

JORDAN RIVER

The Jordan River is in severe danger! Get to know the cultural, natural and religious heritage of the Lower Jordan River by visiting the Jordan River exhibition featuring photography by Paolo Pellegrin and Eddie Gerald. Join us in saving the Jordan River!

Rehabilitating the River Together

Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) is a Jordanian, Palestinian, Israeli environmental peacemaking organization focused on the rehabilitation of the region's shared water resources. FoEME works in 28 local communities, including 11 in the Lower Jordan River Valley, to advance understanding of the region's shared water challenges.



FoEME's successful transboundary approach has been honored with numerous international peace and environment awards.

Global Nature Fund (GNF) is a non-profit, private, independent international foundation for the protection of environment and nature with headquarters in Radolfzell at Lake Constance, Germany. FoEME and the GNF are closely working together in the Living Lakes Network, a global network of environmental organizations coordinated by the GNF, which strive for the protection of lakes and wetlands worldwide.



There are many ways of saving water in Israel, Jordan and Palestine. GNF supports FoEME with expertise in water saving and international awareness raising.

Paolo Pellegrin was born in Rome. He is a contract photographer for Newsweek magazine and received many awards, including nine World Press Photo awards.
 More at: www.magnumphotos.com

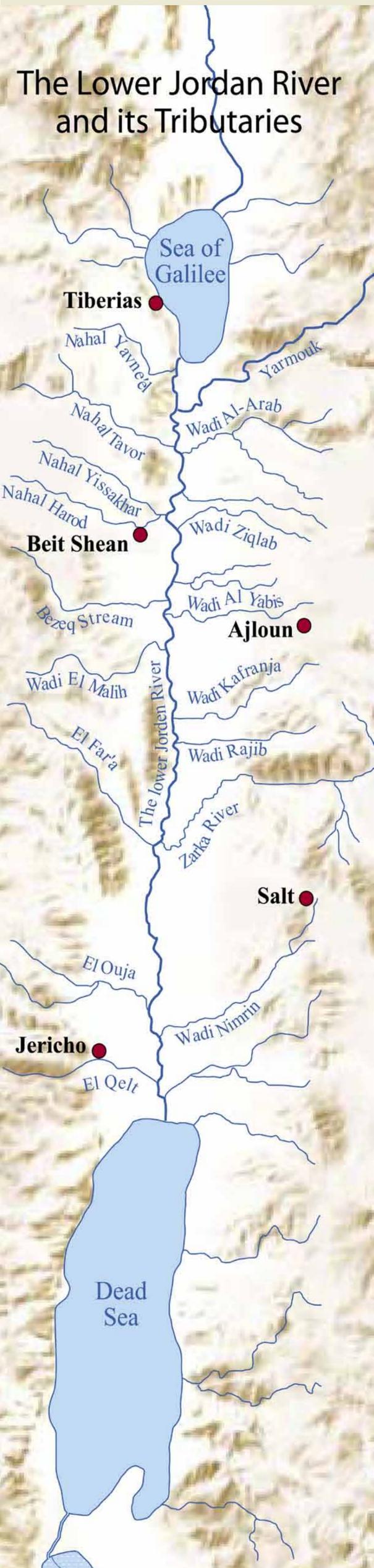
The Israeli photographer **Eddie Gerald** has received numerous awards and citations for his documentary work.
 More at: www.pixsmedia.com

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This exhibition was made possible through the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, the Global Nature Fund/ Ursula Merz Foundation and the Osprey Foundation.

The Lower Jordan River and its Tributaries



The Lower Jordan River

From the Sea of Galilee, the Lower Jordan River meanders some 200 kilometers before entering the Dead Sea.

In 1994 Jordan and Israel signed a **historic peace treaty** in which both parties agree to work together to rehabilitate the shared river.

Sadly, the **Lower Jordan River is currently in danger of drying up** as Israel, Syria and Jordan are collectively diverting 98% of the river's natural flow. In place of fresh water, untreated sewage, saline water and agriculture run-off are allowed to flow in the Jordan River. The destruction of the river has had an alarming impact on the area's unique cultural, religious and natural heritage.



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The Lower Jordan River is the main source of fresh water for the Dead Sea – with 98% of the River diverted the Dead Sea is dropping approximately one meter a year!



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Venerated by Jews, Christians and Muslims

The Jordan River is perhaps best known for its deep religious significance. The **Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and Islamic references** associate the Jordan River with the prophets Moses and Elijah, the baptism of Christ and the Companions of the Prophet Mohammed. With hundreds of references to the Jordan River, it continues to bear strong resonance for over half of the world's peoples.



“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord.” Genesis 13: 10-11

Regrettably, the pollution of the Lower Jordan River has greatly impacted the cultural and natural heritage sites located on both of its banks. Perhaps most significantly the baptism sites opposite Jericho have been so contaminated that pilgrims can no longer undertake the sacred rite of baptism safely.



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Many of the Venerable Companions to the Prophet Mohammad are buried near the banks of Jordan River, making it a holy site for Muslims around the world.



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The New Testament closely associates the Jordan River with the life of Jesus Christ, as the place of his baptism and beginning of his ministry.

