

# BRAZIL LOSES '1 MN FOOTBALL PITCHES' WORTH OF FOREST

Relevant for: World & Indian Geography | Topic: Physical Geography of South America incl. important Geopolitical regions

Widening gap: A photo taken on Sept. 22, 2017 shows an aerial view of the deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. | Photo Credit: [AFP](#)

Deforestation in Brazil has reached such epic proportions that an area equivalent to one million football pitches was lost in just one year, Greenpeace said.

Between August 2017 and July 2018, deforestation increased by almost 14%, with an area of 7,900 sq km of forest cleared, according to the governmental institution of special investigations.

"It's more or less one million football fields of deforestation in just one year," said Marcio Astrini, the public policies coordinator for Greenpeace Brazil. "Every year we have this news that forest is being criminally deforested."

Mr. Astrini said things could get even worse if President-elect Jair Bolsonaro carries out his threats to loosen environmental protection rules. His appointment of Tereza Cristina as Agriculture Minister also caused concerns as she heads the agribusiness lobby in Congress and is a supporter of clearing more forested area to make way for pasture land and agriculture.

The Amazon rainforest represents more than half of Earth's remaining rainforest and covers an area of 5.5 million sq km, about 60% of which is in Brazil.

But it is under threat from illegal logging as well as farming, in particular from soybean plantations and pasture land for cattle.

Between 2004 and 2012, deforestation in Brazil was slowed through controls imposed at a government level as well as by the private sector.

But Mr. Bolsonaro has said he will "end protected areas, indigenous reserves, that he will reduce the power to inspect and punish environmental crimes," according to Mr. Astrini.

"If he does all this, if he reduces the ability to punish crimes, Amazon deforestation could explode into an unimaginable situation," added Mr. Astrini.

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