

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
June 30, 1934

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed June 23, 1934

DESERT AREAS

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There is a wide difference of opinion among geographers and climatologists as to the criteria that should decide whether or not any region is to be considered a desert. Hence widely different figures have been published concerning the areas of such regions.

The well-known German climatologist Koeppen adopts a somewhat complex formula for delimiting deserts, in which he takes into account not only the amount of rainfall but also its distribution between the seasons and the average temperatures. He thus seeks to give due weight to the factor of evaporation. A large chart that he has published showing the types of climate prevailing in all parts of the world includes ten desert regions having the approximate areas in square miles shown below:

1. Sahara	2,600,000	6. Colorado	200,000
2. Australia	1,100,000	7. Gobi	180,000
3. Turkestan	900,000	8. Kalahari	90,000
4. Arabia	480,000	9. Thar (India)	74,000
5. Argentine	400,000	10. Chile	74,000

The above enumeration does not include the so-called "cold deserts," which are unfit for agriculture on account of low temperature rather than deficient rainfall.

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Washington, D.C.