* 1/5 of Amazon has been destroyed over years
* Fires are commonly set to clear land for forests along w/ bulldozers to make roads
* Chemical wastes are dumped into the forests water ways making it hazardous and unsafe
* All the previous problems cause many animals to die and races to go extinct
* Edge-effect is deforestation caused
* Edge-effect occurs when deforestation creates a forest edge which exposes it to high wind, brighter light, and dryer condition
* Tons of carbon dioxide are released into air as trees are burned down
* Since fields give off less water vapor than trees, there is less rain
* Cattle ranching is major cause of deforestation in Brazil but is “compensated” because so much money is made
* Soybeans are another reason for deforestation and since soil in Amazon is so poor, farmers must keep moving every two years or so
* U.S. is only one to produce more soybean than Brazil and since is now converting to ethanol in some places, farmers start making corn which increases demand for Brazilian soybeans
* As pasturelands (grass fields) run out ranchers move deeper, and soybean farmers come into left pasturelands so there is never time for trees to grow back
* The major soy companies of the Amazon are giant so nobody can do much against them
* Logging also attacks the Amazon for valuable trees
* Brazil made selling Mahogany illegal in 2001 after finding most mahogany cut down were illegal but illegal logging continues
* This shows the government is trying a little to prevent bad stuff…..
* Mining causes damage to Brazil and Venezuela and began in the 1970’s
* Illegal gold miners called Garimpeiros cause water pollution w/ mercury used in mining process which poison fish
* Miners also removed soil and vegetation from the rainforest which caused soil erosion
* Oil also has problems – from 1967 to 1992 Texaco drilled for oil in Ecuador and dumped billions of gallons of toxic chemicals into waste pits which seeped into rivers
* Scientist estimate 50,000 species of the world’s rainforest become extinct every year – 137 a day!
* Poaching kills many animals
* Animals are wanted as pets or for their traits
* The middlemen of **traffickers** make huge profits by selling these animals world wide
* The IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources) cracks down on many poachers but since the practice is so wide spread, it is very hard to stop.
* Brazil has found that indigenous reserves are the best way to preserve the forest
* In 2002 Brazil joined WWF (World Wildlife Fund) and ARPA (Amazon Region Protected Area) program
* Part of the ARPA plan is to set up 80 reserve camps the size of California
* In 2007 Brazil launched “Arc of Fire” which cracked down on illegal logging camps
* Rainforest is Brazil, Africa, and Southeast Asia
* Rainforests only cover fraction of what they used to cover due to deforestation n
* 87000 miles^2 per year are lost in the rainforest
* By 1950 half the rainforests that existed by the turn of the century disappeared
* Roads are built through remote areas to improve transportation and for loggers to get new areas of timber
* “Shifted Cultivation”: a form of agriculture, used especially in tropical Africa, in which an area of ground is cleared of vegetation and cultivated for a few years and then abandoned for a new area until its fertility has been naturally restored
* Shifted cultivation destroys the rainforests and abuses the nutrients so the area is no longer fertile and therefore plants cannot grow back
* The farmers then keep on moving and repeating the process
* Many trees are logged to sell for quick profit
* Quick profits can be made, but for the price of enormous destruction
* The collection of wood for firewood is another cause of clearance, especially in Africa
* Dams are built for hydroelectric power where water rushes through and spins the turbines
* Before a dam is made people and animals must be cleared from the area and if trees are left to stay underwater, the will acidify the water which eats away the machinery
* Amazon has lots of riches and though mining isn’t direct threat, brings roads that attracts settlers