

1.4 Biomes

Within the biosphere are communities of living organisms that have adapted to the physical surroundings of a specific area. These major ecological regions contain distinctive plant and animal groups that are well adapted to the physical environment. These regions are known as **biomes**.

Biomes extend over a large geographical area and are often named after the dominant type of vegetation found within them. The exact number of biomes in world is often disputed, however they can be placed into six main groups. These have been generally accepted as being aquatic, deserts, grasslands, woodlands, forests and tundra.

Figure 1.6 and Table 1.1 show the location and describe the general characteristics of some of the major biomes:

- deserts
- grasslands
- woodlands and scrublands
- boreal (taiga) forests
- temperate forests
- tropical rainforests
- tundra
- polar ice cap.

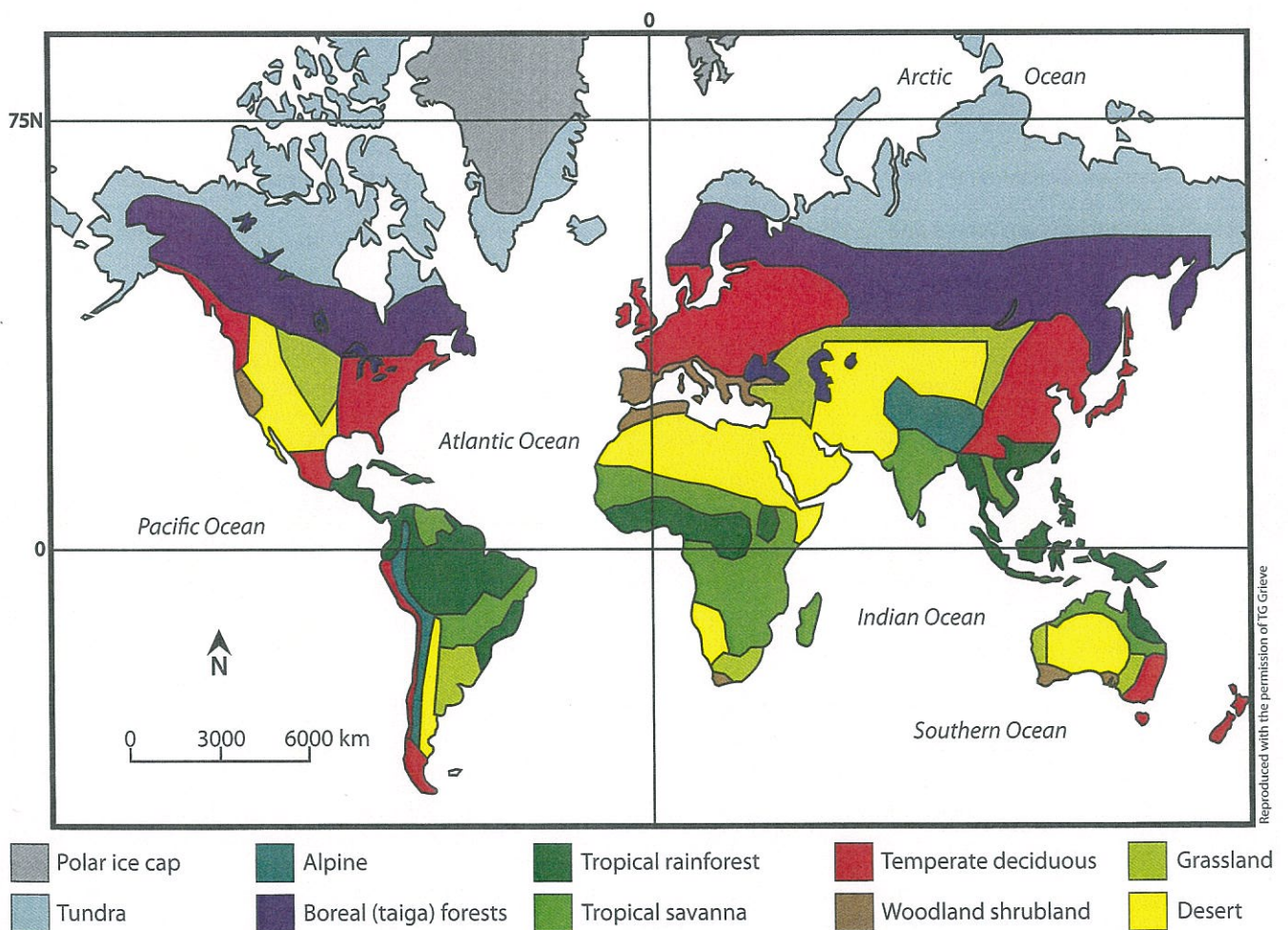


Figure 1.6 World biomes