

Deforestation and Forest Fires and the Role of Palm Oil



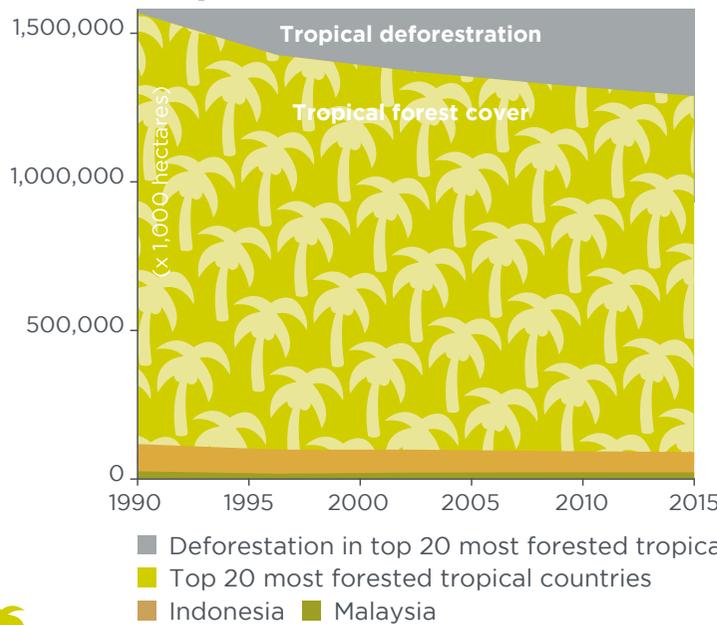
Deforestation

Deforestation is the conversion of forests into another land use or its permanent reduction of the tree canopy cover.

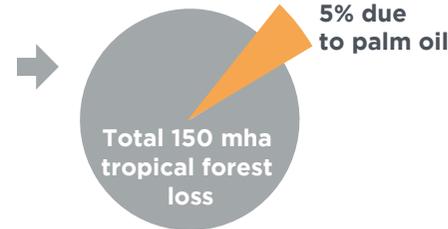
Forest can be defined by a tree height >5m and a canopy cover >10% (FAO). Forest can be further categorised according to their richness in biodiversity or carbon such as High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS).

Tropical deforestation is slowing down

Tropical Forest Cover



Palm oil contribution to global tropical deforestation is 5%



Between 1990 and 2015, 150 Mha of tropical forest has been lost of which an estimated 5% is directly due to oil palm expansion. Not all oil palm expansion has directly caused deforestation as oil palm is also grown on former plantations or degraded land.

Solutions

Buying more sustainable palm oil contributes to better managed plantations, protection of HCV and HCS forest and a reduced risk for forest fires. Additionally, it is important to:

- support smallholders to better manage and replant their plantations preventing the use of fires
- invest in fire prevention programs
- engage governments, farmers and plantations to combine their efforts in a landscape approach



Boycotting palm oil is not the solution, sustainable palm oil is!



11% of recorded fires in Indonesia in 2016 were on oil palm concessions

Forest Fires

Forest fires have been occurring over the past twenty years during dry seasons on peatlands and forest areas. They can be exceptionally severe and were aggravated by an intense El Nino climate event.

Fires which are started to clear land, for logging or planting crops or other human activities can get out of control and destroy vast areas.

Fires on peat are very difficult to extinguish and can smoulder for days or weeks until heavy rains put them to an end.

Fire alerts by land use area in Indonesia in 2016

- Pulpwood plantations
- Oil Palm Concessions
- Logging Concessions
- Outside Concessions

