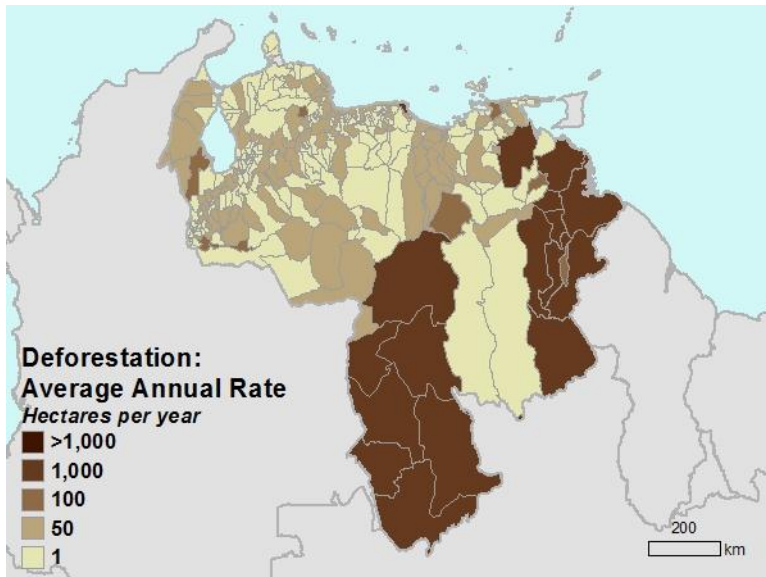


Venezuela



Deforestation¹

Forest area (2010): **52%**
 Primary forest area (2010): **n.a.**
 1990-2000: **-0.57 %y⁻¹**
 2000-2005: **-0.59 %y⁻¹**
 2005-2010: **-0.61 %y⁻¹**

Agriculture²

Agriculture as % of GDP (2007): **4%**
 Agricultural land (2009): **24%**
 Top 3 commodities, by footprint (2010):
Maize: 0.65m ha
Rice: 0.25m ha
Sorghum: 0.25m ha
 Employment in agriculture (2008): **9%**

*Rates at sub-national level are for indicative purposes only given use of relatively coarse MODIS data

National deforestation estimates in percent per year and agricultural statistics are from FAO (2010). Mapped sub-national estimates of the Deforestation Indicator in hectares are indicative only, given the resolution of the data source, and are from CI (2011), derived from the MODIS percent tree-cover change product for 2000 to 2005 (Hansen, et al 2009).

Sub-national Region	Hectares per Year (indicative)
Padre Pedro Chien	771
Río Negro	754
Maturín	570
Tucupita	492
Alto Orinoco	448

Context

Political Context

Venezuela suffered extreme political instability during the 1980s and 1990s, negatively impacting the socio-economic situation of the country; but during the last several decades, the country has remained stable despite constant protests against the government³. Venezuela is one of the largest oil reserves in Latin America and the Caribbean, which contributes to its economic growth⁴. Natural resources and forest cover have been negatively affected by political strife and economic advancement, thus the government is creating policies, laws and initiatives attempting to conserve natural resources and reduce deforestation⁵. These include the Environmental Law of 2012⁶ and the participatory national reforestation initiative Mision Arbol, started in 2008.⁷

Socio-economic Context

In 2010, the population in Venezuela was 28.9 million people with a rural population of 11.2% and 24.5% living in poverty⁸. Unemployment was 8%⁹ and agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors represented just 4.8% of the GDP¹⁰. But as of June 2012, agriculture grew to 15.8% of total exports, with coffee and non-traditional agriculture products also highly traded¹¹. Agriculture relies on 7.3% of the country's labor force¹².

Deforestation Drivers

Venezuela is a mega-diverse country¹³ and one of five countries with the largest forested area in Latin America (46.3 million hectares). It is also one of ten countries in the world with the largest area of forest designated for protection of soil and water. Between 2005 and 2010 Venezuela experienced forest loss at a rate of 288,000 hectares per year¹⁴. Deforestation drivers correspond predominantly to expansion of agriculture (41.8%), followed by infrastructure development (26.2%), logging (23.5%), mining (5.2%), and social conflicts (3.3%). The underlying causes are also related to changes in demographic factors (41.8%), institutions and policies (22.1%), economic factors (20.5%), and cultural factors (7.4%)¹⁵. The Caparo tropical forest reserve in the western plains region of Venezuela is experiencing a high rate of deforestation from settlers and lumber concessionaires¹⁶. In the Lake Maracaibo Basin and in the Guyanas areas, cattle ranching, agriculture and urban expansion have been identified as major drivers of deforestation¹⁷.

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