



**JNCC Report 813**

**Guidance for promoting and encouraging sustainable consumption in  
individual consumers**

**Annex 2**

**Factsheet: the environmental impact of cocoa beans**

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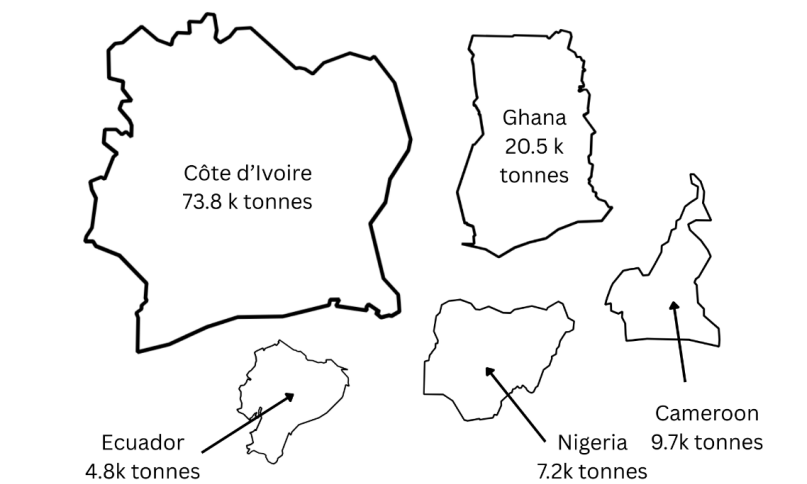
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# Factsheet: the environmental impact of cocoa beans

## Background

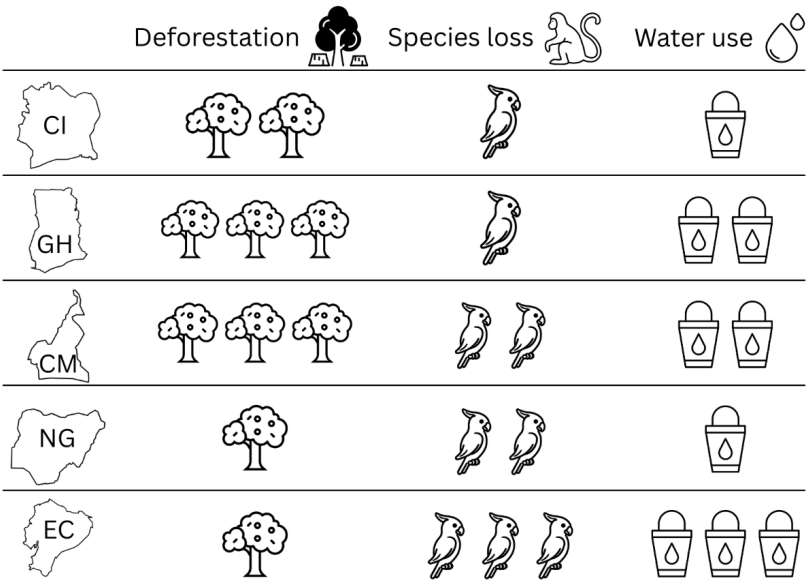
The UK consumes 126 thousand tonnes of cocoa beans per year, which is approximately **2 kilograms** per person per year. Cocoa beans consumed in the UK mostly come from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria and Ecuador.



Cocoa bean production leads to deforestation of natural ecosystems, uses a huge amount of water, and threatens biodiversity through habitat loss. However, by understanding the impact that individual choices have, we have the ability to shift consumption patterns and reduce negative effects.

## Geography of different impacts

The intensity of environmental effects can vary across producing counties. If we look at the top five producing countries, across three categories of environmental impact, we can see how the impact per tonne of cocoa production varies country-to-country.



Of the five primary producing countries, deforestation per tonne of cocoa beans is highest in Ghana and Cameroon, but species loss and water use are highest in Ecuador (see Impacts in numbers for specific values).

