



Decline in Global Tropical Primary Forests: Global Forest Watch

For Prelims: [Deforestation](#), [Food and Agricultural Organization](#), [Carbon sequestration](#), [COP26 Glasgow 2021](#), [The Bonn Challenge](#), [Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change](#), [India State of Forest Report 2021](#), [Forest Conservation Act, 1980](#), [National Afforestation Programme](#), [Environment Protection Act of 1986](#), [Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers \(Recognition of Forest Rights\) Act, 2006](#)

For Mains: Significance of Forests, Status of Forests in India.

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

The latest report from **World Resources Institute's (WRI) Global Forest Watch** has revealed a **staggering loss of [tropical primary forests](#) in 2022, amounting to 4.1 million hectares**. This loss is **equivalent to losing an area of 11 football fields per minute**.

- The report emphasizes the significance of primary forests in the tropics, **where over 96% of [deforestation](#) occurs**, urging global attention to the issue.
- WRI is a **global nonprofit organization that works with leaders in government, business and civil society** to research, design, and carry out practical solutions that simultaneously improve people's lives and ensure nature can thrive.

What are Primary Forests?

- Primary forests are characterized by their **dense coverage of native tree species, minimal human interference, and undisturbed ecological processes**.
 - According to the [Food and Agricultural Organization \(FAO\)](#), primary forests account for approximately **one-third (34%) of the world's forested land**.
- They store **more [carbon](#) and support greater [biodiversity](#)** compared to other forest types. Therefore, **their loss is nearly irreversible**, as secondary forests cannot match their **biodiversity** and [carbon sequestration](#) capabilities.

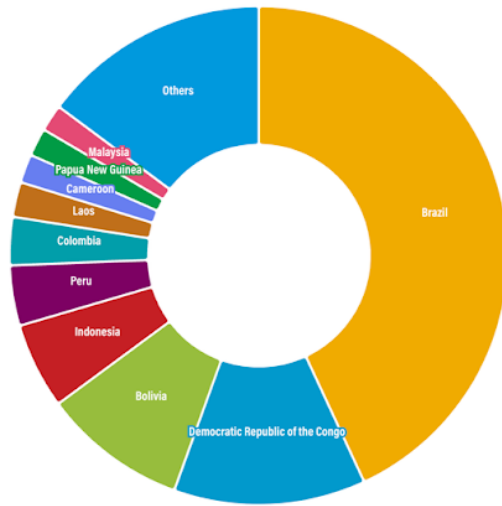
What are the Major Findings of the Report?

- **Forest-Related Commitments and Progress:**
 - The current rate of forest loss indicates a failure to restore forests adequately. The world is **not on track to meet forest-related commitments**, including the goal to end and reverse deforestation by 2030 ([COP26 Glasgow 2021](#)).
 - Restoring 350 million hectares (Mha) of lost and degraded forests by 2030 is another key global pledge ([The Bonn Challenge](#)).
 - To meet this target, **global deforestation must be reduced by at least 10% annually**. Also, tree cover must increase by **22 Mha per year between 2021**

and 2030.

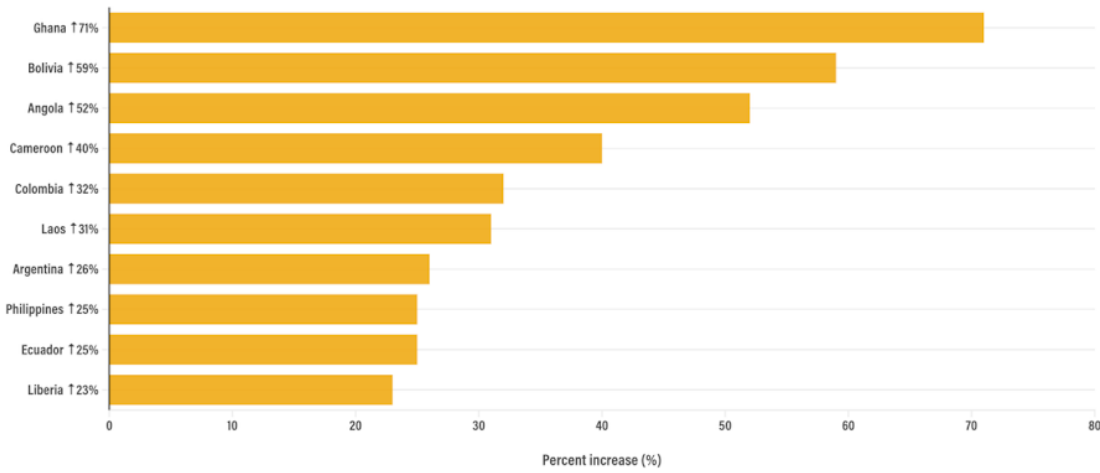
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Top countries for primary forest loss by area in 2022



