



WWF

SUMMARY

INT

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## WWF Living Forests Report: Chapter 5

# SAVING FORESTS AT RISK

More than 80 per cent of deforestation between 2010 and 2030 is likely to happen in just 11 places. These are the “deforestation fronts.”

WWF wants to see an end to the destruction of our planet’s vital forests. Our target, as explained in previous chapters of the *Living Forests Report*, is Zero Net Deforestation and Forest Degradation (ZNDD) by 2020.<sup>1</sup>

To achieve this, we need to focus on the forests most at risk. Drawing on a wealth of research, WWF has identified 11 deforestation fronts (see map) – places where the largest concentrations of forest loss or severe degradation are expected in the near future.

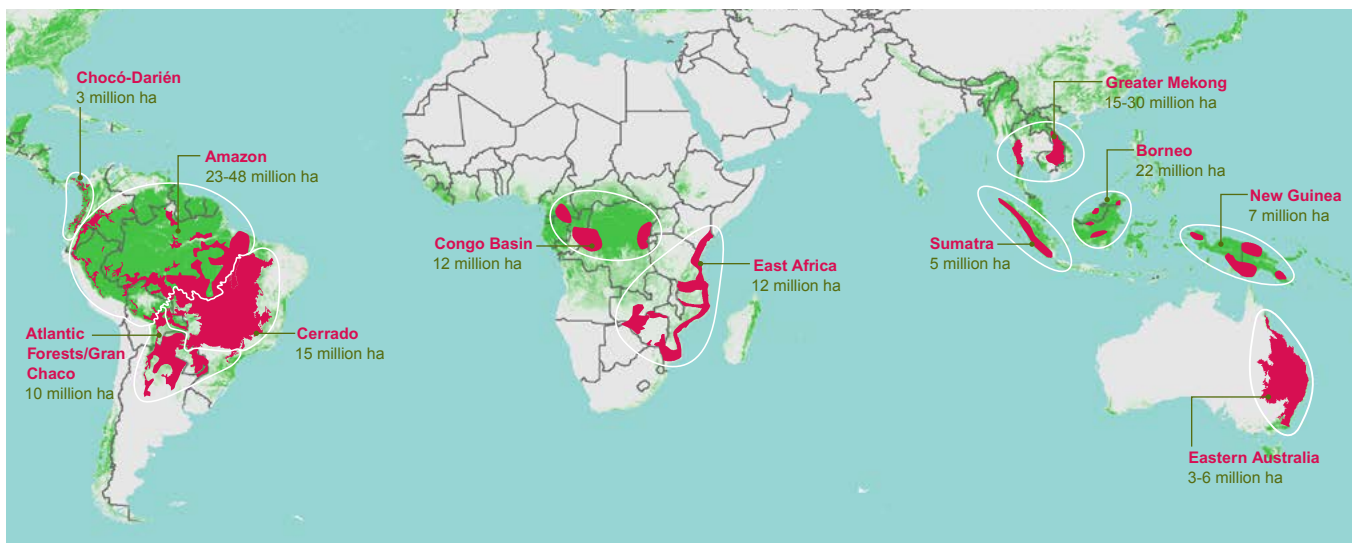
Without action to change current trends, **up to 170 million hectares of forest could be destroyed** in these places by 2030 – more than 80 per cent of total projected forest losses globally. Imagine a forest stretching across Germany, France, Spain and Portugal – wiped out in just 20 years.

The 11 deforestation fronts contain some of the richest biodiversity in the world, including large numbers of unique species. Urgent action is needed to save them.