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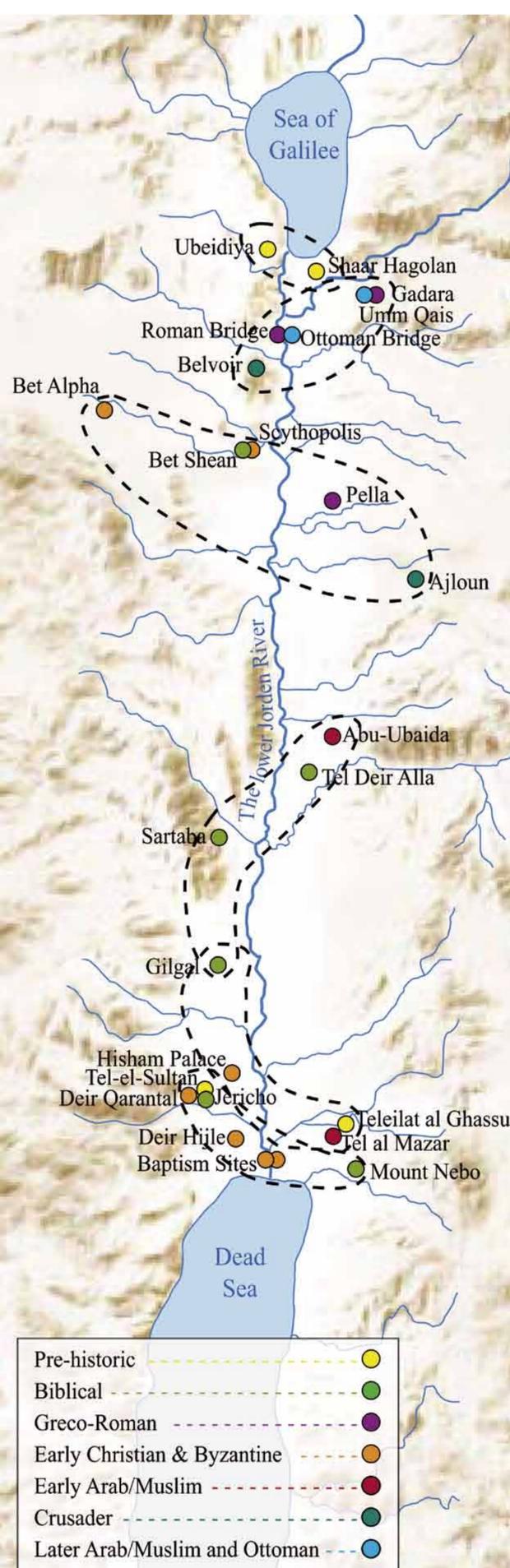
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The Jordan River Valley boasts tens of thousands of years of habitation. Pre-history sites along the Lower Jordan River provide significant evidence of early human migration out of Africa.

Shared Cultural Heritage

In the Greco-Roman period, the Jordan River served as the Eastern Frontier for the Roman Empire. During the Byzantine period, sites of baptism and those associated with the revelations of testament became places of pilgrimage around which churches and monasteries were built.

The Early Muslim period saw the **first buildings of the Ommayyad Dynasty** and the identification of sites associated with the Prophet Mohammed. In the 12th and 13th Centuries the Crusaders built large fortifications along the valley.



Ajloun Castle (bottom) and Pella (top) are majestic examples of the Jordan River Valley's rich cultural heritage.



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Natural Heritage of the Lower Jordan River

Located at the ecological intersection of three continents, the Lower Jordan River serves as the natural home to a remarkable and **unique mixture of diverse flora and fauna species**, including numerous species that are threatened at the global level.

The Jordan River is an important wetland habitat sustaining diverse vegetation and fauna and operating as a migratory flyway for over **500 million birds** twice annually.



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Towards a Living Jordan River

Rehabilitation is Possible

In 2010 Friends of the Earth Middle East undertook the first ever Jordanian-Israeli-Palestinian assessment of the Jordan River. The study concluded that **the River requires 400-600 million cubic meters of water annually** in order to reach a reasonable level of rehabilitation. This is less than a third of the historic flow levels.



Furthermore, this study found that a broad range of options exist to reduce water demand or increase supply in Israel, Jordan and Palestine. In all, nearly a billion cubic meters of water can be saved or produced in the region, part of which can be utilized to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River and to restore Palestinian water rights.

Political Champions

FoEME's regional approach to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River has been championed by Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli national leaders, mayors and community members as well as members of the European Parliament and the US Congress.



Palestinian Mayor receiving Champion of the Jordan River Award. (left)

S&D Party Representatives championed a resolution in the EU Parliament which "Calls on the governments of Israel and Jordan and the Palestinian Authority to work in a spirit of cooperation in order to save the Lower Jordan River". (right)

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Advancing Regional Planning

In 2012 Friends of the Earth Middle East, Global Nature Fund and the Stockholm International Water Institute partnered together to launch a project to produce a “FoEME Master Plan: A Vision for the Lower Jordan River Valley.”

This plan will recommend integrated water management strategies related to water, environment, drainage, security, natural and cultural heritage management, ecosystem services, tourism, governance and more.

Over the next three years FoEME and its partners will work with leading planners and experts, with invited inputs from regional decision makers and the public, to develop the plan.

The FoEME Master Plan is a necessary and significant step towards sensible regional management and will contribute to restoring life to the Lower Jordan River.



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The regional master planning project is made possible through the support of the European Commission's Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM) Programme.