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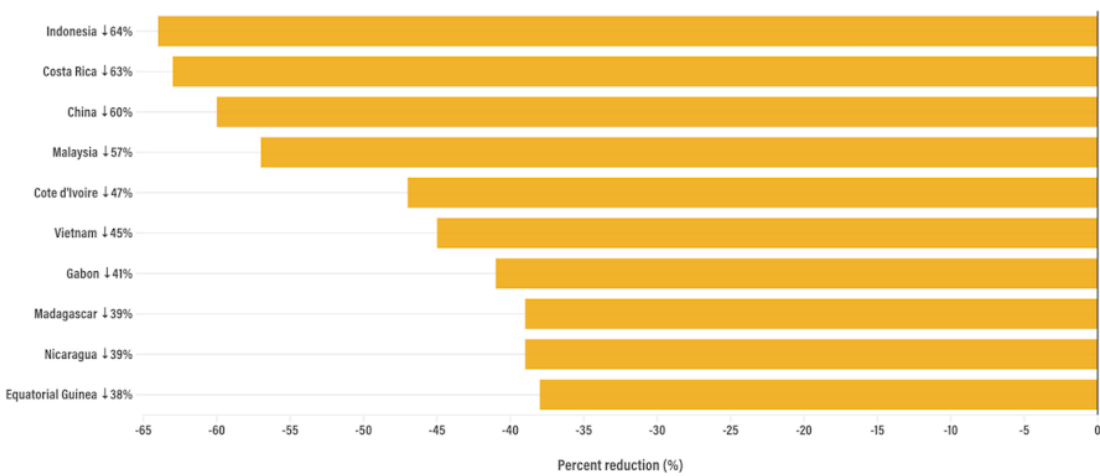
Top 10 countries for increase in primary forest loss as of 2022



Top 10 countries were determined by comparing the average primary forest loss from 2015-17 to the average from 2020-22. Includes countries with a least 1 Mha of tropical primary forest in 2001.

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- **Tree Cover Loss:** The total global tree cover loss in **2022 declined by 10%**. This includes **primary, secondary, and planted forests**. This decrease, according to Global Forest Watch, is **a direct result of a decrease in [fire-related forest losses](#) which decreased 28% from 2021**.
 - However, non-fire losses in 2022 increased by slightly less than 1%.
- **Forest Loss in India:**
 - India experienced the loss of **43.9 thousand hectares of humid primary forest between 2021 and 2022**.
 - This accounted for **17% of the country's total tree cover loss** during the period, which amounted to **255 thousand hectares**.

Note:

- The [Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change](#) defines 'forest cover' in India as **“all lands, more than one hectare in area with a tree canopy density of more than 10%”**, and 'tree cover' as **“tree patches outside recorded forest areas exclusive of forest cover and less than the minimum mappable area of one hectare”**.

What is the Status of Forests in India?

- **About:**
 - According to the [India State of Forest Report 2021](#), the total forest and tree cover in India is **24.62%** of the geographical area of the country. The total forest cover is **21.71%** and the total tree cover is **2.91%**.
 - Area-wise **Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover** in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
 - In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are **Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76.00%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%)**.
- **Government Initiatives for Forest Conservation:**
 - [Forest Conservation Act, 1980](#)
 - [National Afforestation Programme](#)
 - [Environment Protection Act of 1986](#)
 - [Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers \(Recognition of Forest Rights\) Act, 2006](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. At the national level, which ministry is the nodal agency to ensure effective implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006? (2021)

- (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- (b) Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- (c) Ministry of Rural Development
- (d) Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Ans-(d)

Q2. A particular State in India has the following characteristics: (2012)

1. It is located on the same latitude which passes through northern Rajasthan.
2. It has over 80% of its area under forest cover.
3. Over 12% of forest cover constitutes Protected Area Network in this State.

Which one among the following States has all the above characteristics?

- (a) Arunachal Pradesh
- (b) Assam
- (c) Himachal Pradesh
- (d) Uttarakhand

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q. “The most significant achievement of modern law in India is the constitutionalization of environmental problems by the Supreme Court.” Discuss this statement with the help of relevant case laws. **(2022)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/decline-in-global-tropical-primary-forest-global-forest-watch>