

We lose millions of square kilometres of forest each and every year due to deforestation. This is having a devastating impact on the world's wildlife populations and also creates a host of other problems across the planet. Is the issue really as serious as experts say it is, though? If so, can we do anything about it?

What is deforestation?

Deforestation is the destruction of forests by people: it describes humans' actions of cutting down and clearing trees. Natural occurrences such as hurricanes, landslides and drought also affect forestry, of course, but the term refers specifically to the intentional removal of forest areas by humans.

Deforestation occurs for a number of reasons, including for timber and food production, and clearing ground for mining. The market for wood, as either fuel or a building material, is one of its most common motivations. The conditions in tropical rainforests, such as the Amazon in South America, are ideal for growing trees that produce strong timber. These are often felled (chopped down) for use in construction.

Another major reason for deforestation is the creation of farmland. As the population of the world continues to grow, more and more natural habitats for animals are destroyed to allow food to be produced for humans. Sometimes the land is used to grow and cultivate crops, but it can also be used to house livestock such as cows and sheep. Livestock farming takes up far more land than growing crops.

What problems does deforestation cause?

The loss of beautiful natural features may be a sufficient reason to oppose deforestation – but there are other consequences, too.

The effects of deforestation have hit the populations of countless animal species. As areas of rainforest are destroyed, many lose their homes. Some may be able to survive by relocating, but they will then face competition for food from the creatures already living there. As creatures are forced closer together, they also invade each other's territories. Having developed fierce protective instincts, they often then attack one another. This combination of factors has resulted in mass extinctions: it has been estimated that deforestation causes the loss of up to 50,000 species of plants, animals and insects every year.

Deforestation's effects also affect humans. Trees absorb the carbon dioxide, which humans breathe out, and they produce oxygen. The increase of carbon dioxide results in Earth's air becoming less suited to human survival. Carbon dioxide is also linked to global warming – the rising of temperatures on Earth – which affects other aspects of the natural world, including temperature and rainfall. Creating a cycle, this in turn affects the further growth of plants.

It can also affect soil levels in a rainforest, as tree roots help to prevent soil from being washed away by rainwater. Without the trees, soil is displaced and can block streams and rivers. This can not only cause flooding, but also pollute humans' drinking water.

Why is the Amazon so often mentioned?

The Amazon is the world's largest rainforest and is therefore often at the forefront of discussion about deforestation. Its majority is in Brazil, but it spreads into other countries including Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador and Colombia.

The World Wildlife Fund estimates that more than a quarter – 27 per cent – of the Amazon will be without trees by 2030, if deforestation continues at its current rate. This presents a significant issue: the Amazon region is believed to be home to around 10 per cent of all known species on Earth. The existence of many is at risk.

What can we do about it?

If more is not done to combat deforestation, the areas of world's forests, including rainforests, will continue to be reduced – if unstopped, this will of course mean that humans could be responsible for destroying all of Earth's forests. If no forests survive, neither will we.

Several major charities and organisations are working hard to fight deforestation and improve global awareness of the problem. Eating sustainable food, and less meat, will reduce the need for so much farmland to be created. Choosing recycled or sustainable wood products, like paper, reduces deforestation for wood supply.

There are also specific ingredients of food and cosmetic products that cause more harm than others. Crops grown for palm oil, for example, have been in particularly high demand over recent years. Palm oil is commonly used in the production of some foods, soaps, shampoos and fuel. In areas of Indonesia, deforestation for the growth of oil palms has led directly to a significant decline in the population of orangutans – so you can help by steering clear of products containing palm oil, too.

 FILL IN THE GAP


Read the sentences and choose the correct word or words to fill the gap.

This is having a _____ impact on the world's wildlife populations and also creates a host of other problems across the planet.

Carbon dioxide is also linked to global warming – the rising of _____ on Earth – which affects other aspects of the natural world, including temperature and rainfall.

This combination of factors has resulted in mass _____.

The conditions in tropical rainforests, such as the Amazon in _____, are ideal for growing trees that produce strong timber.

Several major charities and organisations are working hard to fight _____ and improve global awareness of the problem.

Crops grown for _____, for example, have been in particularly high demand over recent years.

In areas of Indonesia, deforestation for the growth of oil palms has led directly to a significant decline in the population of _____.

