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New forest loss figures show how vital our Amazon work is

Deforestation in Brazil rose by 28% in the last year, according to new figures released by Brazil's environment ministry. But the news wasn't all bad...

Acre, where our Sky Rainforest Rescue project is based - was one of three states that recorded a drop in deforestation. This proves it's possible to reverse the trend and find sustainable ways of living that keep the forest standing.

Brazil's National Institute for Space Research, INPE, reported that 5,843 sq km of Amazon rainforest - an area half the size of Jamaica - was cleared in Brazil between August 2012 and July 2013.

The two worst-affected states were Pará and Mato Grosso. Pará state experienced the biggest area of forest clearance – some 2,379 sq km – owing largely to illegal mining. That's 37% higher than the previous year's figure.

Mato Grosso registered the highest increase in the rate of forest loss – up 52% since last year, to 1,149 sq km.

But overall, the new figures represent the second-lowest rate of deforestation recorded since 1988 when monitoring began.

Remarkably, Acre was one of three states that reported a drop in annual deforestation rates, with a 35% decrease (from 305 sq km to 199 sq km). We've been working in Acre since 2009 to protect the rainforest, through the Sky Rainforest Rescue project. By finding sustainable alternatives to clearing forest for crops, we're helping local people make a fairer living without cutting down trees.

In response to the new figures, Brazil's environment minister Izabella Teixeira stressed that the state governments and local communities must work together to address threats to the rainforest from illegal logging and other activities. Through its partnership with the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO), the Brazilian government will also help to monitor and reduce deforestation in other Amazon countries.