

The Amazon Rainforest Should Be Saved "When Measured In A Purely Economic Sense," Study Says



ENVIRONMENT

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Brazil's recently elected president Jair Bolsonaro has come to be known as the "Trump of the Tropics". He's outspoken, anti-immigration, anti-media, anti-globalist, socially conservative, and pro-big business. He is also worrying the hell out of environmentalists.

Environmentalists [have described](#) him as an "unprecedented threat to the Amazon" due to fears that he

might milk this unique environment for short-term financial gain. Certainly, this is a rich natural resource, but a new study argues that it is more economically valuable if we manage it sustainably. As reported in the journal [Nature Sustainability](#), a team of economists at Brazil's Federal University of Minas Gerais have worked out that the Amazon can be valued at up to \$737 per hectare every year. In total, the vast rainforest contributes as much as \$8.2 billion to Brazil's economy every year, according to [Mongabay News](#).

However, this value will only remain if the resources are sustainably used, guided by regional forest protection to ensure the land is not improperly appropriated and deforested.

"The forest should unambiguously be saved when measured in a purely economic sense," the study authors write.

"While opportunity values still often exceed demonstrable protection values, economically measurable values amount to only a small fraction of the immeasurable overall value of the Amazon forest, given that most of its ecosystem services are intangible and we map only 4 of 17 documented ecosystem services."

The research takes into account the Amazon's main produce, from Brazil nuts and beef to rubber and timber. Furthermore, it also takes into



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account the importance of the Amazon to the world's climate, local weather patterns, and greenhouse gas mitigation.

For example, a decrease in forest cover would result in a massive decline of regional rainfall, thereby dwindling agricultural output by millions. Equally, a lack of rain could result in more forest fires and damage timber production.

You can check out a break down off all this information on their free-access database amazones.info.

The question remains: Will the Amazon be treated sensibly and with respect? Only time will truly tell, but things aren't looking too promising.

President Bolsonaro has already announced his intentions to follow Donald Trump's decision and take Brazil [out of the Paris Agreement](#). Recently, however, he backtracked on that and said he would [remain](#) in the Agreement (with qualifications, of course). He has also made a string of [unsavory comments](#) about not allowing "a single centimeter more of indigenous land" and [vowed to kick out](#) international environmental organizations, such as Greenpeace and WWF.