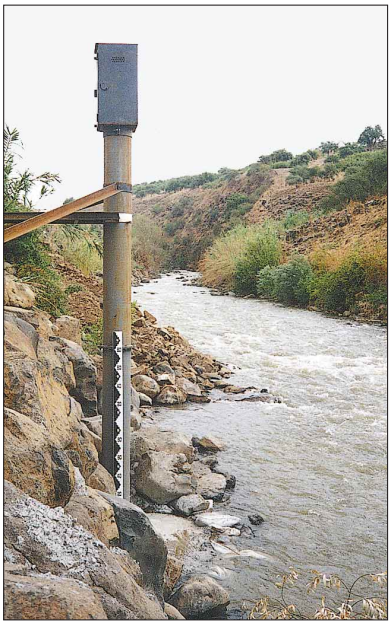
Upper Jordan River

The Jordan River is the largest stream in the region, and its rich history is known around the world. The watershed of the upper Jordan River includes the northern Mountain Belt, the southwestern slopes of Mount Hermon (Jabel Al Sheik), and the northern tip of the Jordan Rift Valley. The mountain ranges, northern latitude, and proximity to the Mediterranean Sea yield average annual precipitation values ranging from 450 to over 1,200 mm. The upper Jordan River derives baseflow principally from a group of karstic springs on the western and southern slopes of Mount Hermon that flow into the Hasbani, Dan, and Banias Rivers. The largest of the springs is the Dan, which supplies a steady flow and accounts for about one-half of the baseflow of the upper Jordan River. As it enters the Jordan Rift Valley, the upper Jordan River flows through fertile agricultural areas into Lake Tiberias. The flow characteristics of the upper Jordan River near the lower end of the Hula Valley have been measured from 1960 to 1997 at the Obstacle Bridge gaging station. As shown below, the median annual volume of the Jordan River at this station is 490 MCM.



Upper Jordan River at gaging station

Springfed baseflows account for about one-half the annual flow volume of the river in a typical year; the rest is from rainfall runoff. Seasonal variation in flow is moderated by this large baseflow as shown in the median monthly volumes in the column chart to the right. The highest flows are sustained in February and March; the lowest flows occur in July and August. The annual variation of the stream is much less than for other streams in the region. The largest floods since 1960 occurred during 1969 and 1992.