

# How has rainforest degradation in the Brazilian Amazon contributed to carbon emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) and climate change?

## Introduction:

The Brazilian Amazon, often called the "lungs of the Earth," is critical to global climate stability, yet it faces growing threats from deforestation and fire activity. These processes not only degrade the rainforest's ability to absorb carbon dioxide but also release massive amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, a key driver of climate change. Understanding how rainforest degradation contributes to carbon emissions is vital for shaping effective environmental policies and promoting sustainable forest management. This study explores the connection between firespot activity and carbon emissions in the Brazilian Amazon between 1999 and 2019, aiming to uncover trends and insights that highlight the broader implications of these changes on climate systems.

## Used Data:

This study integrates three key datasets to analyze emissions and firespot activity in the Brazilian Amazon:

### 1. FAOSTAT and UNFCCC Emissions Data:

- **Metadata URL:** (<https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/GT/metadata>).
- **Data URL:** ([https://bulks-faostat.fao.org/production/Emissions\\_Totals\\_E\\_Americas.zip](https://bulks-faostat.fao.org/production/Emissions_Totals_E_Americas.zip)).
- **Description:** This dataset provides CO<sub>2</sub> emissions data segmented by reasons (e.g., forest fires, savanna fires) from 1999 to 2019. It includes information from both FAOSTAT and UNFCCC sources. The data was filtered to include only Brazil and further refined to align emissions with firespot data from the Amazon region. Combining UNFCCC data with FAOSTAT data increases dataset richness by providing additional segmentation
- **Structure:** Tabular format with columns for emission sources, years, and CO<sub>2</sub> values (in metric tons).
- **Licensing:** Available under CC BY 4.0 International. Attribution to the UNFCCC and FAOSTAT is maintained, (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

### 2. Amazon Fires Dataset (Kaggle):

- **Metadata URL:** <https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/mbogernetto/brazilian-amazon-rainforest-degradation>
- **Data URL:** Not applicable (downloaded using KaggleHub).
- **Description:** This dataset contains firespot counts in the Brazilian Amazon from 1999 to 2019, highlighting temporal patterns of fire activity.
- **Structure:** Tabular format with columns for years and firespot counts.
- **Licensing:** Licensed under CC0 1.0 Universal (<https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>) .

## Reasons for Choosing These Data Sources

- **Relevance:** The datasets focus specifically on emissions from land-use changes and fire activity in the Brazilian Amazon, directly aligning with the study's objective of analyzing rainforest degradation and its impact on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

- **Coverage Period:** Both datasets span the same timeframe (1999–2019), ensuring temporal alignment for comparative and correlation analyses.
- **Granularity:** The datasets provide detailed emissions data segmented by reasons (e.g., forest fires, savanna fires) and firespot counts, enabling a deeper exploration of specific contributors to carbon emissions.
- **Open Data:** All datasets are publicly available under open licenses (CC BY 4.0 and CC0 1.0), ensuring transparency, legal compliance, and unrestricted use for analysis.

## Analysis

### Data Summary:

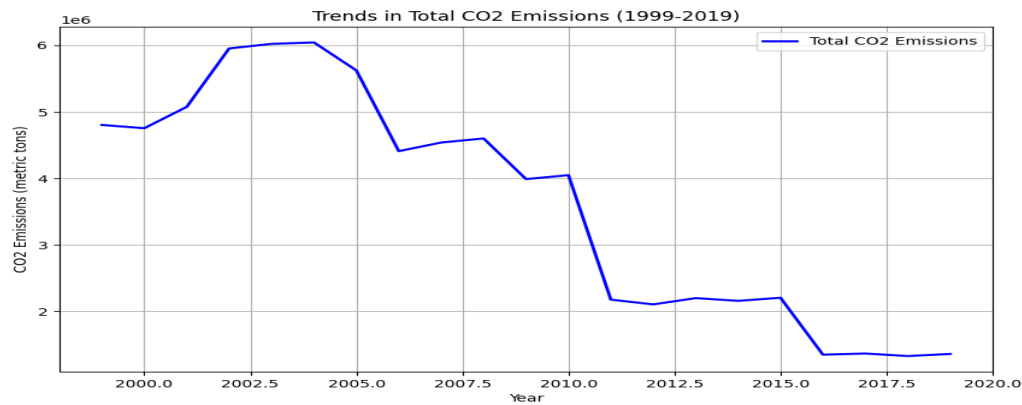
This data summarizes the yearly changes in both **CO2 emissions** (aggregated across various emission sources) and **firespot counts** in the Brazilian Amazon region from **1999 to 2019**. The emissions data includes contributions from activities such as forest fires, crop residue burning, and deforestation, while the firespot data represents observed fire activities in the region. As shown in the table, the dataset provides detailed information on emission sources and reasons, making it more understandable for the reader.

