

PHYSIOGRAPHY

A sub-discipline of geography describing the physical characteristics of the earth's surface, i.e. the natural conditions prevailing in a specific area.

The physiographic description takes into account the climate and related meteorological and hydrological relationships, terrain, geological characteristics, soil types as well as fauna and flora (biosphere) species present in the area. Physiographic disciplines include: geomorphology, hydrology, climatology and meteorology, glaciology, biogeography, oceanography and others. Physiography describes processes and regularities occurring in the natural environment in contrast to processes resulting from human activity. It is important for land use planning. Physiography is connected with the concept of a physiographic object. The Act of 29 August 2003 on Official Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects defines a physiographic object as: "a separate component of the geographical environment, in particular: lowland, upland, hill, mountain range, mountain, mountain top, pass, valley, cave, river, canal, lake, bay, marsh, pond, artificial water reservoir, waterfall, forest, forest complex, wilderness, peninsula, island".

Physiography is also connected with the concept of physico-geographical regionalisation, i.e. the description of world regions distinguished due to their specific physiographical conditions. The American geographer Nevin Fennemann was the author of a scale, which was used for the first time to describe the physico-geographical lands of the USA. The author of the physico-geographical regionalisation of Poland is Jerzy Kondracki. The division he proposed, modified several times (1966, 1987, 1997) still applies today. Within this division, we distinguish several provinces in Poland: the Central European Plain, the Czech Massif (the Sudetes with the Sudeten Foreland), the Polish Highlands, the Western Carpathians, the Eastern Carpathians, the East Baltic Sea-Belarusian Lowlands and the Ukrainian Highlands. The division provides for a scale from the level of a province (the most general), through a subprovince, macro-region to a mesoregion. For example, the Gorzów Plain (mesoregion) belongs to the South Pomeranian Lake District (macroregion), the South Baltic Lake District (subprovince), and the Central European Lowland (province).

[M. G.]

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