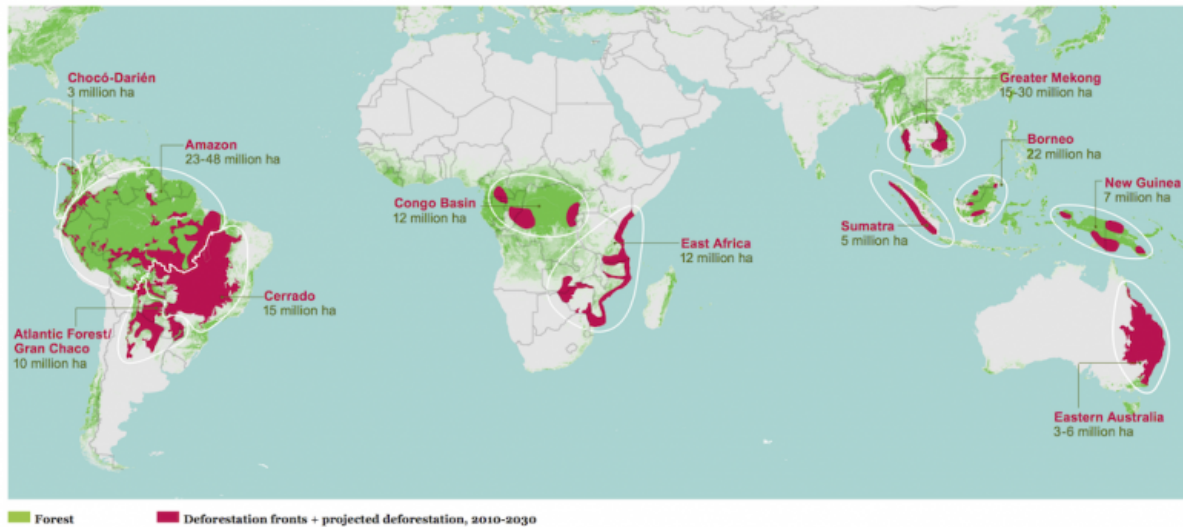
Up to 170 million hectares of forest could be lost between 2010 and 2030 in these "[deforestation](#) fronts" if current trends continue, according to findings in the latest chapter of WWF's Living Forests Report series. The fronts are located in the Amazon, the Atlantic Forest and Gran Chaco, Borneo, the Cerrado, Choco-Darien, the Congo Basin, East Africa, Eastern Australia, Greater Mekong, New Guinea and Sumatra.

These places contain some of the richest wildlife in the world, including endangered species such as orangutans and tigers. All are home to indigenous communities.

"Imagine a forest stretching across Germany, France, Spain and Portugal wiped out in just 20 years," says Rod Taylor, Director of WWF's global forest programme. "We're looking at how we can tackle that risk to save the communities and cultures that depend on forests, and ensure forests continue to store carbon, filter our water, supply wood and provide habitat for millions of species."

The report builds on earlier analysis by WWF showing that more than 230 million hectares of forest will disappear by 2050 if no action is taken, and that [forest loss](#) must be reduced to near zero by 2020 to avoid dangerous climate change and economic losses.

Landscape solutions vital to halting deforestation



Global deforestation map. Credit: WWF

Living Forests Report: Saving Forests at Risk examines where most deforestation is likely in the near term, the main causes and solutions for reversing the projected trends. Globally, the biggest cause of deforestation is expanding agriculture – including commercial livestock, [palm oil](#) and soy production, but also encroachment by small-scale farmers. Unsustainable logging and fuelwood collection can contribute to [forest degradation](#), or "death by a thousand cuts," while mining, hydroelectricity and other infrastructure projects bring new roads that open forests to settlers and agriculture.

"The threats to forests are bigger than one company or industry, and they often cross national borders. They require solutions that look at the whole landscape," says Taylor. "This means collaborative land-use decision-making that accounts for the needs of business, communities and nature."

The EU contributes to global deforestation

Humanity is using the Earth's resources unsustainably, at significant cost to the natural ecosystems upon which our society and economy ultimately depend. Globally, we use the resources of 1.5 planets. The Ecological Footprint of the EU is even higher: on average, we need 2.6 planets to maintain our current lifestyles. The EU is heavily dependent on the natural capital and resources of other countries, effectively outsourcing large parts of its footprint.

European Commission-funded research shows that EU consumption led to the loss of 9 million hectares of forest globally during the period 1990-2008 – an area the size of Portugal. A main contributor is the agriculture sector through its consumption of oil crops, such as soy and palm oil and their derived products as well as meat consumption.

The EU, as a signatory party to the UN Declaration on Forests, has committed to "at least halve the rate of loss of natural forests globally by 2020 and strive to end natural forest loss by 2030" and to support and help "the private sector meet the goal of eliminating deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities such as palm oil, soy, paper and beef products by no later than 2020".

Anke Schulmeister, Senior Forest Policy Officer at the WWF European Policy Office: "Despite acknowledging the need to address the environmental impact of its consumption, the EU has not yet taken significant steps to address its impact abroad and to balance its consumption.

While some companies are pledging to cut their impact on deforestation, governments are failing to support this ambition through decisive action. We believe the EU should take action now, to match these efforts with policies and regulatory measures, boosting the pledges made, holding

companies accountable for implementing their commitments, and raising the environmental, social and human rights standards for all companies.

The 7th Environmental Action Programme of the EU aims to significantly reduce the environmental impact of EU consumption by 2020, in particular in the food, housing and mobility sectors. It proposes the development of an EU action plan on deforestation and [forest](#) degradation. This provides a unique opportunity for EU political action."

More information: Living Forests Report Chapter 5: Saving Forests at Risk: [d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/ ... forests at risk.pdf](https://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/..._forests_at_risk.pdf)

Provided by WWF

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