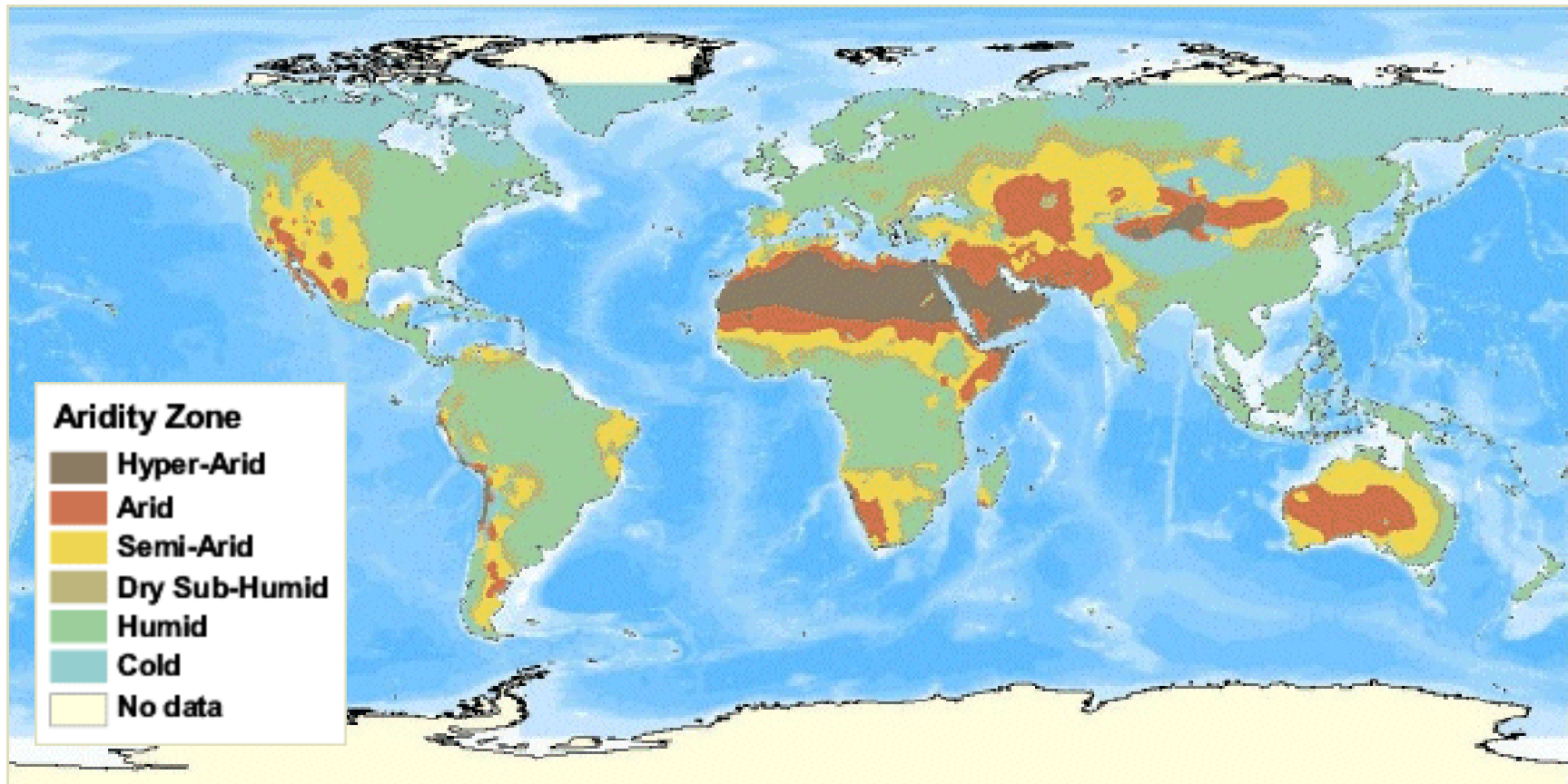


Drylands: Aridity Zones of the World



Map Projection: Geographic

Citation: WRI. 2002. World Resources Institute. Drylands, People, and Ecosystem Goods and Services: A Web-based Geospatial Analysis. Available online at: <http://www.wri.org>.

Analytical Overview:

No analysis was completed for this map. Please note that there is no aridity zone data available north of 70 degrees.

Description:

Using the ratio of mean annual precipitation to mean annual potential evapotranspiration, the world is divided into six aridity zones. Drylands include arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas (other than polar and sub-polar regions) in which this ratio ranges from 0.05-0.65. Areas where the ratio is less than 0.05 are hyper-arid zones. Areas where the ratio is greater than 0.65 are humid zones.

As shown on this map, of the approximately 135 million km² of terrestrial land area globally, the humid zone is the most extensive including about 46.5 million km² (or 34 percent of total land area). This zone covers most of Europe and Central America, and large portions of Southeast Asia, eastern North America, central South America, and central Africa. The hyper-arid zone is the least extensive, including approximately 11 million km² (or 8 percent of total land area), and is represented most predominantly by the Saharan Desert. Hyper-arid lands generally are unsuitable for growing crops.

Drylands cover almost 54 million km² of the globe. Semi-arid areas are most extensive followed by arid areas and then dry sub-humid lands. These aridity zones spread across all continents, but are found most predominantly in Asia and Africa.