

Deforestation of Brazilian Amazon hits record in April

May 7 2021



A riverboat in the Brazilian Amazon transports logs on September 18, 2020

Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon hit a record last month, the government reported Friday with figures that belie President Jair Bolsonaro's pledge to crack down on such destruction.

The area of the rainforest that was destroyed—580 square kilometers (225 square miles)—marked a new high for the month of April and a 42.5 percent on-year rise, according to satellite monitoring by the Brazilian space agency INPE. Its data goes back to 2015.

The level for March was also higher than 12 months earlier, and followed two months of decline in the [rainy season](#) when logging activity decreases.

From January through April 29, however, the cutting of trees to provide lumber and clear land for agriculture was down 3.9 percent compared to the same period in 2020, INPE said.

The dry season, which peaks in July and August, is when most deforestation happens.

Records have been set in the past three dry seasons, INPE said.

The Amazon, the world's biggest rainforest, is considered vital to curbing [climate](#) change because of the [carbon dioxide](#) it absorbs from the atmosphere.

About 60 percent of the rainforest is in Brazil.

"Right now it is not possible to say what will happen but in 2021 there could be a fourth straight deforestation record," said the Climate Observatory, a group of 63 NGOs and social organizations.

Bolsonaro, a far-right [climate change](#) skeptic, came to power in 2019 encouraging commercial exploitation of the rainforest and calling [conservation groups](#) "cancer."

However, last month he pledged to "eliminate illegal deforestation in

Brazil by 2030," 10 years earlier than initially planned.

Environmental NGOs have expressed doubt that Brazil under Bolsonaro will live up to this pledge.

"In 2021 there is no federal effort to control [deforestation](#)," the Climate Observatory said.

The government agency that carries out inspections in the Amazon "is doing nothing" and the process of punishing violators has been halted, it added.

A study published last week by the journal *Nature Climate Change* said the Brazilian Amazon released nearly 20 percent more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere over the last decade than it absorbed.

This report shows humanity can no longer depend on the world's largest tropical forest to help absorb man-made carbon pollution.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: Deforestation of Brazilian Amazon hits record in April (2021, May 7) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-05-deforestation-brazilian-amazon-april.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.