

## **Niger (République du Niger)**

**Last updated: 31-01-2004**

### **Location and area**

Niger is a landlocked republic in western Africa, bordered on the north by Algeria and Libya, on the east by Chad, on the south by Nigeria and Benin, and on the west by Burkina Faso and Mali. It has a total area of 1,267,000 km<sup>2</sup>. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Topography**

Niger is divided into three zones:

1. The northern zone, covering more than half of the total area, lies within the Sahara. It is a highland region of plateaux and mountains and, except in scattered oases, has little vegetation. In this zone is Mount Bagzane (1,900 m), the highest point in the country.
2. The central zone, known as the Sahel, is semi-arid and lightly wooded.
3. The southern zone is a fertile, forested area that benefits from adequate rainfall and, in the southwest, from the periodic overflow of the River Niger, virtually the only river in the country.

On the southeast, the nation borders on the shallow Lake Chad. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Climate**

The climate of Niger is hot and, in most areas, dry. Rainfall, negligible in the north, increases to 560 mm a year in the south, where a rainy season lasts from June to October. The average annual temperature at Niamey is 29° C. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Land use**

The northern desert of Niger has little vegetation. In the south are extensive savannah grasslands and, in the lowlands, a variety of trees, including baobab, tamarind, kepok, and a species of mahogany.

Livestock raising is the principal agricultural activity. Some 40,000 hectares of the 2.7 million hectares of arable land are irrigated. Desertification due to overgrazing, recurring droughts, and deforestation is a major problem. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Peatlands**

Some possible peatland areas are indicated in table 1.

Table 1: Possible peatland areas (in km<sup>2</sup>) in Niger and adjacent countries (after Howard-Wiliams & Thompson 1985). W = area in wet season, D = area in dry season.

Niger River	Niger	Floodplain	W 907 D 270
Lake Chad	Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon	Shallow lake and swamps	

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Niger and 19,256 km<sup>2</sup> of gley soils.

Still to be checked:

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**Schulz, E., Joseph, A., Baumhauer, R.,Schultze, E & Sponholz,B.** 1990. Upper Pleistocene and Holocene history of the Bilma region (Kawar,NE-Niger).Recent data in African earth sciences. *CIFEG Occ. Publ.* 22 , 281-284.

**Schulz, E. Pomel, S., Abichou, H. Salzmann, U.** 1995. Climate and man. Questions and answers from two sides of the Sahara. *Pub l. Occas. CIFEG*, 31, Orleans, 35-47.

**14** Enneri Achelouma (22o21´N, 12o 42´E), ca. 650 m, Niger. Pollen.

**Schulz, E.** 1980. Zur Vegetation der östlichen zentralen Sahara und zu ihrer Entwicklung im Holozän. *Würzburger Geogr. Arb.* 51. 194 p.

**25** Termit Ouest, (16o12´N, 11o4´E), ca 450 m,Niger. Pollen.

**Schulz, E. Pomel, S., Abichou, H. Salzmann, U.** 1995. Climate and man. Questions and answers from two sides of the Sahara. *Pub l. Occas. CIFEG*, 31, Orleans, 35-47.

**35** Ari Koukouri, (13o55´N, 13o 6´E), ca 270 m, Niger. Pollen.

**Schulz, E. Pomel, S., Abichou, H. Salzmann, U.** 1995. Climate and man. Questions and answers from two sides of the Sahara. *Pub l. Occas. CIFEG*, 31, Orleans, 35-47.

**Baumhauer, R.** (1987): Holozäne limnische Akkumulationen im Bereich der Stufen von Zoo Baba und Dibella (NE-Niger). *Palaeoecol. Afr.*, Vol. 18, S. 167-177.

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**Baumhauer, R. & Schulz, E.** (1984) The Holocene lake of Seguedine, Kaouar, NE Niger. *Palaeoecology of Africa* 16: 283-290

**Faure, H., Manguin, E. & Nydal, R.** (1963) Formations lacustres du Quaternaire supérieur du Niger oriental: Diatomites et datations absolues. In: *Bull. B. R. G. M.* 3: 41-43