1	Reasons of Emission	Element	Source	Year	Emissions	firespots
2	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	1314.905	17.2043
3	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	UNFCCC	1999	3172.4	41.507875
4	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	322.6375	4.2214087
5	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	UNFCCC	1999	779.1	10.193792
6	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	1637.543	21.425708
7	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	UNFCCC	1999	3951.5	51.701666
8	Drained organic soils	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	420.4324	5.5009631
9	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2)	FAO TIER 1	1999	1385209	18124.155
10	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2)	UNFCCC	1999	979523.6	12816.147
11	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	1385209	18124.155
12	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	UNFCCC	1999	979523.6	12816.147
13	Savanna fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	5578.219	72.985754
14	Savanna fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	4820.297	63.069059
15	Savanna fires	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	10398.52	136.05481
16	Forest fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	16533.94	216.33109
17	Forest fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	4618.977	60.43497
18	Forest fires	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	1999	21152.92	276.76606
19	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	1321.821	13.389696
20	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	UNFCCC	2000	2940	29.781415
21	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	324.3335	3.2854118
22	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	UNFCCC	2000	720.8	7.3015116
23	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	1646.155	16.675108
24	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	UNFCCC	2000	3660.8	37.082927
25	Drained organic soils	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	417.4538	4.2286956
26	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2)	FAO TIER 1	2000	1385209	14031.794
27	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2)	UNFCCC	2000	979523.8	9922.3151
28	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	1385209	14031.794
29	Net Forest conversion	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	UNFCCC	2000	979523.8	9922.3151
30	Savanna fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	2245.541	22.746733
31	Savanna fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	1940.436	19.656099
32	Savanna fires	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	4185.977	42.402832
33	Forest fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	2436.249	24.678554
34	Forest fires	Emissions (CO2eq) from N2O (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	684.813	6.9369729
35	Forest fires	Emissions (CO2eq) (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2000	3121.062	31.615527
36	Burning - Crop residues	Emissions (CO2eq) from CH4 (AR5)	FAO TIER 1	2001	1359.089	18.655792

### 1. Trends in CO2 Emissions:

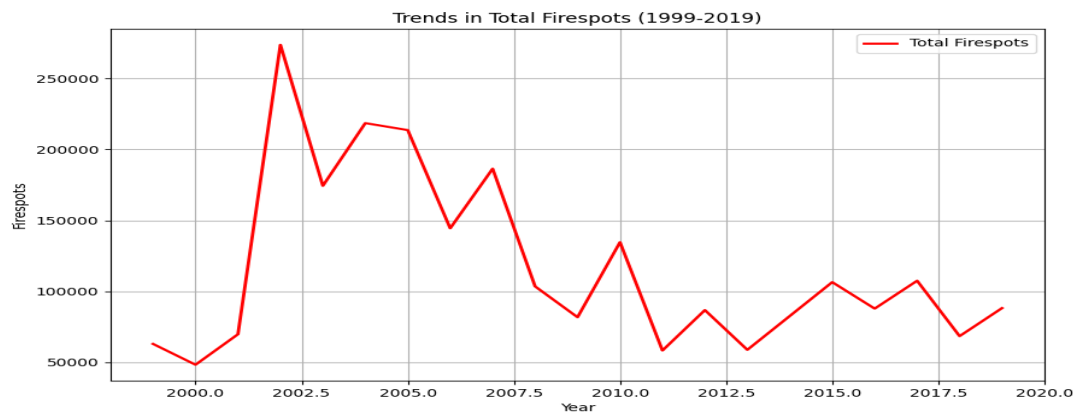
- As illustrated in the line graph, total CO2 emissions experienced a noticeable decline between 2005 and 2015, reaching their lowest levels in 2015. This decline was likely due to deforestation control policies and international environmental agreements. After 2015,

emissions showed signs of stabilization, with minor fluctuations until 2019.



