



Fires in Brazil



August 11, 2019

JPEG





August 13, 2019

JPEG

Editor's Note: This story was updated on 22 August 2019 to clarify our data source. Then on 23 August 2019, we published a separate in-depth article giving more context to the 2019 Amazon fire season.

In the Amazon rainforest, fire season has arrived. The Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on NASA's Aqua satellite captured these images of several fires burning in the states of Rondônia, Amazonas, Pará, and Mato Grosso on August 11 and August 13, 2019.

In the Amazon region, fires are rare for much of the year because wet weather prevents them from starting and spreading. However, in July and August, activity typically increases due to the arrival of the dry season. Many people use fire to maintain farmland and pastures or to clear land for other purposes. Typically, activity peaks in early September and mostly stops by November.

As of August 16, 2019, an analysis of NASA satellite data indicated that total fire activity across the Amazon basin this year has been close to the average in comparison to the past 15 years. (The Amazon spreads across Brazil, Peru, Colombia, and parts of other countries.) Though activity appears to be above average in the states of Amazonas and Rondônia, it has so far appeared below average in Mato Grosso and Pará, according to estimates from the Global Fire Emissions Database, a research project that compiles and analyzes NASA data. (Note that while the chart label says 2016, the 2019 data is listed on all of the plots as a green line. Roll your cursor over the green 2019 block below the plot to isolate the 2019 numbers.)

NASA Earth Observatory images by Lauren Dauphin, using MODIS data from NASA EOSDIS/LANCE and GIBS/Worldview and VIIRS data from NASA EOSDIS/LANCE and GIBS/Worldview, and the Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership. Caption by Adam Voiland.

Heat

Fires



Satellites begin to detect heightened fire activity in July and August in the Amazon.

Instruments:

Aqua — MODIS

Suomi NPP — VIIRS

References & Resources

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Global Fire Emissions Database (2019, August 16) Forecast. Accessed August 22, 2019.

Van Marle, M.J.E. *et al.* (2017) Fire and deforestation dynamics in Amazonia (1973-2014). *Global Biogeochemical Cycles*, 31 (1), 24-38.

South American Fires in 2019

Fire activity in the Amazon and much of South America often coincides with a dry season from July through October.