

SCIENCE WORLD REPORT

Amazon Tree Species Face Major Threats: More Than Half Globally Threatened

Catherine Griffin Nov 22, 2015



More than half of the tree species in the Amazon rainforest may be globally threatened. (Photo : Hans ter Steege)

More than half of the tree species in the Amazon rainforest may be globally threatened. Scientists have taken a closer look at species of trees and have found that though threatened, they could be protected in the future.

Forest cover in the Amazon has been declining since the 1950s. However, scientists still have a poor understanding of how this has affected populations of individual tree species.

In this latest study, the researchers compared data from forest surveys across the Amazon with maps of current and projected deforestation in order to estimate how many tree species have been lost and where.

In the end, the researchers found that 36 to 57 percent of the Amazon's estimated 15,000 tree species likely qualify as globally threatened under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species criteria.

"We aren't saying that the situation in the Amazon has suddenly gotten worse for tree species," said Nigel Pitman, one of the researchers, [in a news release](#). "We're just offering a new estimate of how tree species have been affected by historical deforestation and how they'll be affected by forest loss in the future."

Because the same trends observed in Amazonia are occurring throughout the tropics, the researchers believe that the world's more than 40,000 tropical tree species likely quantify as globally threatened.

Fortunately, protected areas and indigenous areas cover over half of the Amazon Basin, and contain sizable populations of most threatened tree species. This is good news since it may be possible to protect these tree species.

Source:

<http://www.scienceworldreport.com/articles/33495/20151122/amazon-tree-species-face-major-threats-more-half-globally-threatened.htm>