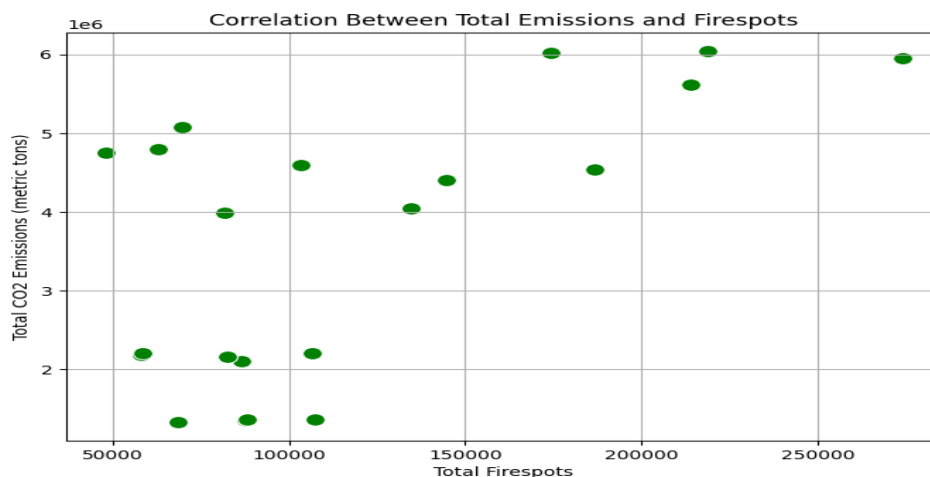
## 2. Trends in Firespots:

- Firespots showed significant volatility over the analyzed period. Peaks occurred in 2002 and 2004, followed by a general decline after 2010. This decline may be attributed to stricter enforcement of deforestation laws. However, intermittent surges in firespots were observed in later years, possibly due to policy relaxations or increased deforestation activities.



## 3. Correlation Analysis:

- The scatterplot reveals a weak positive correlation (Pearson correlation coefficient of  $\sim 0.2$ ) between total CO2 emissions and firespots.
- While years with high firespots correspond to relatively higher CO2 emissions, the relationship is not linear. The scattered data points suggest that other factors, such as industrial emissions, agricultural practices, and fire intensities, may play a significant role in influencing CO2 levels.



## Interpretation:

- The analysis indicates that firespots alone cannot fully explain variations in CO2 emissions. Although both datasets reflect environmental activities in the Amazon, their weak correlation highlights the complexity of emission sources. Factors like industrial activity, urban expansion, and policy changes significantly contribute to the observed trends.
- This analysis provides a foundation for exploring more granular datasets, such as regional emissions or fire intensity data, to gain deeper insights into the interplay between firespots and CO2 emissions.

## Conclusions:

The analysis aimed to explore the relationship between **total CO2 emissions** and **firespots** in the Brazilian Amazon from **1999 to 2019**. The findings reveal the following:

### 1. Key Findings:

- While firespots are one of the contributors to CO2 emissions, the weak positive correlation (Pearson coefficient  $\sim 0.2$ ) suggests that they are not the sole or dominant factor driving CO2 emission levels.
- Both datasets exhibit individual trends, with emissions generally declining during the period studied, while firespots displayed a more volatile pattern, influenced by deforestation policies and enforcement.

2. **Answer to the Question:** The posed question regarding the relationship between firespots and CO2 emissions was partially answered. Firespots contribute to emissions, but the weak correlation indicates that other significant factors, such as industrial processes, transportation, and agricultural practices, also play a role in determining CO2 levels.

### 3. Limitations:

- **Dataset Scope:** The analysis relied on aggregated annual data, which may mask finer temporal (monthly/seasonal) patterns or regional variations within the Amazon.
- **Exclusion of Other Factors:** Emissions from non-fire-related activities, such as fossil fuel combustion or industrial emissions, were not separately analyzed.
- **Data Quality:** The data's reliance on open-source and self-reported emissions could introduce inaccuracies or inconsistencies.

### 4. Uncertainties:

- The specific contribution of each deforestation driver (e.g., agriculture, illegal logging) to emissions remains unclear.
- Policy changes and enforcement variations over time might not be fully captured in the datasets.