Without the trees, soil is displaced and can block _____ and rivers.

Palm oil is commonly used in the production of some foods, soaps, _____ and fuel.

The World Wildlife Fund estimates that more than a quarter – 27 per cent – of the Amazon will be without trees by _____, if deforestation continues at its current rate.

The _____ is the world's largest rainforest and is therefore often at the forefront of discussion about deforestation.

This is having a devastating impact on the world's _____ populations and also creates a host of other problems across the planet.

Its majority is in _____, but it spreads into other countries including Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador and Colombia.

_____ is the destruction of forests by people: it describes humans' actions of cutting down and clearing trees.

As the population of the world continues to grow, more and more natural _____ for animals are destroyed to allow food to be produced for humans.

We lose millions of square _____ of forest each and every year due to deforestation.

MATCHING



Draw a line with a ruler to match the information.

also affects forestry	•
clearing, cutting down trees	•
world's largest rainforest	•
location of the Amazon	•

ideal conditions for growing trees	•
felled	•
major reason for deforestation	•
livestock	•

affected by palm oil	•
palm oil production area	•
raising awareness of problem	•
product of palm oil	•

number of species lost every year	•
percentage of the Amazon that will be without trees by 2030	•
amount of forest lost each year	•
percentage of species that live in the Amazon	•

tree roots	•
trees absorb	•
without trees	•
trees produce	•

the Amazon	•
South America	•
hurricanes, landslides and drought	•
deforestation	•

creation of farmland	•
cows and sheep	•
tropical rainforests	•
chopped down	•

Indonesia	•
orangutans	•
fuel	•
environmental campaigners	•

10 per cent	•
millions of square kilometres	•
50,000	•
27 per cent	•

soil is displaced	•
oxygen	•
carbon dioxide	•
prevent soil from being washed away	•



Label the definition with the correct word or words.

cutting, clearing of trees	
hurricanes, landslides and drought	
world's largest rainforest	
blocks streams and rivers	
used to make food, soap and shampoo	
the intentional removal of forest areas by humans	

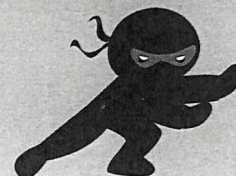
Label the definition with the correct word.

cut down	
livestock	
area where orangutans are in decline	
prevent soil from being washed away by rainwater	
trees absorb this	
one of the most common motivations for deforestation	

Label the statements with the correct information.

strong timber used for	
creating this is a major reason for deforestation	
deforestation causes animals to lose	
majority of the Amazon is found in	
are fighting hard against deforestation	
eating this can help fight deforestation	

TRUE OR FALSE



Read the sentences. Put a tick in the correct box to show which sentences are *true* and which are *false*.

A major reason why deforestation occurs is to create farmland.

True ☐ False ☐

Animals are not affected by deforestation.

True ☐ False ☐

Deforestation affects the whole planet.

True ☐ False ☐

The Amazon is located in South America.

True ☐ False ☐

Palm oil trees are helping reduce deforestation.

True ☐ False ☐

Producing wood is one of the most common reasons for deforestation.

True ☐ False ☐

Deforestation destroys the habitats of animals.

True ☐ False ☐

Nothing can be done to fight deforestation.

True ☐ False ☐

Felled trees are used to create food, soaps, shampoo and fuel.

True ☐ False ☐

Using containing palm oil causes harm.

True ☐ False ☐

Deforestation on a large scale can affect temperature and rainfall.

True ☐ False ☐

Rivers and streams flow better with fewer trees in the area.

True ☐ False ☐

Some animals could become extinct because of deforestation.

True ☐ False ☐

Amazonian trees are desirable because they produce extremely strong timber.

True ☐ False ☐

Orangutans have benefitted from palm oil trees being grown in Indonesia.

True ☐ False ☐

MULTIPLE CHOICE



Circle the correct answer for each of the following questions.

What is one of the most common reason for deforestation?

creating space for houses

the production of wood

to prevent flooding

making candles

Why are trees felled?

construction

to help animals

to eat

making rivers

Deforestation also creates land for...

factories

businesses

rivers

farming

What else does deforestation have a huge negative impact on?

animals

humans

profits

businesses

Soil in rainforests can be washed away by rainfall. What prevents this from happening?

animals on the ground

the roots of trees

man-made supports

streams and rivers

By when does the World Wildlife Fund estimate that more than a quarter of the Amazon will be without trees?

