



If you don't buy African ivory, why would you buy Amazon mahogany?

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With American consumers clamoring for the rich hues of mahogany furniture, the demand for the wood has soared along with prices—driving the illegal trade of these majestic trees from Peru to the United States. In addition to breaking the law, the effects of this illegal activity abroad are disastrous: Indigenous communities that rely on the forest are losing their homes, rare and endangered species such as the jaguar are losing their habitat, and if the illegal logging doesn't stop, the mahogany tree will be commercially extinct before 2016.

What We Are Doing to Stop Illegal Logging

Peru's mahogany exports violate U.S., Peruvian, and international law, according to a lawsuit against importers and U.S. agencies being filed by native groups and NRDC. Following the path of ivory, in 2003, mahogany was listed on the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as a species in need of strict regulation to prevent its extinction. Because Peruvian mahogany is traded in violation of CITES, it is illegal to trade or possess it under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

What You Can Do to Stop Illegal Logging

Millions of dollars worth of Peruvian mahogany enters U.S. ports in violation of domestic and international laws. As the largest importer of mahogany, the United States has a responsibility to ensure that the trade in mahogany is legal and sustainable. U.S. buyers also have a responsibility to ensure that they do not purchase tainted wood. Peruvian native groups and NRDC are asking industry leaders to pledge not to buy illegal or unsustainably logged mahogany.

Pledge Not to Buy Illegal Mahogany

Peruvian officials report that more than 80 percent of mahogany is logged illegally, but authorities lack the ability to establish chain of custody controls and to regulate the trade. Moreover, Peru's efforts are undermined by timber traders who cheat the system by falsifying permits and documents, manipulating the national forestry database, and misrepresenting the locations and quantities of mahogany in their concessions.

Yet the United States continues to allow tens of thousands of tons of contraband mahogany to cross U.S. borders each year, despite President Bush's Initiative against Illegal Logging, announced in 2002. The United States now accounts for more than 80 percent of all exports from Peru. Once it enters the country, Peruvian mahogany is manufactured into upscale wood products, including dining tables, elegant doors, and luxury yachts.

Rank	Importers of Peruvian Mahogany*	City	State
1	Bozovich Timber Products	Evergreen	AL
2	T. Baird Intl Co	King of Prussia	PA
3	Maderera Gutierrez y Hernandez Ltda	Gulf Shores	AL
4	TBM Hardwoods Inc	King of Prussia	PA
5	J. Gibson McIlvain Co	White Marsh	MD
6	Downes & Reader Hardwood	Stoughton	MA
7	Alan McIlvain Co	Marcus Hook	PA
8	Overseas Tropical Lumber	Lutz	FL
9	Dan K. Moore Lumber Co	Lexington	NC
10	Lane Stanton Vance Lumber	City of Industry	CA
11	Banks Hardwoods Florida	Miami	FL
12	Inter-Continental Hardwoods	Currie	NC
13	Rex Lumber Co	Acton	MA
14	Thompson Mahogany Co	Philadelphia	PA
15	Fine Woods Products	Miami	FL
16	South Florida Lumber Co	Coral Gables	FL
17	Speciality Woods Inc	Destin	FL
18	Medley Hardwoods	Medley	FL
19	Precious Tropical Hardwoods	Corona	CA
20	Patriot Timber Products	Greensboro	NC

*Importers of Peruvian mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) in descending order of total volume imported in 2005. Other companies, including Newman Lumber Company and Aljoma, have purchased Peruvian mahogany in the past and may still buy it from third parties.

Illegal Logging Threatens Native Peoples, Endangers Wildlife

The illegal and unsustainable logging of mahogany has a profound impact on the Amazon and its peoples. The majority of remaining mahogany stands are located in protected areas and territorial reserves set aside for indigenous peoples who have had little or no contact with the outside world—people who have made the Amazon their home for thousands of years. As armed loggers invade these remote Peruvian Amazon regions, they threaten the survival of the last few hundred families of isolated Mascho Piro, Yora, Matsigenka, and Amahuaca. Loggers also introduce deadly diseases, engage in violent and deadly conflict, and destroy the ecosystem the tribes depend upon for life.

Not only are families threatened, but the mining of mahogany in the Amazon also causes severe damage to the entire forest ecosystem, and associated hunting by illegal loggers decimates populations of rare and endangered species such as the jaguar, the giant otter, and river turtles. In just one region of the Peruvian Amazon, it has been estimated that illegal loggers kill 3,000 pounds of wildlife each day, leading to the local extinction of some species. And experts estimate that at current rates of harvest, the mahogany tree will be commercially extinct within a decade.

To stop this destruction, the Natural Resources Defense Council is joining forces with native groups from Peru to stop all imports of illegally and unsustainably logged Peruvian mahogany—particularly by the United States, the world's largest mahogany importer.