Various statements in the Genesis account show the flood to be universal.

Let's look at those statements, and see what light they shed on the question.

1. The End of All Flesh

The flood brought about "the end of all flesh" --all land-dwelling and air-breathing creatures perished. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark (Gen 6:7,13, 7:21-23).

This shows that the deluge was as wide as the habitation of birds, land animals, and men.

2. All People Today Descended from Noah

Genesis further says that everyone in the world today is descended from those who came out of the ark, Noah and his sons, and their wives.

God said to them, as he had said to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen 9:1), and so, "From the sons of Noah, the whole earth was populated" (Gen 9:18-19).

3. The Extent of Sin

The flood, according to Genesis, came about because God saw that "the earth was filled with violence" (Gen 6:11-13). This does not sound like a local problem. A flood covering only part of earth would not eradicate the violence filling the whole earth.

4. All High Mountains Covered

The flood covered all high mountains. "All the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered" (Gen 7:19,20).

It would be hard to explain this in terms of a local flood.

5. The Duration of the Flood

The flood lasted a year. The deluge started in the second month one year, and the flood did not abate until the second month of the next year (Gen 7:11, 8:13-14).

It is hard to explain why a local flood would take so long to drain away.

6. The Ark Was the Only Refuge

The ark was the only place of refuge. The ark was "to keep them alive". There was no other place to go in order to escape the flood (Gen 6:19-20).

If the flood was local, it is hard to explain why people and animals within reach of its edge could not escape to dry land.

7. The Rainbow Promise

God promised that he would never flood the earth again. To this day the rainbow reminds us of this good promise (Gen 8:20-22, 9:11-17).

If this promise was about a local flood, then God has broken it. Many great floods have happened since.

On a planetary scale however, the waters are under remarkable control. We recall that in the beginning the waters of our world were in chaos, before God divided them and gathered them together (Gen 1:1-2, 6-10).

This planet is a watery world. Under the earth, in the deep, upon the poles, and in the sky, there is an unimaginable quantity of water.

The dry lands of our planet and the creatures who dwell in those lands, live only by the grace of our Lord Jesus, who "holds everything together" according to the ancient promise (Col 1:16-17).

No more will he unleash those waters upon his creatures. Never before had he done it, either, because God had forewarned Noah "of things not previously seen" (Heb 11:7).

The flood Noah survived was unique in world history. Surely that means more than an all-time record for local floods.