

End of Brazil's Soy Moratorium risks millions of hectares of Amazon rainforest: Study



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28 Jul 2026 Amazon

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[Millions of hectares of Amazon rainforest are newly at risk of being legally deforested, a new study](#) estimates. The potential increase in deforestation comes as soy companies have terminated their voluntary participation in the Amazon Soy Moratorium, a private-sector agreement that barred signatories from buying soy grown on land deforested after 2008.

Researchers found 9.1 million hectares (22.5 million acres) of private forest, a total area around three times the size of Belgium. Additionally, more than 28 million hectares (69 million acres) of public forests without any clear purpose or protection could now face additional pressure from rural land speculation, where people buy and hold land to sell later at a higher cost, and illegal conversion for agriculture.

According to Tiago Reis, a conservation specialist at WWF-Brazil and co-author of the analysis, the positive impacts of the moratorium went beyond the direct prevention of soy-linked deforestation.

“[The Soy Moratorium] also hindered illegal deforestation, land speculation, social conflicts and land conflicts,” Reis [told](#) Mongabay Brasil reporter Lucas Berti.

In January 2026, the Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries (Abiove) [announced](#) it was withdrawing from the pact. Abiove represents many of the largest grain traders operating in Brazil

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of the moratorium traded roughly 90% of the soy grown in the Brazilian Amazon.

The decision to leave the soy moratorium was prompted by a new law in Brazil's largest soy-producing state, Mato Grosso, which removed tax exemptions for companies that applied stricter environmental standards than is required by state law, including the Soy Moratorium.

According to [state lawmakers](#), the Amazon Soy Moratorium harmed the state's economy and disadvantaged farmers who operate on land that was legally cleared after the 2008 cut-off date.

[In January, Abiove stated](#) that individual companies could opt to stay in the pact and, therefore, not receive Mato Grosso's state tax breaks. As of July 2026, not a single company is still listed as a signatory on the [Amazon Soy Moratorium website](#).

The withdrawal of the companies from the moratorium will likely lead to an additional 1.4 million hectares (3.5 million acres) of deforestation in the next 10 years, according to the study.

Such deforestation would release approximately 745 million metric tons of CO2 equivalents, roughly comparable to the greenhouse gas emissions produced by Canada each year, the authors note.

"Ending the [Amazon Soy Moratorium] ... risks weakening Brazil's position as the leading supplier of deforestation-free soy while increasing risks to the agricultural sector, climate goals, and Brazilian society," the study's authors write.

Read the story in Portuguese [here](#).

Banner image: A truck carrying soybeans surrounded by smoke from fires in a deforested area on the BR-163 highway in Pará state. Image courtesy of Alberto César Araújo/Amazônia Real.

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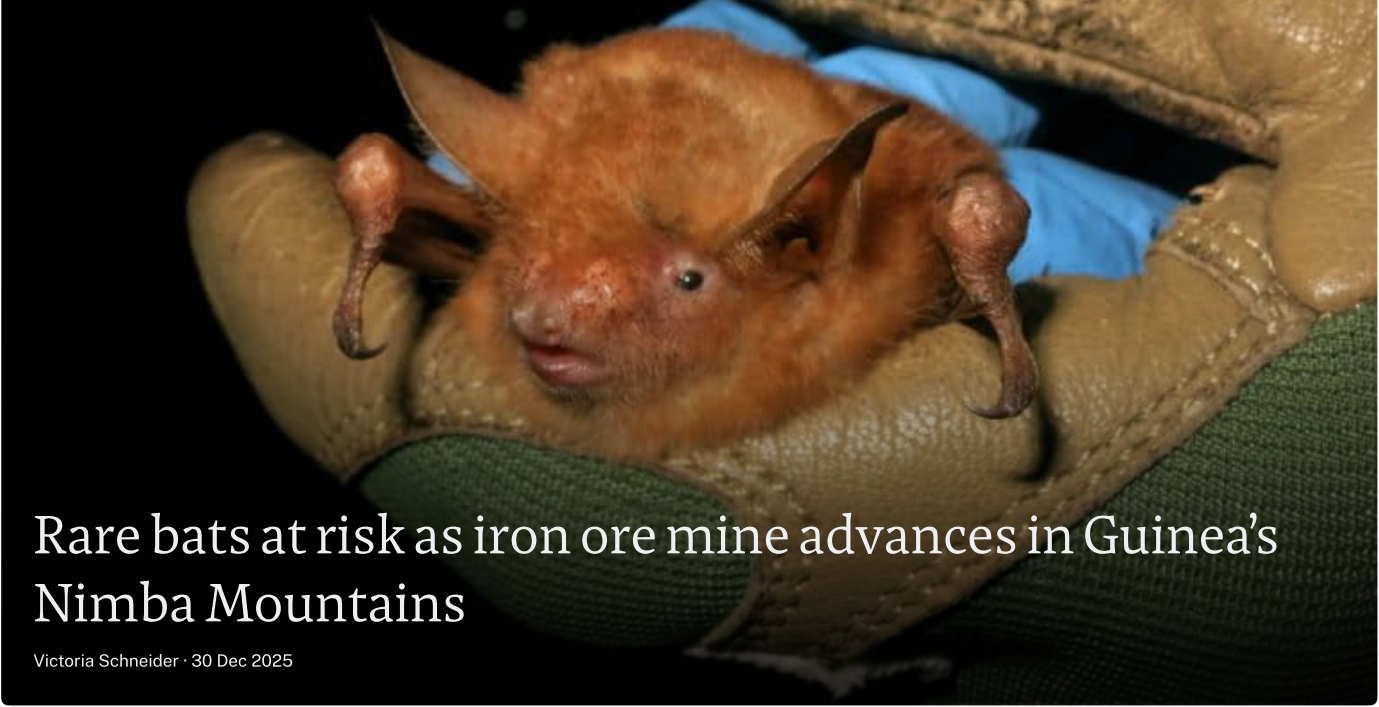
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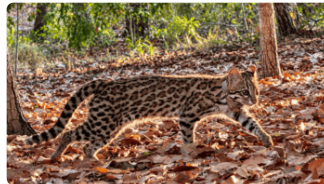

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