Relationships of Floras (& Faunas)

Knowledge of earth and organism histories now permit closer examination of relationships of disjunct floras and faunas.

- Southern Hemisphere temperate
- Southern Hemisphere tropics
- the Wallace Line
- Eastern Asian - Eastern North American temperate
Alfred Wallace, one of the premier zoobiogeographers, wrote the definitive treatise “Distributions of Animals” in 1876 where he summarized the known distributions and causes of their biogeographical patterns.
Alfred Wallace’s main interest was in the vertebrate fauna of the Indo-Malay Archipelago from Asia to Australia where he clearly saw a sharp faunistic break in species distribution. His 1854–1862 expedition in Indo-Malay (1848-1852 South America with Henry Bates) further solidified the understanding of faunal boundaries.

Sclater’s & Wallace’s faunistic regions
The Wallace Line

“In the archipelago . . . there are two distinct faunas rigidly circumscribed, which differ as much as those of South America and Africa, and more than those of Europe and North America” [Letter to Henry Bates in London (1858)]

Wallace’s 1854 – 1862 expedition in Indo-Malay (1848-1852 South America with Henry Bates)

Sclater’s & Wallace’s faunistic regions

Probably his most important trip he ever made was a 6 km ferry ride from Bali to Lombok
The Wallace Line

“In the archipelago . . . there are two distinct faunas rigidly circumscribed, which differ as much as those of South America and Africa, and more than those of Europe and North America” [Letter to Henry Bates in London (1858)]

“The boundary line often passes between islands closer than others in the same group. I believe the western part to be a separated portion of continental Asia, the eastern the fragmentary prolongation of a former Pacific continent”
The Wallace Line

Wallace graphically depicts what has since been termed the “Wallace Line” in his book by showing birds and mammals that are found in the Oriental (Borneo, left) and Australian (New Guinea, right) sides.
The Wallace Line

- Wallace Line — the imaginary line separating the Oriental and Australian biotas — extends between Bali and Lombok and between Borneo/Philippines and Sulawesi

- Several other lines have been proposed in the region based on particular groups of animals or plants.

- Main issue with most lines is what do with Sulawesi (Celebes)
The Wallace Line

Sulawesi, with its mixture of Oriental and Australian fauna, was so perplexing to Wallace, that he vacillated back and forth on where to place the island.
The “Wallace Line” biogeographical riddle was elegantly solved with the continental drift theory of Alfred Wegener and the more recent plate tectonic basis as a mechanism for Earth evolution.

Earth and Life Evolve Together
Now know that the two regions are different continental plates that have been moving independently — the Asian and Australian plates.

The IndoMalay - New Guinea Archipelago area includes island groups mostly confined to either of two continental shelves:

- **Sunda shelf** — Asian
- **Sahul shelf** — Australian
The Wallace Line

Collision of the Australian plate with the Asian plate occurred between 15-5 mya

Note the origins of Bali and Lombok, forming the Wallace Line
Collision of the Australian plate with the Asian plate occurred between 15-5 mya

Note the origins of Bali and Lombok, forming the Wallace Line

Sulawesi is a hybrid island from both plates!
The Wallace Line – is it real?

Tree shrews (family Tupaiidae) were indicated by Wallace as honoring this biogeographical line. An Asian group whose entire range gets as far east as Bali and Borneo but not to Lombok or Sulawesi.
The Wallace Line – is it real?

Do plants honor the Wallace Line?

All but 3 of the genera of *Dipterocarpaceae* honor the Wallace Line – to New Guinea

Surprising considering the winged fruit in the family is designed for (limited?) dispersal

Borneo dipterocarp

Distribution of genera of *Dipterocarpaceae*
A Biogeographical and Phylogenetic Analysis of Dipterocarpaceae: Do They Honor the Wallace Line?

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The family Dipterocarpaceae (Malvales) is divided into three subfamilies (Dipterocarpoideae, Monotoideae, and Pakaraimoideae) and is pantropical in distribution. Dipterocarpoideae consists of 13 genera and about 475 species, most of which are large trees dominant in the emergent canopy of lowland everwet rain forests in India and Sri Lanka to West Malaysia (Kajita et al., 1998; Fig. 1). The geographic distribution of the majority of these species correlates directly with the biogeographic boundary of the Wallace Line; however, some genera including Anisoptera, Hopea, Vatica, Shorea, and Dipterocarpus have crossed east over the boundary of the line (Whitmore 1981; Fig. 2). The goal of this study is to infer whether these species crossed over the Wallace Line subsequent to the collision of the Sunda and Sahul Plates 5-10 Ma, or, earlier and over greater oceanic distances.