UP TO 170 MILLION HECTARES OF FOREST COULD BE DESTROYED BY 2030











## WHERE ARE THE DEFORESTATION FRONTS?



The 11 deforestation fronts, with projected losses, 2010-2030

**Highlights from the fronts.** **Amazon:** The world’s largest forest is also where the biggest losses are expected. If recent deforestation trends continue, more than a quarter of the Amazon will be treeless by 2030. **Atlantic Forests/Gran Chaco:** Tighter legal controls to protect remaining fragments of Atlantic Forests are putting pressure on the Gran Chaco. **Borneo:** The island of Borneo has lost almost half its forests over the last few decades – and half of what’s left could be destroyed by 2030. Palm oil plantations are a main cause. **Cerrado:** Brazil’s Cerrado contains almost 5 per cent of all species on Earth, but less than 3 per cent of it is strictly protected. Conversion of natural vegetation to agriculture continues at an alarming rate. **Chocó-Darién:** The tropical rainforests of the Chocó-Darién are among the most biologically diverse regions in the world, but they’re increasingly threatened by coca production and cattle ranching. **Congo Basin:** The Congo Basin contains a fifth of the world’s tropical forests, home to gorillas, chimps and forest elephants. But forests could become fragmented to meet a fast-growing population’s needs for fuel and farmland. **East Africa:** Farming and fuelwood collection, driven by a high population density, threaten the miombo woodlands and coastal forests of East Africa. Forest fires are also an increasing problem. **Eastern Australia:** A weakening of laws to control deforestation in Queensland and New South Wales could bring a resurgence of large-scale forest clearing, mainly for livestock farming. **Greater Mekong:** The economies of the Greater Mekong are booming, but much development has come at the expense of the region’s forests – threatening unique biodiversity and essential ecosystem services. **New Guinea:** The region retains significant forest cover. However, it faces a growing deforestation threat. The rate of forest loss could surge if current proposals for agricultural development are realized. **Sumatra:** Sumatra holds some of the richest and most diverse forests in the world – but more than half have been destroyed, and what remains is at risk from land clearing by new settlers or for commercial plantations of oil palm, rubber or pulpwood.

**Deforestation Pressures**

	 Livestock	 Large-scale agriculture	 Small-scale agriculture & colonization	 Unsustainable logging	 Pulp plantations	 Fires	 Charcoal and fuelwood	 Mining	 Infrastructure	 Hydroelectric power
Amazon	■	■	■	■		■		■	■	■
Atlantic Forest/ Gran Chaco	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Borneo		■		■	■	■		■	■	■
Cerrado	■	■					■	■	■	■
Chocó-Darién	■	■	■	■				■	■	
Congo Basin	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	
East Africa	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	
Eastern Australia	■		■	■				■		
Greater Mekong		■	■	■	■		■		■	■
New Guinea		■	■	■	■	■				
Sumatra		■	■	■	■	■			■	

Summary of main pressures on forests in different deforestation fronts

■ Primary cause of forest loss and/or severe degradation   ■ Important secondary cause of forest loss and/or severe degradation   ■ Less important cause of forest loss and/or severe degradation   □ Not a cause of forest loss and/or severe degradation

## WHAT ARE THE THREATS?


Different deforestation fronts face different pressures. Globally, the biggest cause of deforestation is expanding agriculture – including commercial livestock, palm oil and soy production, but also encroachment by small farmers. Unsustainable logging and fuelwood collection can lead to a spiral of degradation that eventually leads to deforestation or “death by a thousand cuts.” Mining, hydroelectricity and other infrastructure projects are another major threat – new roads can have a large indirect impact through opening up forests to settlers and agriculture. Forest fires are also increasing in frequency and intensity.

## WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

As previous chapters of the *Living Forests Report* have shown, it’s possible to meet human demands for food, energy and raw materials in the coming decades without sacrificing precious forests. With better planning, management and collaboration at a landscape scale, we can sustainably increase production and meet local development needs while conserving critical ecosystems.

Large-scale interventions are needed in deforestation fronts to stop the march of deforestation and manage land use more smartly and sustainably. Parts of the solution include:

- **Expanded and strengthened networks of protected areas.** Well-managed protected areas, including indigenous reserves, are a proven strategy for combating forest loss. At a minimum, they can provide sanctuaries for biodiversity in deforestation fronts and serve as a reservoir for future restoration. Ideally they should be well connected and large enough to ensure wildlife can move freely and ecological processes continue to function.
- **Valuing ecosystem services.** Forests provide many benefits – from securing clean water supplies, to harbouring important species and sites of cultural significance. Recognizing the value (including the economic value) of these benefits can help governments and businesses around deforestation fronts make wiser land-use decisions.
- **REDD+ rolled out on a far larger scale.** The REDD+ scheme, which provides incentives to developing countries to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, could help counter threats in deforestation fronts, while supporting poverty alleviation, land rights and equitable resource governance.
- **“Deforestation-free” supply chains.** A growing number of major retailers, manufacturers and investors have pledged to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains and portfolios. Expanding and fulfilling these commitments could make a major difference in deforestation fronts affected by international commodity markets.
- **Forest-friendly infrastructure.** Those financing, building and regulating infrastructure like roads, dams and mines in deforestation fronts can take measures to mitigate their social and environmental impacts, without undermining local development opportunities. Forest safeguards should be built into all infrastructure projects.



**Why we are here**  
 To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony and nature.  
[www.panda.org/livingforests](http://www.panda.org/livingforests)

1 Essentially, this means no overall loss in forest quantity or quality, while allowing for some flexibility: for example, allowing some degraded forest to be cleared to meet local needs while restoring an equivalent area in an important biodiversity corridor could be a worthwhile trade-off.