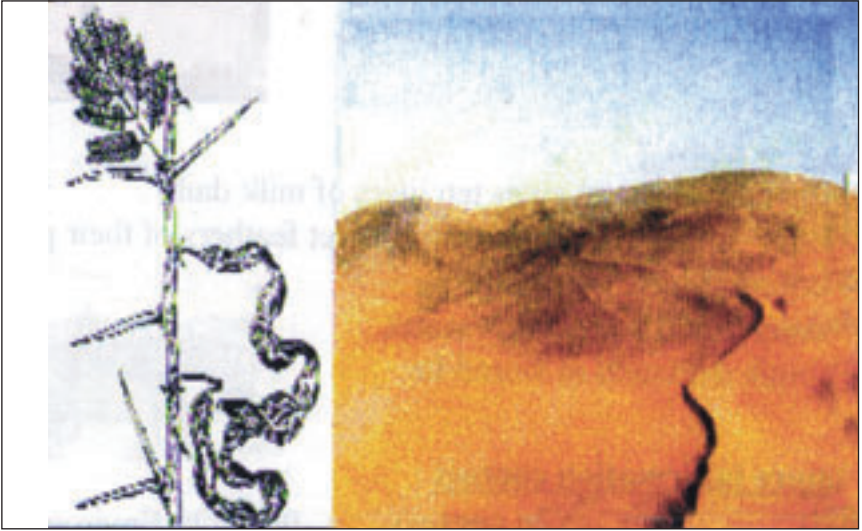




## THE DESERT



### **Nature of the desert :**

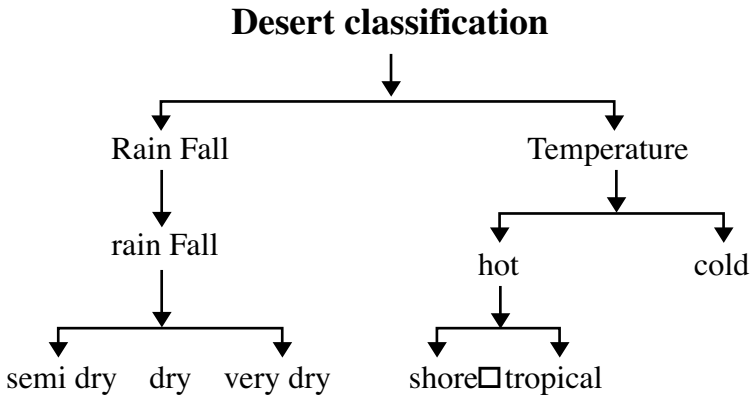
The desert is a region with scarce water and plants. Water resources are far less than water lost because of evaporation causing draught.

Deserts are characterized by the great variation of temperatures day and night and summer and winter. Organic contents of the soil are limited and this

is reflected on the vegetation cover. It has few plants scattered and trees are rare. Large areas are without any plant cover.

### **Desert classification :**

Deserts are classified according to different criteria most common of which is that based on temperature and that on rain fall.



### **Plant Life in the desert :**

Draught is the main factor limiting plant life to continue in the desert. It is also important in determining the type of plant, its density, and productivity.

Desert plants has characteristics to meet draught conditions. It is divided into two main sections :

permenent and annuals.

Permanent trees live more than one year and can stand draught and may be succulent. Annuals appear only in rainy seasons and disappear during dry seasons.

### **Desert animals :**

Desert animals are many and varied: rodents, reptiles, birds and insects. They are confronted with great difficulties as to temperature and plant scarcity.

They can adapt to conditions. The camel is an example which can stand water shortage. It has also the ability to store heat by day and lose it by night. Its wool helps to protect it from the effect of heat.



Gazelles also live in the desert, only close to the sources of water. Carnivorous animals like wolves, foxes, wild cats stay in caves by day and go out to hunt at night. Many rodents live in the desert. Some live on plants secreting salt. Some live under the soil and feed on plant tumers in the soil. Birds live in large numbers in the desert. Some depend on plants seeds, others feed on insects, snakes and small creatures. It hides in shrubs and in shades of rocks or valleys. When thirsty it flies looking for water in a well or spring.

Many reptiles live in the desert such as lionels, snakes both poisonous and nonpoisonous. It can arrange periods of activity to adapt to hard desert conditions.

Desert animals are faced with differred threats from man which may lead to its extinction.

Desert ecosystem did not escape the intrusion of man to hunt its animals for meat and furs or using his fire arms to have fun use fast cars, which caused many animals to disappear like the Arab Orix and the tiger.



## Do you know ?

- The female camel gives ten liters of milk daily.
- Baby birds get water through wet feathers of their parents returning from a well or spring.
- Many desert animals get water through oxidation of stored fat.

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Realised by : Prof. Dr. Mohamed SABER SELIM  
Prof. Dr. Kamal El-Din Hassan EL-BATANOUNY  
Academy for Scientific Research and Technology,  
Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt.  
Tel and Fax: (202-5) 71 58 85  
E-mail: batanouny@frcu.eun.eg



Ain-Shams University



Academy for Sc. Research  
& Technology

**Coordinateur Régional** : Prof. Dr. Abdelhamid BELEMLIH  
Société Protectrice des Animaux et de la Nature «SPANA» 41, Résidence Zohra, Harhoura  
12 000 Témara - Maroc - Tél : (212-7) 74 72 09 - Fax : (212-7) 74 74 93 - E-mail : spana@mtds.net.ma