Materials and Methods

Taxon Sampling: The cpDNA sequences (trnL Intron and trnL-trnF Intergenic Spacer) of 71 species from the subfamily Dipterocarpoideae, 1 species from the subfamily Monotoideae, and 3 outgroup species were gathered from GenBank and aligned within MacClade 4.08 OX S.

Analysis: Divergence times were estimated within BEAST v1.7.2 using fossil dates and divergence estimates of Dipterocarpus (Meijer 1974), Dipterocarpoideae (Dutta et al. 2011), Dipterocarpaceae (Appanah et al. 1998), and Malvales (Wikstrom et al. 2001) obtained from prior studies. Previous analysis included using PAUP Maximum Parsimony and Maximum Likelihood as beginning phylogenetic estimates. With four fossil calibrations (Malvales, Dipterocarpaceae, Dipterocarpoideae, and Dipterocarpus fossils) the Anisoptera crown node was found to have originated 17.7 million years ago (Ma) (95% CI = 5.9-31.9), the Dipterocarpus crown node 30.7 Ma (95% CI = 25.1-39.9), the Hopea crown node 22.9 Ma (95% CI = 12.2-35.0), the Shorea crown node 22.0 Ma (95% CI = 9.9-35.5), and the Vatica crown node 14.8 Ma (95% CI = 6.3-26.4; Fig. 3). Our results suggest these five geographically widespread species originated before the Sunda and Sahul plates collided 5-10 Ma. The species within these genera known to have the most widespread distribution include Anisoptera costata and Dipterocarpus kerri as stated by Meijer 1974. The Anisoptera costata crown node was found to have originated 8.8 Ma (95% CI = 1.2-21.0) and while the Dipterocarpus kerri crown node originated 13.7 Ma (95% CI = 1.5-28.4). These dates suggest the dipterocarp species reaching the farthest east over the Wallace Line originated around the same time as the Sunda and Sahul plate collision.

The shortest distance between the plates after collision is around 20 miles between Bali and Lombok. Most flora and fauna presumably evolved when separated by a sea exceeding 1500 miles and remain drastically different presently in the Eurasian and Australian areas (Schuster 1972). The known species that hopped eastward over the Wallace Line most likely did so over shorter distances while their parent species remained in smaller areas of distribution. For some species, this may not be the case and the parent species are more largely distributed than those recently diverged.

Further research regarding the dispersal capabilities of the dominant two-winged fruit of dipterocarp species and closer study of the topology of large geographically distributed species are needed to clear up discrepancies.
Dipterocarpaceae chronogram

3 genera and 8 species make it to New Guinea on Sahul Shelf . . .

. . . and within last 10 myr – so dipterocarps do honor Wallace’s Line!
The Wallace Line – is it real?

Do palms honor the Wallace Line?

Greatest center of diversity of palms is in the IndoMalay archipelago — how do they respond to the Wallace Line?
**The Wallace Line – is it real?**

**Rattan palms** are essentially Asian with all but 3 genera restricted west of Lombok and Sulawesi.

For the 3 genera east of Wallace Line, only 1 species each crosses the line.

but **timing** of these dispersals east are not known.

Distribution of different genera of rattan palms.
The Wallace Line – is it real?

The genus *Caryota* (fishtail palms) is widespread across the IndoMalay - New Guinea region.

Does it NOT support the Wallace Line?
Species relationships within two different groups of fishtail palms and their biogeographical distributions

Although fishtail palms appear not to honor the Wallace Line as a genus, only the most recent speciation events in each clade have generated species crossing the line.

Perhaps these occurred after plate contact occurred? – no dates are available yet

Bill Hahn
The Wallace Line – is it real?

*Eucalyptus* (Myrtaceae) is an Australian genus and basically honors the Wallace Line from the east.

Date of 4 species in Wallacea not known