

# ETHIOPIAN REGION

## INTRODUCTION:

Owing to the peculiarities of distribution shown by an animal at the present day, it has been found practicable and advisable to divide the whole surface of the earth into a number of regions according to the similarities and dissimilarities of their fauna. Every specialist follows the division of his own particular group and hence a large number of schemes has been proposed. The most accepted view regarding the division of the animals was proposed by P.C. Selater (1858) and Wallace (1876). Blanford (1890), Lydekker (1896), Huxford (1887), Gradstein (1913), Sarsen or Schmidt (1954) also made their contribution in study of zoogeography. Wallace divided the animal universe into six zoogeographical regions: palaearctic, Ethiopian, oriental-Australian, Neotropical and Nearctic regions and Selater classified as follows:-

Cretaceous  
Palaeogeography

- i) Palaearctic region
- ii) Ethiopian or western palaeotropical region
- iii) Indian or middle Palaeotropical region
- iv) Australian or eastern Palaeotropical region

Cretaceous  
Neogeography

- v) Nearctic or North American region
- vi) Neotropical or South American region

## Factors determining the geographical distribution of animals:-

The distribution of species or a group of animals is governed by the effects of ecological, spatial and historical factors that are independent of organic evolution.

### Ecological factors:-

- 1) The constitution of the organism including its

ecological requirements and the changes produced in these by evolution.

2) Nature and distribution of the physical and biological environment in which it can live.

### Spatial factor:-

1) The place where the species or group originated and forms which it has dispersed.

2) The means of dispersal available to the organism.

### Historical factors:-

1) The times of origin of the species or group as a result of which, it has been subjected to the effect of a longer or shorter sequence of changes.

2) Changes in the physical environment both as regards barriers and high ways and changes in the biological environment as modified by evolution and migration.

## ETHIOPEAN REGION

### Extent:-

It consists of whole of Africa and Arabia south of the tropic of cancer together with Madagascar and neighbouring islands. But Darlington does not consider Madagascar as a part of this region.

### Physical features:-

In the north of the region is a great Sahara desert, the largest desert in the world. It forms an effective barrier between the Palearctic region and Ethiopian region. Thus the fauna north and south of it, are quite distinct. South of this region is characterized by desert and forest.

**Zoogeography:-** The region of animals have been following sub regions:-

**A. South African sub region:-**

It comprises the southern portion of the continent from the Cape mountains. It is represented by 186 families of terrestrial vertebrates.

**B. West African sub region:-**

It includes most of the African forest region from the river Cameroons eastward to beyond Lake Chad and southward to embrace the coast side of Congo.

**C. East African sub region:-** It includes

the rest of the tropical Africa and tropical Asia. It is represented by 191 families of terrestrial vertebrates.

**D. Malagasy sub region:-** It is comprised

by Madagascar, Mauritius, Comora and neighbouring islands.

**Fauna of the region:-**

**FISHES:-** The primitive

and fresh water fishes of this region are as follows:-

(A) Polypterus (B) Lepido Siren (C) Cat fish (D) Cichlids

**AMPHIBIANS:-** The representative of Amphibia are:-

(A) caecilian (B) Anura (C) Rhacophoridae  
(D) Leptodactylidae (E) Dactyctenidae.

**REPTILES:-** Reptiles are represented by:-

(A) Trionychidae (B) Testudinidae (C) Chamaeleon  
(D) Typhlops (E) Sand Boa (F) Python (G) Typical lizards  
(H) Zonuridae (Irida lizard)

**BIRDS:-** Among birds, the important ones are:-

(A) Serpentariae (Secretary bird) (B) Numididae (Guinea fowl)  
(C) Aerocharidae (Heleard bird) (D) Ostrich  
(E) mucophagidae (weaver birds).

MAMMALS:- Important family and genera representing the mammals are: (A) Chiroptera (B) Procellariidae (C) Chiroptera (D) Chiroptera (E) Hippoboscidae.

Peculiarity of the region:-

- 1) Among fishes the Cephalopoda or Polypterus are peculiarity of the region.
- 2) Among Amphibians, Clawed Toads are the peculiarity.
- 3) Among birds the ostriches, Secretary birds and Heermann birds are the peculiarity.
- 4) The mammalian peculiarity of the region is the presence of Nye-Nye, African buffalo, quoniam, crocodile and the most common is the ostrich.



Fig:- The Ethiopian region with adjacent regions.