

# Record deforestation in Brazilian Amazon in February

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Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon set a new record for the month of February, official data show.

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon set a new record for the month of February, according to official data released Friday, the latest sign of a

surge in destruction under President Jair Bolsonaro.

Satellite images show 199 square kilometers (77 square miles) of [forest cover](#)—an area more than half the size of the US capital Washington—were lost in Brazil's Amazon region last month, according to Brazilian space agency INPE's Deter monitoring program.

That was the highest figure for February since the program began in August 2015, and a 62 percent increase from February last year.

Environmentalists said the figure was all the more worrying given that February is the rainy season in the Amazon, typically a low period for [deforestation](#).

"The first two months of this year both set records for deforestation—629 square kilometers so far, more than triple last year," said Romulo Batista of environmental group Greenpeace.

That fueled fears 2022 could see even worse destruction in the Brazilian Amazon than last year, when deforestation hit a 15-year high of 13,235 square kilometers from August 2020 to July 2021, according to another INPE monitoring program, Prodes, whose records go back to 1988.

"This absurd increase shows the lack of policies to combat deforestation and environmental crimes in the Amazon, driven by the current administration. The destruction just isn't stopping," Batista said in a statement.

Bolsonaro, who has pushed to open protected lands to agribusiness and mining, has drawn international outcry over a surge in deforestation and fires in the Amazon.

Since the far-right president took office in 2019, Brazil's average annual

deforestation in the Amazon, a crucial resource in the race to curb climate change, has risen more than 75 percent from the previous decade.

The destruction is mainly driven by farming and land speculation in agricultural powerhouse Brazil, the world's biggest exporter of beef and soy.

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