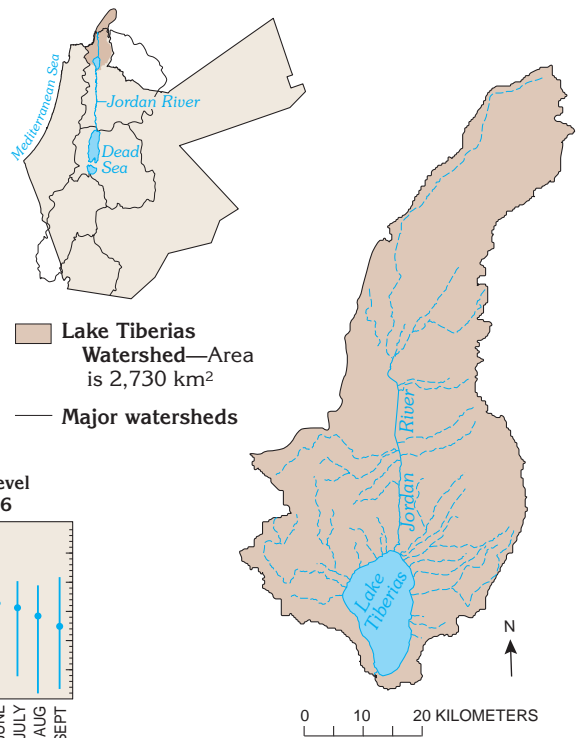


Lake Tiberias

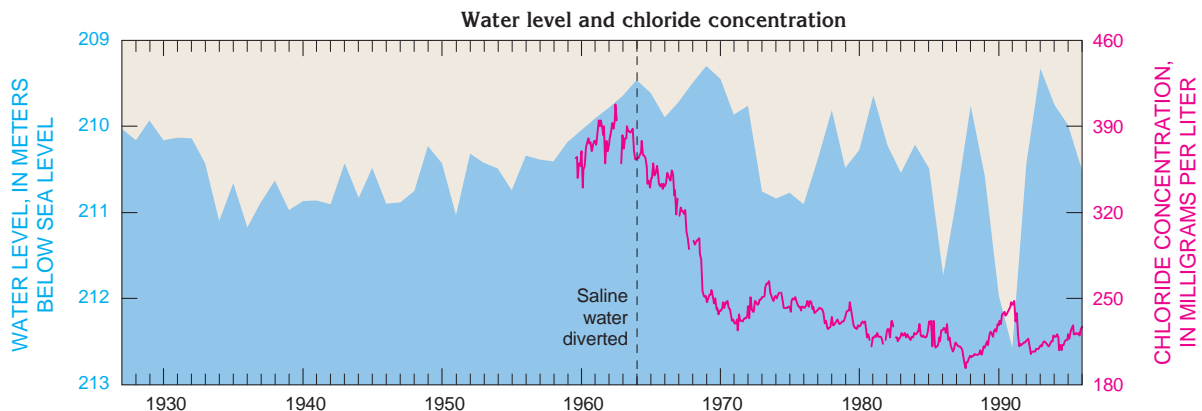
The upper Jordan River descends from its mountain headwaters to the Jordan Rift Valley to supply Lake Tiberias, which is bounded to its east and west by basaltic escarpments that rise from 100 m to more than 400 m above the lake. The surface area of the lake is 167 km²; and the average and maximum depths are about 26 m and 45 m, respectively. In addition to the Jordan River, several productive side streams and springs supply Lake Tiberias. Water leaves Lake Tiberias primarily through surface evaporation and through the National Water Carrier intakes in the northwest of the lake. The National Water Carrier, completed in 1964, distributes water from the north to more arid regions through a vast, integrated distribution system. The average lake level is 210.4 m below sea level for the period 1926–96. Lake levels typically rise from December to May and decline from June to November over a range of about 1.3 m, as shown in the monthly water level graph.



Northwestern shore of Lake Tiberias near Capernaum



Tiberias shoreline during storm conditions, February 1992



Historically, chlorides in Lake Tiberias have been high due primarily to saline springs that discharge to the lake. Saline springs were diverted from the lake into the lower Jordan River beginning in 1964, resulting in much lower chloride concentrations in the lake. The chloride concentration in the lake also is dependent on the volume of freshwater inflow, as seen from 1988–91, when water level and inflow declined and salinity increased; and in 1992 when very high inflows led to declines in salinity.