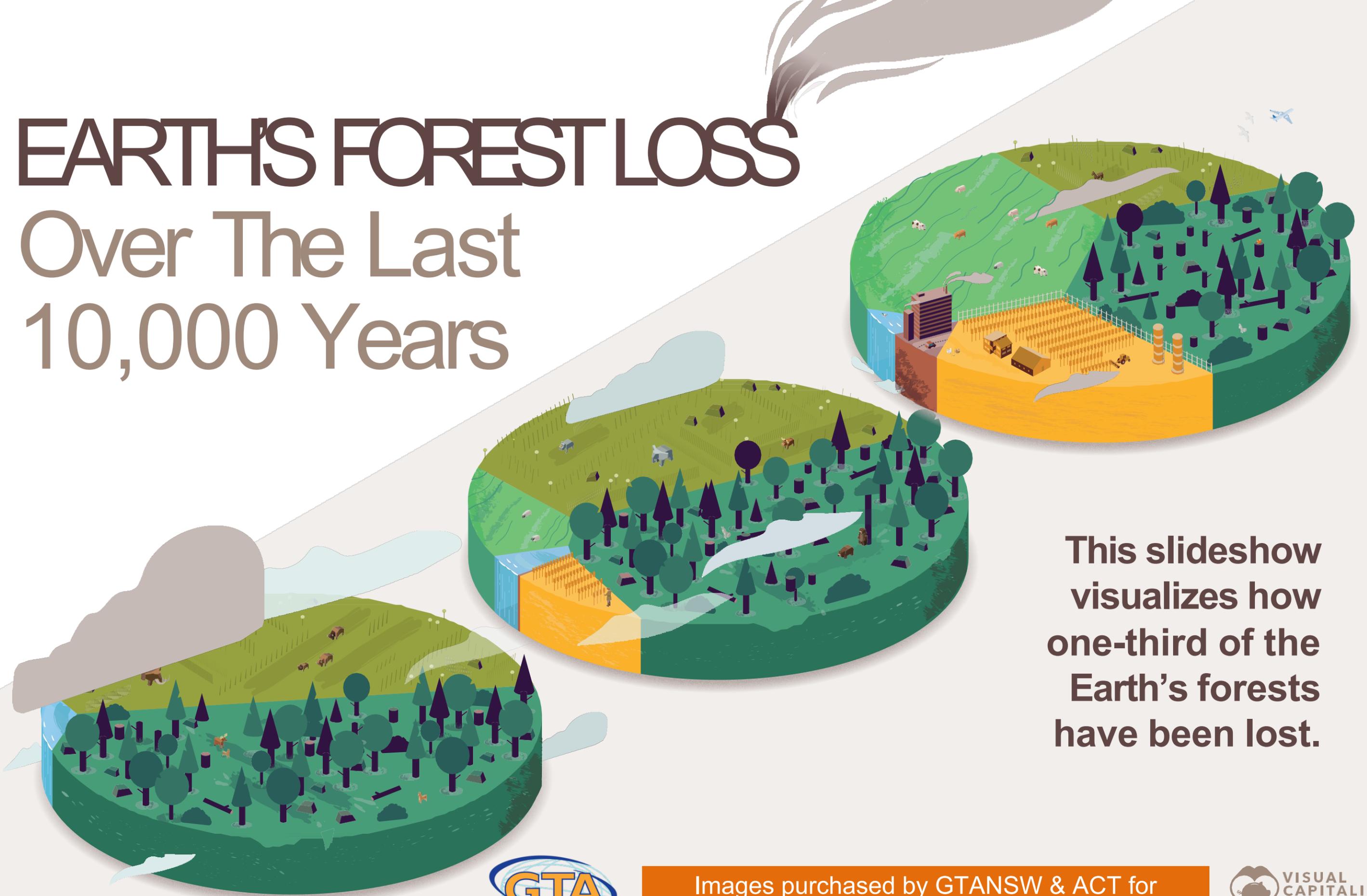


EARTH'S FOREST LOSS Over The Last 10,000 Years



**This slideshow
visualizes how
one-third of the
Earth's forests
have been lost.**

Earth's Surface by Type

Earth's surface by type in hectares

The vast majority of the Earth's surface is made up of uninhabitable ocean, glaciers, and barren land.

Ocean
71% | 36.1B

Glaciers
3% | 1.5B
The vast majority is concentrated in Antarctica.

Habitable
21% | 10.6B

Before looking at forest loss, it's important to consider the Earth's surface as a whole:

Barren
6% | 2.8B
Includes deserts, salt flats, exposed rocks, and dunes.

Let's look at how the planet's habitable land has evolved over the last 10,000 years.



10,000

Years ago

Breakdown
of Habitable
land in hectares

10,000
years ago

Present

Grassland
42% | 4.6B
Wild grassland and shrubs.



5,000
Years ago

Breakdown
of Habitable
land in hectares



Grassland
44% | 4.8B



With only three major civilizations in **Egypt**, **Mesopotamia**, and the **Indus Valley**, most of the world's land remained unused.

- Grazing
<1% | .01M
- Freshwater
1% | ~150M
- Urban
<1% | .004M
- Crops
<1% | 1M



Forest
55% | 5.8B

The first major human civilizations were formed in river valleys suitable for early agriculture around 5000–8000 years ago.

1700

Breakdown of Habitable land in hectares



Grassland
38% | 4.2B

The spread of civilizations and repurposing of land for agriculture becomes apparent on a macro scale.

Grazing
6% | 668M
Grasses and wild vegetation for livestock grazing.

