

Our Place in the Universe **Consequence Cards** (Chapter 7)

<p>When Hula Lake still stood, the water flowing from Mount Hermon into Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) made its way slowly through the swampy Hula valley.</p>	<p>The Hula valley is a major stop in the route used by birds migrating between Europe and Africa.</p>
<p>The valley served as a huge filtering system, with debris carried by the water sinking down to the lakebed, leaving the water to flow more cleanly into the Kinneret.</p>	<p>The birds travel thousands of miles in an exhausting and dangerous journey to greener pastures. In the autumn, millions of birds make their way south to Africa, escaping the harsh European winters. In the spring, the birds return to Europe to nest and raise their young.</p>
<p>When Hula Lake was drained, canals were built to funnel the water quickly across the valley, with the unintended result that it carried the debris along with it, polluting the Kinneret, a major source of drinking water for Israel.</p>	<p>When the valley was drained, the migrating birds had to find alternative places to rest and find food and water along their journeys. This made their trip much harder.</p>
<p>Research has shown that hundreds of species of animals lived in the Hula valley before the drainage project.</p>	<p>The ground under the lake and swamp was a layer of peat, decayed plant matter kept continuously wet by the water covering it. When the water was drained, the peat dried and changed its characteristics.</p>
<p>These animals included insects, crustaceans, snails, clams, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.</p>	<p>The top layers of dried peat crumbled into black, fine-grained dust, which the winds blew onto the neighboring fields, covering the crops.</p>
<p>When the valley was drained, many of these creatures' habitats were destroyed, and several species became extinct.</p>	<p>Large underground caverns formed in the peat, sometimes collapsing without warning. The dried peat fueled smoldering underground fires, which sometimes burned for months on end and were extremely difficult to extinguish.</p>