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Will demography defeat river rehabilitation efforts? The case of the River Jordan

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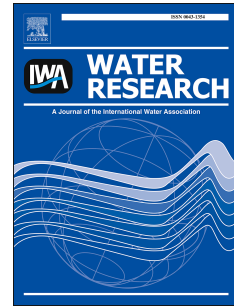
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**1 Will Demography Defeat River Rehabilitation Efforts? The Case of the River Jordan\***2  
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89 **Abstract**

10 In the age-old debate between technological optimists and pessimists, desalination has been hailed as a “game  
11 changer” that can fundamentally alter the dynamics of water management under conditions of scarcity. While  
12 water from desalination facilities can reduce uncertainties in municipal supply, they are unlikely to replace the  
13 missing flow required to rehabilitate rivers and streams. The Jordan River is an iconic, but highly degraded  
14 water body whose restoration has been the subject of extensive research as well as numerous proposals and  
15 strategies. A review of the present state of the River and prospects for successful rehabilitation efforts reveals  
16 that neither the increase in the riparian population nor the reduced water supply due to climate change in the  
17 Jordan basin has been considered sufficiently in restoration strategies. Demographic pressures produce acute  
18 water shortages which make the provision of future environmental flows highly unlikely. While much can and  
19 should be done to improve its environmental condition, the Jordan River offers a cautionary tale for water  
20 scarce regions about the challenge of stream restoration initiatives in the face of accelerated population growth,  
21 notwithstanding the potential benefits of desalination as a source of drinking water.

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