Freshwater
1% | ~150M

Urban
<1% | 41M

Crops
3% | 318M
Includes human food, cash crops, and animal feed.

Forest
52% | 5.5B



1800

Breakdown of Habitable land in hectares

The rise of industrialization and mass agriculture begins.

10,000 years ago

Present
1800

Grassland 36% | 3.9B
Initially, most of the land used for grazing and crops came from grasslands.

Grazing
9% | 917M

Freshwater
1% | ~150M

Urban
<1% | 35M

Crops
4% | 424M

Forest
50% | 5.3B



1900

Breakdown of Habitable land in hectares

10,000 years ago

Present
1900

Grassland
27% | 3.0B

As easily accessible grassland became used up, forests (which have very fertile soil) were also cleared to make room for crops and livestock.

Grazing

16% | 1.7B

Freshwater

1% | ~150M

Urban

<1% | 70M

Despite an estimated population of 1.6 billion people in 1900, humanity's urban footprint is still miniscule.

Crops

8% | 844M

Forest

48% | 5.1B



1950

Breakdown of Habitable land in hectares

Grazing

3% | 3.3B

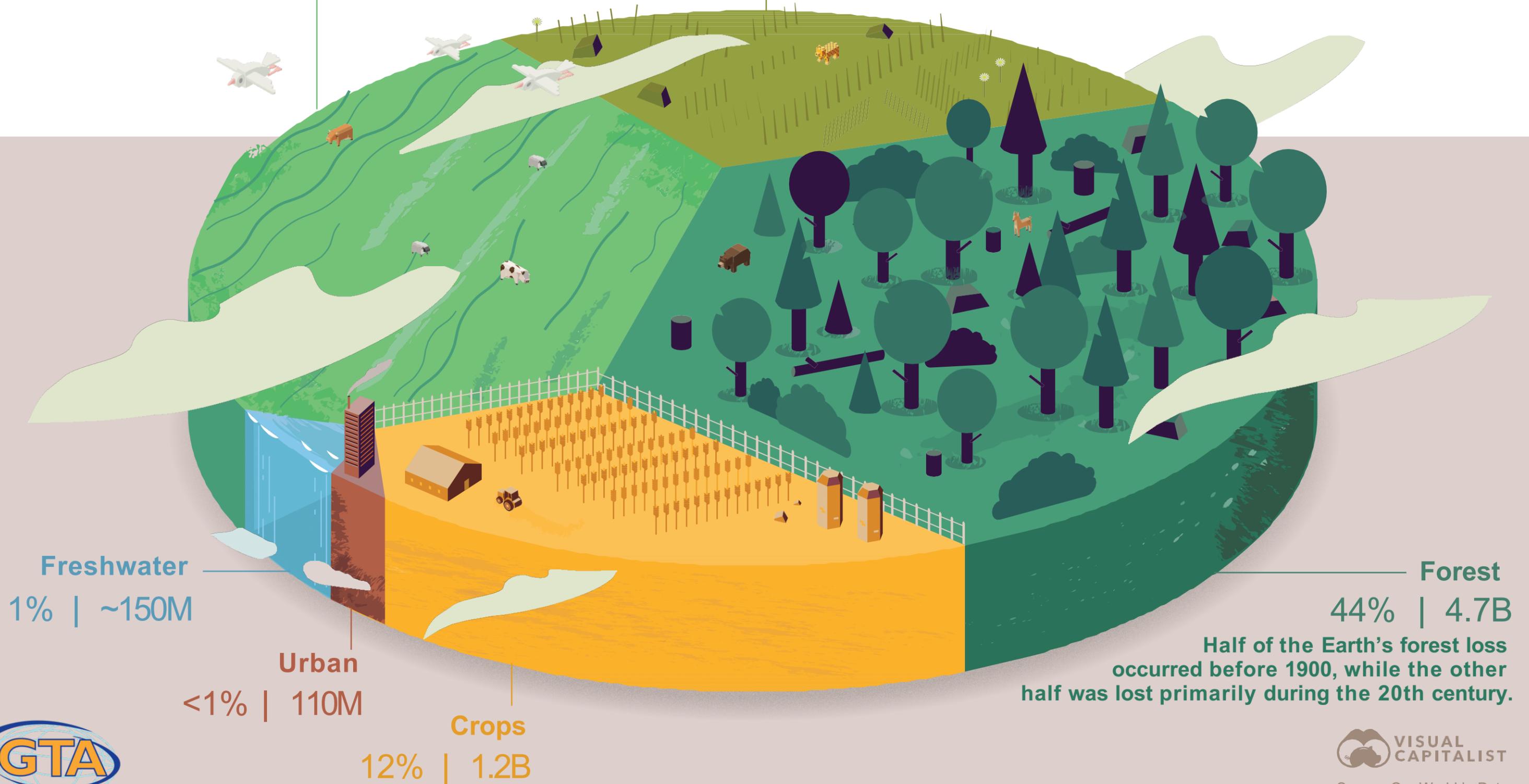
Almost 1 billion hectares of grassland were lost from 1900–1950, mainly for grazing.

Grassland

12% | 1.4B

10,000 years ago

Present
1950



Forest
44% | 4.7B
Half of the Earth's forest loss occurred before 1900, while the other half was lost primarily during the 20th century.



2018

Breakdown of Habitable land in hectares



Grassland
14% | 1.7B

Over time, used up agriculture and forestry land becomes grassland.

Grazing
31% | 3.2B



Freshwater
1% | ~150M

Urban
1% | 150M

Includes settlements and infrastructure.

Crops
15% | 1.6B

Forest
38% | 4.0B

Since the last ice age, one-third of the world's forests have been lost.

