

Fact sheet 1

Deforestation in the Amazon rainforest

The Amazon

The Amazon is the world's largest rainforest, stretching across eight countries in South America: Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana, an overseas territory of France.

The Amazon is a truly incredible place. The landscape contains:

- One in ten known species on Earth
- 6.7 million kilometres squared of dense forests, nearly half of the planet's remaining tropical forests
- The Amazon River, one of the longest in the world, stretches for 6,500km. But there are many tributaries as well.

What is happening?

During the last 50 years at least 17% of the Amazon's rainforest cover has been destroyed by humans. An area of forest the size of three football pitches is cut down every minute of every day.

Why is it happening?

People have cleared the forest for many reasons. These include:

- To clear space to grow soy – a cash crop
- To clear land for cattle to graze on
- To grow food to eat
- To cut down logs for the timber trade
- To mine for gold in the ground beneath the forest.



Who does it affect?

Deforestation is putting the future of the people, animals and plants that call the Amazon their home at risk.

The Amazon rainforest is teeming with life. From tiny insects to huge predators, it's a vast and interconnected web of life. And they all rely on the rainforest staying in tact to survive. When areas of forest are cleared it destroys habitats for many animals and can make it more difficult for them to find food and survive. This can eventually lead to extinction. Many people also call the Amazon home and depend on it to survive. Some indigenous people still live in the way they have lived for thousands of years and rely on the plants and animals of the Amazon which can be destroyed by deforestation. Other people rely on rubber trees or fish because they can provide income.

And in fact deforestation can actually affect the whole world. As the largest rainforest in the world, the plants in the Amazon absorb and store huge amounts of carbon. Often when people want to clear land quickly they burn the trees on the land and this releases the carbon as carbon dioxide which contributes to climate change.

What can be done?

Through Sky Rainforest Rescue, Sky and WWF are working with local people in Acre state, north-west Brazil to help protect the Amazon rainforest for local people and the planet. We are aiming to protect one billion trees from deforestation by helping people to make a fair living that leaves the forest standing.

We do lots of varied work but some key things we focus on are:

- Providing farmers with support to help them keep their land fertile and productive without resorting to deforestation
- Helping people to make a living through activities that don't harm the forest, by encouraging new markets for berries, nuts and rubber for example
- Educating people about the importance of protecting the rainforest
- Working to encourage governments and big business to adopt policies and introduce laws which protect the rainforest.

Fact sheet 2

Jaguar

Best feature:

Their powerful bite which makes them fearsome hunters.

Size:

They are approximately 1.8m long and weigh around 113kg – making them the largest of South America’s big cats. Females are generally around 10-20% smaller.

Favourite food:

They’re carnivorous and eat fish, peccaries (pig-like mammals), capybaras (large rodents) and other larger animals like deer. They’ve also been known to eat river alligators called caimans.

Home:

They prefer to live in the dense rainforest regions of Latin America – although you’ll also find them in dry woodlands and grasslands.

Current population:

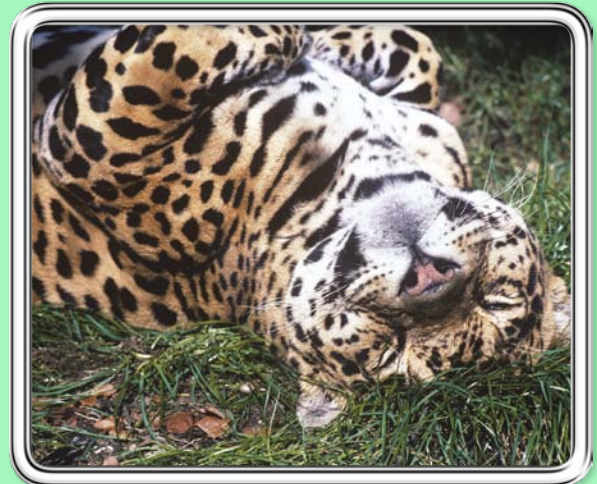
Due to the roaming nature of the jaguar, population numbers are hard to calculate.

Biggest threat:

Habitat loss due to the destruction of their rainforest home.

That’s a fact:

The name jaguar comes from the ancient Guarani word ‘yaguar’ meaning ‘he who kills with one leap.’



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Fact sheet 3

Poison dart frog

Best feature

Their brightly coloured and patterned skin which warns predators that they are poisonous.

Size

Most poison dart frog species are only around one inch long!

Favourite food

Ants, termites, beetles and other insects.

Home

These frogs can be found throughout the Amazon rainforest living either on the ground or in trees up to 10 metres from the ground.

Current population

Some species of poison dart frog have stable populations. But most are small and shrinking.

Biggest threat

The destruction of the frogs' habitats through logging and farming has led to reductions in their numbers.

That's a fact

The poison dart frog is one of the most poisonous animals on earth. The tiny golden poison arrow frog contains enough venom to kill ten men!



Fact sheet 4

Pink river dolphin

Best feature

Its unusual and beautiful pink colour.

Size

At up to 3 metres it is the largest river dolphin in the world. Large specimens can weigh up to 100 kilograms.

Favourite food

Fish and other water dwelling animals like turtles and crabs. It has poor vision so uses an internal sonar system to navigate and catch its food.

Home

The pink river dolphin is one of the world's 3 dolphins that can only live in freshwater. Normally it can be found in lowland fast flowing, whitewater rivers, clearwater or blackwater rivers.

Current population

Currently unknown.

Biggest threat

The building of hydroelectric dams which affects their habitat. Dolphins can also be caught up in fishing nets, killed by fisherman or caught in oil spills.

That's a fact

People living in the Amazon used to believe that the pink river dolphin could shift shape to appear as a handsome young man.

