



*A drainage basin is the area that contributes direct surface runoff, which drains by gravity, to an outlet point along a stream. Thus, different outlet points along a stream have different drainage basins, which increase in area in a downstream direction. The boundary of the drainage basin represents the drainage divide. Drainage basins in Hawaii are small and have steep sides, although drainage basins may be difficult to define in places where well-defined stream channels are absent. Drainage basins in Hawaii commonly are small mainly because the distance between the headwaters and mouths of streams is short and adjacent streams are closely spaced. Furthermore, the topography associated with Hawaiian shield volcanoes leads to an initial drainage pattern in which streams flow away from each other, rather than into each other as in most continental settings. Surface-drainage divides generally are not coincident with ground-water divides, although they may be similar in some areas.*