

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. RAINFORESTS. TRANSCRIPT

Shrouded in a blanket of clouds, they awaken. Their canopies of green glitter in the sun. Their wildlife start to slither, chirp and growl and one of the planet's richest ecosystems comes to life.

Rainforests are the oldest living ecosystems on the planet. Some can trace their origins to over 70 million years ago, back to a time when dinosaurs still roamed the Earth. While the giant reptiles have disappeared, rainforests continue to thrive, growing on every continent except Antarctica.

Two types of rainforests are scattered across the globe: temperate and tropical.

Temperate rainforests are mainly found in the mid-latitudes, often near cooler, coastal, mountainous regions.

Tropical rainforests are primarily located in warmer climates between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

As their names imply, temperate and tropical rainforests are the wettest forests on Earth, receiving up to about 33 feet of rain per year. This precipitation plays a critical role in creating an exceptionally lush and biologically diverse habitat. While rainforests only make up about 6% of the Earth's surface area, they are home to over half of the world's plant and animal species.

This biodiversity creates benefits that extend far beyond the rainforest boundaries. Rainforest plants produce an assortment of food items, in addition to ingredients useful in everyday products and medicines. In fact, an estimated 70% of the plants used in cancer treatments are only found in rainforests. On an even larger scale, rainforests help to stabilize the planet's climate. Its lush, green vegetation regulates global temperatures by absorbing massive amounts of radiation from the sun. They also absorb vast amounts of carbon dioxide and convert them into oxygen—about 40% of the planet's breathable air.

Over the past few centuries, rainforests have disappeared at an alarming rate. Factors such as economic inequalities, human development, and demand for natural resources have fuelled the deforestation of these rich ecosystems.

At the current rate, rainforests, which have survived for over 70 million years, may completely disappear within the next century, but through educational campaigns, sustainable logging practices, and cooperation with local communities, deforestation may begin to slow down, helping to preserve rainforests for many generations to come.

VOCABULARY

absorb (verb) - To take in or soak up something, like water or light.

alarming (adjective) - Causing worry or fear.

awaken (verb) - To wake up from sleep or become alert.

beyond (preposition) - On or to the other side of something, farther than something.

blanket (noun) - A large piece of cloth used to keep warm, often on a bed.

campaigns (noun) - Organized activities to achieve a goal or raise awareness, often for a cause.

cancer (noun) - A disease where the body's cells grow out of control.

canopies (noun) - Roof-like covers made of leaves or fabric, often in forests or over seating areas.

century (noun) - A period of 100 years.

chirp (verb) - A short, high sound made by birds or insects.

coastal (adjective) - Relating to the area where land meets the sea.

diverse (adjective) - Made up of different types of things or people.

ecosystems (noun) - Groups of living things and their environment, like forests, oceans, or deserts.

factor (noun) - Something that helps to cause or influence a situation or result.

fuelled (verb) - Made something stronger or more intense, often by providing energy.

glitter (verb) - To shine with many small, bright flashes of light.

growl (verb) - A low, rumbling sound, often made by animals like dogs when they are angry or annoyed.

habitat (noun) - The place where an animal or plant lives.

imply (verb) - To suggest something without saying it directly.

inequalities (noun) - Differences where some people or things are treated unfairly or have less.

logging (noun) - Cutting down trees to use for wood or other products.

lush (adjective) - Growing thickly and healthily, full of green plants.

origins (noun) - The beginnings or starting points of something.

precipitation (noun) - Water that falls from the sky, like rain or snow.

preserve (verb) - To keep something safe from being damaged or destroyed.

primarily (adverb) - Mainly, or mostly.

radiation (noun) - Energy that comes in the form of waves, often from the sun or other sources.

reptiles (noun) - Cold-blooded animals with scales, like snakes, lizards, and turtles.

scattered (adjective) - Spread out in different directions or over a wide area.

shrouded (adjective) - Covered or hidden by something, often something dark or mysterious.

slither (verb) - To move smoothly over a surface, like a snake.

stabilize (verb) - To make something steady or balanced, so it doesn't change or fall.

sustainable (adjective) - Able to be kept going or continued without harming the environment or resources.

thrive (verb) - To grow or develop well and be successful.

trace (noun) - A small sign or evidence that something was there or happened.