

Jonathan has been [going after](#) Peet's for not actually selling very much coffee that is environmentally friendly or that supports social justice. Among all of Peet's coffees, he reports that only one is fair trade certified and only one other is organic certified. (And apparently, you have to pick between helping people and avoiding pesticides!)

Let me pile on with Jonathan and note yet another important environmental issue relating to coffee consumption that Peet's seems to be ignoring. [Coffee production in tropical countries can result in significant conversion of habitat from rainforests to open plantations](#). The result is a loss of habitat that is important for a range of species, including many of the birds that migrate to North America in the spring, birds that we enjoy watching and that are integral parts of our ecosystems here. Destruction of their wintering habitat in Central and South America is having devastating impacts on the populations of those bird species.

But you don't have to choose between protecting birds and your morning cup of coffee. [A traditional \(and still important\) form of coffee production leaves many of the canopy trees from the forest in place, providing important habitat for birds \(and other species\)](#). "Shade-grown" coffee is still widely practiced in Central and South America. Various organizations have been trying to support shade-grown coffee growing. [The Smithsonian Institution's Migratory Bird Center has a certification program so that you can identify coffee beans that have been grown on shade-grown plantations in Central and South America](#). [The Rainforest Alliance has a related certification mechanism that certifies coffees from around the world](#).

[Peet's does list on its "sustainability" page that it uses coffee certified by the Rainforest Alliance](#) (and the Rainforest Alliance [lists Peet's](#) on its partners list).^{*} Yet I can't find a single one of its coffees that is, in fact, certified by Rainforest Alliance. Perhaps I'm missing something, but it doesn't seem that Peet's is doing very much about this issue. This is not impossible to do. Whole Foods in Berkeley sells coffee by Allegro which has multiple coffee lines that are rainforest certified. This is fairly shocking and disappointing, given that the customers of Peet's Coffee likely care a lot about these issues. And there doesn't seem to be any reason that Peet's couldn't step up its game. There are [roasting companies](#) that sell "triple-certified" coffee (fair trade, organic, and rainforest/shade-grown certified coffee). Why can't Peet's?

I want to emphasize that I want to like Peet's. I really do. Not that I drink coffee. But my wife does. A lot. And she's been a dedicated Peet's customer for more than a decade. Now she's questioning her coffee choices.

* Peet's also says that many of its coffees are certified by [UTZ Certified](#) as being

environmentally sustainable and socially just. However, having perused their website, I can't find any details about what, exactly, their certification standards involve.