

# Build THE Change

## FACT SHEET

### INTO THE RAINFOREST

#### GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE



**3%** of the Earth is covered by rainforest. They are hot, tropical forests and although they only cover a small area, they are incredibly important for wildlife.<sup>(2)</sup>

Rainforests are exactly that – they are tall, thick forests that have lots of rain all year round. They are also very hot, because they receive a lot of sunlight.<sup>(3)</sup>

I'm a sloth and I live in the main canopy!



Rainforests have layers and each one is home to different species:

##### EMERGENT LAYER

This layer is made up of trees that have stretched up and grown taller than the main canopy.

##### MAIN CANOPY

This is the thickest part of the forest, where the tops of the trees form a blanket, which blocks out sun from the lower layers. Trees grow tall and strong, stretching as high as they can to reach the sunlight.

##### UNDERSTORY

This layer is just below the tops of the trees, and has some growing plants like vines, which are perfect for monkeys to swing between!

##### FOREST FLOOR

There is not much sunlight here, but lots of rotting leaves and branches, which makes a perfect home for insects.<sup>(3)</sup>

These forests are crucial to life on Earth, as they provide **oxygen, water** and **resources such as food and medicine**.<sup>(4)</sup> These forests absorb and store huge amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and are important in slowing climate change.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### WILDLIFE



TIGER



BORNEO  
ORANGUTAN



SUMATRAN  
RHINO



TREE  
FROG



JAGUAR



AMAZON  
RIVER DOLPHIN

#### DID YOU KNOW?

These amphibians are arboreal, meaning they spend a lot of time hiding in the trees.

## BIODIVERSITY

Although rainforests cover a small section of the Earth, they are home to over **50% of all of the plants and animals on the planet**, including some very rare and endangered species, such as orangutans, rhinos and tigers, who depend upon the complex habitats in rainforests to survive.

This makes them one of the **most biodiverse ecosystems on the planet**, as there are so many different species!



**How far?** Black howler monkeys from the forests of Latin America have a call that can be heard almost 5km away!

## HOW ARE THINGS CHANGING?

Lots of pressure is being put on rainforests, mainly by humans. Some of the problems they are facing include:

- **Deforestation** Every minute, an area the size of 40 football fields is cleared in the rainforest. Deforestation releases lots of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which contributes to climate change. Humans are clearing land to make space to create resources, through things like farming and mining.
- **Poor ecosystem health** As a result of climate change and deforestation, rainforests are struggling to adapt and survive, because conditions are changing. Rising temperatures can cause forest fires, while deforestation reduces the quality of the soil, making it harder for plants and trees to regrow.
- **Loss of plants and wildlife** Because of climate change, deforestation and human actions, many species are struggling to survive. 3 of the 9 species of tiger have become extinct, through a combination of hunting and loss of habitat.<sup>(6)</sup> Removal of rainforest has destroyed tigers' homes and reduced their food supply, while rising sea levels reduces the availability of freshwater.

## DID YOU KNOW?

As forests grow, they take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen – if we conserve forests, we could reduce carbon emissions massively, to the same level as if we got rid of every car on the Earth!<sup>(4)</sup>



The Amazon rainforest is enormous. If it were a country on its own, it would be the 9th largest country in the world!<sup>(7)</sup>



Forests are found on every single one of the continents, except for Antarctica.<sup>(5)</sup>



## HOW CAN WE HELP?

It's important that we work together to protect rainforests. People have begun working towards this already by:



### WORKING TOGETHER

Around the world, communities, organisations and governments are working together to protect rainforests by creating protected areas. Reducing demand for resources like beef, palm oil, minerals and wood by replacing them with more sustainable choices means that less land needs to be deforested.

### LET IT GROW

Starting tree planting schemes. In 2017, a project was launched to plant over 70 million trees in the Amazon rainforest. It is important that we keep the forests that we have, and continue to repair and replant wherever possible.<sup>(1,5)</sup>

### PROTECTION

Protecting individual species. Wildlife reserves protect land from damage or destruction, and mean the species can't be hunted. Scientists are using technology, such as cameras, to figure out where animals live, so they can protect the right habitats.