2023

2027

2030

2033

Which of the following activities can help the fight against deforestation?

eating sustainable food

building more homes

creating more farmland

getting a big car

How many species are estimated to be lost because of deforestation each year?

5,000

50,000

50

500

Where is the majority of the Amazon rainforest found?

Colombia

Peru

Ecuador

Brazil

Who carries out deforestation?

animals

humans

scientists

rivers



123 SEQUENCING

Look at *Deforestation*. Number the statements from 1 to 5 to show the order they occur in the text. Look at the first line of each paragraph to help you.

Deforestation occurs for a number of reasons, including for timber and food production, and clearing ground for mining.

We lose millions of square kilometres of forest each and every year due to deforestation.

The loss of beautiful natural features may be a sufficient reason to oppose deforestation – but there are other consequences, too.

There are also specific ingredients of food and cosmetic products that cause more harm than others.

Several major charities and organisations are working hard to fight deforestation and improve global awareness of the problem.

Look at the 'What problems does deforestation cause?' section in *Deforestation*. Number the statements from 1 to 5 to show the order they occur in the text.

This combination of factors has resulted in mass extinctions: it has been estimated that deforestation causes the loss of up to 50,000 species of plants, animals and insects every year.

The effects of deforestation have hit the populations of countless animal species. As areas of rainforest are destroyed, many lose their homes.

Some may be able to survive by relocating, but they will then face competition for food from the creatures already living there.

As creatures are forced closer together, they also invade each other's territories.

Having developed fierce protective instincts, they often then attack one another.

Look at *Deforestation*. Number the statements from 1 to 5 to show the order they occur in the text.

The Amazon is the world's largest rainforest and is therefore often at the forefront of discussion about deforestation.

The conditions in tropical rainforests, such as the Amazon in South America, are ideal for growing trees that produce strong timber.

Natural occurrences such as hurricanes, landslides and drought also affect forestry, of course, but the term refers specifically to the intentional removal of forest areas by humans.

Eating sustainable food, and less meat, will reduce the need for so much farmland to be created.

Some may be able to survive by relocating, but they will then face competition for food from the creatures already living there.

FIND AND COPY



These questions are about *Deforestation*.

Look at paragraph one. Find and copy a word that suggests that deforestation is highly destructive.

Look at the 'What is deforestation?' section. Find and copy a word that suggests that hurricanes and landslides occur without human actions.

Look at the 'What is deforestation?' section. Find and copy a word that suggests a deliberate act by humans.

Look at the 'What is deforestation?' section. Find and copy a word that suggests that the conditions in tropical rainforests are good for trees.

Look at the 'What problems does deforestation cause?' section. Find and copy a word that suggests a desire to prevent or stop deforestation.

Look at the 'What can we do about it?' section. Find and copy a word that suggests humans would be to blame for destroying all of Earth's forests.

Look at the paragraph beginning 'Several major charities...'. Find and copy a word that suggests that something comes from a source that can be maintained.

Look at the final paragraph. Find and copy a word that suggests that the population of orangutans has got smaller.

UNDERLINE OR HIGHLIGHT

Read the paragraphs below and then follow the instructions.

The loss of beautiful natural features may be a sufficient reason to oppose deforestation – but there are other consequences, too.

The effects of deforestation have hit the populations of countless animal species. As areas of rainforest are destroyed, many lose their homes. Some may be able to survive by relocating, but they will then face competition for food from the creatures already living there. As creatures are forced closer together, they also invade each other's territories. Having developed fierce protective instincts, they often then attack one another. This combination of factors has resulted in mass extinctions: it has been estimated that deforestation causes the loss of up to 50,000 species of plants, animals and insects every year.

Underline or highlight a word that means that something is enough for its purpose.

Underline or highlight a word that means an outcome or effect.

Underline or highlight a word that means to continue living, even in dangerous times.

Underline or highlight a word that means a group of living things.

Underline or highlight a word that means to no longer exist.

Underline or highlight a word that means to enter by force.