

# Biogeography. Lecture 22

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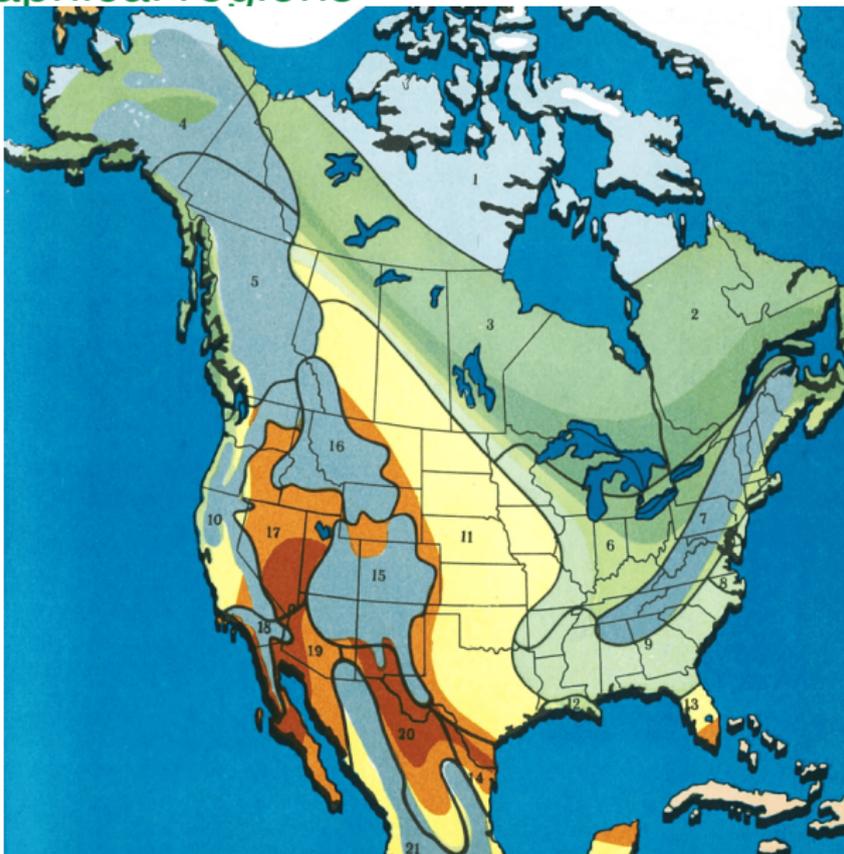


# Outline

## Holarctic region I: Nearctic North America



# Biogeographical regions



## North America: 21 region

1. Arctic Islands and Greenland
2. Labrador, Sr. Lawrence Valley
3. Canadian Northwest
4. Alaska
5. Yukon and British Columbia
6. Great Lakes and Central Lowlands
7. Appalachians
8. East Coast
9. Coastal Lowlands
10. Central Pacific Coast Ranges
11. Great Plains
12. Mississippi delta
13. South Florida
14. South Texas
15. South Montane region
16. North Montane region
17. Great Basin
18. Southern California
19. Sonora
20. Chihuahua
21. Mexican Sierras



## Region 14: South Texas

- ▶ Parkland: green savanna with cactus, mesquite (*Prosopis*) and acacia (*Acacia*) domination. Similar to African savannas.
- ▶ Sea coast supports rich birds life; this is the wintering place for many northern birds.
- ▶ Many native species have Neotropical connections (like nine-banded armadillo, *Dasyus novemcinctus* which now is moving to the north again)



## Regions 10 and 18: California

- ▶ Unique region with similarities to Mediterranean and South Africa (The Cape)
- ▶ Hot, dry summers and more or less humid winters; almost no precipitation in July–October.
- ▶ Cascade mountain range will make Oregon coastline more humid but this effect disappears in “core” California.
- ▶ Multiple endemics, including several plant families and many genera (for example, cobra lily, *Darlingtonia*, redwoods, *Sequoia* and *Sequoiadendron*, *Washingtonia* palm)
- ▶ The center of several species “explosions”, e.g., for oaks (*Quercus*) and manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*)
- ▶ Animals: many endemic primitive species like mountain “beaver” *Aplodontia rufa* and shrew mole *Neurotrichus gibbsii*
- ▶ The southern part (Baja California) is almost Neotropical.



## Mountain “beaver” *Aplodontia rufa*



## Shrew mole *Neurotrichus gibbsii*



## Regions 19, 20 and 21: southern deserts

- ▶ Sonora to the west, Chihuahua to the east and Mexican Sierras between
- ▶ Closest analogs are Spanish and north African deserts
- ▶ High temperatures, precipitation increases on higher altitudes. As a consequence, desert in valleys and forest on the mountains
- ▶ Plants are mostly succulents from Cactaceae (like saguaro *Carnegieia gigantea*, barrel cactus (*Ferocactus*) and Arizona queen of the night *Peniocereus greggii*), and several smaller families (most important are agaves and yuccas from Asparagaceae, and ocotillos from Fouquieriaceae). In eastern deserts, cacti are partly replaced with *Acacia* and *Parkinsonia* (Palo Verde) legume trees.
- ▶ Many desert animals are cactus-specific like bats, elf owl or cactus wren. Famous roadrunners (*Geococcyx*) and Antelope Jack (*Lepus alleni*) are among fastest living things (20 and 44 mph, respectively).
- ▶ Specific groups are gila monster (together with beaded lizard), *Helodermatidae*; *Phrynosoma* horned lizard; and rattlesnakes, *Crotalus* which are able for thermoreception.
- ▶ Mexican Sierras have many Neotropical groups like jaguars (*Panthera onca*), cacomistles (*Bassariscus*) and coati (*Nasua*).



# Arizona queen of the night (*Peniocereus greggii*)



## Regions 15, 16 and 17: Rocky Mountains and Great Basin

- ▶ Great Basin is the one of two closed basins in North America, the bottom of two great dried lakes, **Lake Lahontan** (Nevada) and **Lake Bonneville** (Utah).
- ▶ Great Basin has very low precipitation: this is the true desert. Mountain ranges are more humid, especially the northern part where *Pinus ponderosa* is dominating but there are no broadleaf trees dominated (the only exception are aspen *Populus tremuloides* forests). Another widespread ecosystem is the sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* mostly) semi-desert.
- ▶ Only few endemic species; plants and animals typically came from surrounding regions. Northern mountain range has several species exhibiting the “Seattle/North Idaho” disjunction. However, Yellowstone and Mono Lake support an amazing diversity of extremophile prokaryotes (like *Aquifex* which is the source of PCR DNA polymerase).
- ▶ Most interesting plant and animal species: puma (cougar, *Puma concolor*), sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), spiny lizards (*Scleroporos*, same family as horny lizard), tailed frog (*Ascaphus montanus*) and bristlecone pines (*Pinus aristata* and *Pinus longaeva*, the latter is the oldest living thing, 5,000 years old) 

## For Further Reading



**A. Shipunov.**

*Biogeography* [Electronic resource].

2014—onwards.

Mode of access:

[http://ashipunov.info/shipunov/school/biol\\_330](http://ashipunov.info/shipunov/school/biol_330)



**I. Sanderson.**

*The Continent We Live On.*

1961.

Mode of access: <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/71734#page/7/mode/1up>



**North America.**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North\\_America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America)

