
PREFACE

This book was written to provide an introductory text that would acquaint undergraduate students with the field of biogeography. A special emphasis is placed on instructing geography students in North America, although the topics and examples are global in scope. After a number of years teaching biogeography to students in both the United States and Canada, it seemed to me that three things were required in such an introductory text. First, because introductory biogeography students come to the subject from a wide array of backgrounds, ranging from the humanities, to the social sciences, to the natural sciences, the text has to presuppose little in the way of background knowledge in biology or physical geography. Therefore, the book contains elementary discussions of important concepts and terms from biology and physical geography with which every biogeographer should be familiar. In addition, as so much of biogeography depends upon an understanding of how the physical and biological environments actually affect organisms and influence their geographic distributions, ample space is provided to examine how physical and biological factors such as heat, moisture stress, or predation impact individuals, populations, and species. Second, biogeographers today work on a diverse range of topics, ranging from genetic analyses focused on unraveling evolutionary history, to disturbance studies, to the design of reserves for the conservation of biodiversity. In many cases, the research of modern biogeographers overlaps considerably with the work of evolutionary scientists, ecologists, and conservation biologists.

The text was designed to present the scope of biogeographical work as it is defined by the activities of the practitioners, rather than sticking to narrow academic definitions of the discipline. Therefore the book contains chapters on issues such as human evolution, disturbance, and conservation as well as discussions of traditional topics such as biomes, cladistics, and island biogeography. In addition, the text uses examples from, and provides references to, the recent work of a very wide variety of biogeographers. Some teachers will focus on those chapters that most closely follow their own work and the text is designed to be used in this selective manner or in a broader more encompassing examination of the field. Third, biogeography is a fascinating subject in large part because of the wonderful variety of organisms and ecosystems we are studying and the engrossing and powerful scientific concepts that have been formulated and developed by biogeographers and scientists in closely aligned disciplines. The text contains many examples of the natural histories of different species of plants and animals to help convey this wonderful variety of life. To help relate the human history of biogeography the text contains short biographical sketches of some of the major figures in the field. It is hoped that students will see that the ideas that underlie the science of biogeography were developed by people who were also once young and curious like themselves. Photographs of both interesting organisms

and seminal figures in biogeography are provided to help establish the tie between the classroom and the 'real world'.

In the formulation and writing of this text a number of biogeographers provided excellent critical readings that resulted in insightful comments, helpful suggestions, and important corrections. These readers included: Karen Arabas—Willamette University; C. John Burk—Smith College; William P. Coffman—University of Pittsburgh; Laura E. Conkey—Dartmouth College; Anthony Davis—University of Toronto; James P. Doerner—University of Northern Colorado; Melanie DeVore—Georgia College and State University; Holly Freifeld; Thomas W. Gillespie—University of South Florida; N. C. Heywood—UW Stevens Point; Sally Horn—University of Tennessee; Kam-Biu Liu—Louisiana State University; Robert Peet—University of North Carolina; George Robinson—SUNY Albany; Gary L. Walker—Appalachian State University; Barry B. Warner—University of Waterloo; Susy S. Ziegler—University of Minnesota. Any mistakes that remain in this edition are solely the responsibility of the author.

Many biogeographers generously provided copies of their publications for my use in preparation of this text. I owe these colleagues a debt of gratitude for introducing me to much fine science and enlarging my view of our discipline. It is a shame that due to the constraints of space, I could use only a fraction of this research for detailed and specific examples in this book. Many of the concepts and ideas from these publications appear in more general ways throughout the book and are accordingly referenced in the appropriate chapters.

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I am afraid that writing this book took much time and energy away from some very deserving people, namely my graduate students and my family. I thank those students who were affected: Alexis Aguilar, Roslyn Case, Steve Esselman, Bruce Gervais, Judy King, Sarah Peugh, David Porinchu, Aaron Potito, and Sigrid Rian for their understanding and unflagging enthusiasm—and for keeping it real. Most importantly, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my wife Joanne and my children Alex and Hilary. There were far too many weekends, evenings, and vacation periods spent with me hunched over the computer or engrossed in reading to be fair to a young family. The patience and encouragement they showed when I was confronted by problems in writing or meeting deadlines is deeply appreciated. Joanne also contributed much in the way of critical reading, text preparation, and generally keeping me under control. So, to my family I say—thank you and now let's go out and have some fun!