## What can you do?

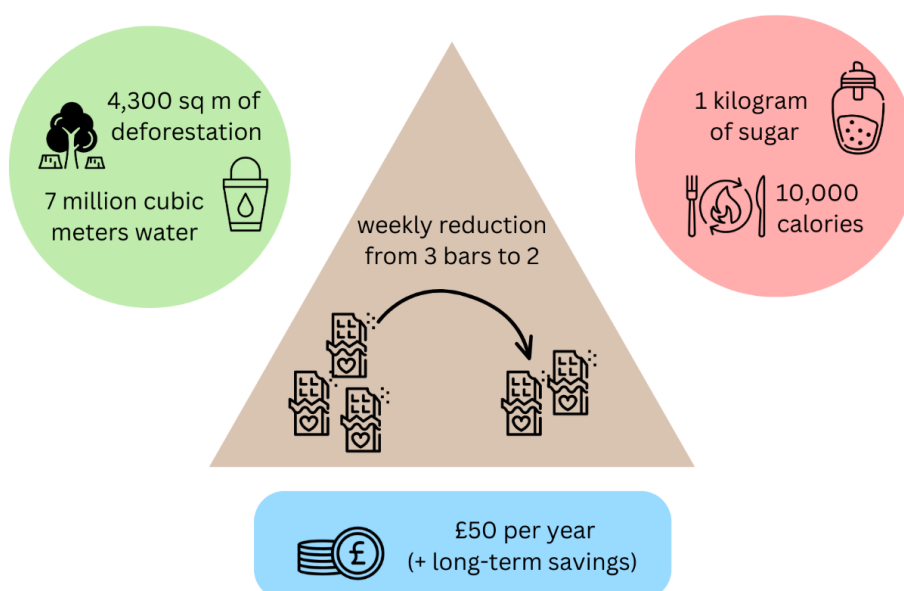
The average person in the UK eats 3 chocolate bars per week. If everyone cut out one bar per week, this could save up to 4,300 square metres of deforestation or up to 7 million cubic metres of water in one year. That's an area equivalent to around one third of Trafalgar Square in London and could contain up to 1,130 trees that would be saved by making a simple switch. 7 million cubic metres is around 3,000 Olympic swimming pools!

You could also reduce your footprint by looking for chocolate with cocoa beans from countries with lower impact scores. Cocoa beans from Grenada, Haiti, Micronesia and Samoa have the lowest deforestation per tonne, whilst water usage per tonne is lowest in Malaysia, Honduras, Bolivia and Tanzania.

## What are the other benefits?

Cutting down one bar per week might not seem like a lot, but over a year, the benefits add up! By removing just one bar per week, you could reduce your sugar intake by over 1,000g annually, and reduce your calorie intake by over 10,000 calories per year. Financially, you could save around £50 per year and may save more in the long term due to a reduction in future healthcare costs.

Why not make your chocolate consumption a real treat? By consciously choosing your chocolate, you could opt for something higher quality and really make it something to savour twice per week.



## Find out more

If you want to learn more about the environmental impact of everyday items, have a look at the [Global Environmental Impacts of Consumption indicator](#), published and updated annually by JNCC and partner organisations.

## Impacts in numbers

Country	Deforestation (m <sup>2</sup> per tonne per year)	Species loss (species per tonne per year)*	Green water use (m <sup>3</sup> per tonne per year)
Côte d'Ivoire	147	0.0000031	11,059
Ghana	240	0.0000072	43,157
Cameroon	278	0.0000870	39,624
Nigeria	47	0.0000220	16,740
Ecuador	39	0.0001300	101,834

\* Note on species loss: This is the number of species predicted to become extinct because of land changes for cocoa production. There is no time frame on when these extinctions are likely to be felt. The risk can be thought of as being shared amongst all species, and so individual species cannot be pinpointed as being 'at risk' using this metric.