

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 21, 2008



This is a report generated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection/ Inland Fisheries Division- Diadromous Program. For more information, contact Steve Gephard, 860/434-6043. For more information about fish runs on the Connecticut River call the USFWS Hotline at 413/548-9628 or visit the USFWS website at www.fws.gov/r5crc. For more information about Atlantic salmon, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association at www.ctriversalmon.org.

CONNECTICUT RIVER LOCATIONS

FISHWAY (RIVER)	ATLANTIC SALMON	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Rainbow (Farmington)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	1	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	>1,000	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	640						
DSI (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Bellows Falls (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
TOTALS=	0/0	1	N.A.	0++	0	0	0	1	0
<i>(last year's totals)</i>	141/11	163,466	-----	74++	67	241	42,434	?	266

Fishways listed in gray font above are not yet opened for the season. In some cases, the fishways will be opened soon. In the case of the fishways on the Connecticut River, some fishways are not opened until significant numbers of fish pass through the fishway immediately downstream of them. If that never happens, the fishway may not be opened during the season.

* The number before the slash indicates the total number of salmon seen at the fishway. The number after the slash is the number that were allowed to continue upstream of the dam. The others were captured for breeding.

**Many of these species move at night. There is a video camera that records overnight passage when staff is not present. So this count is a combination of real-time counts and video counts. There is a considerable lag between the date a tape is recorded and when staff is able to count fish from the tape, so these numbers will not represent up-to-date counts until after the end of spring season.

*** The number of lampreys at these facilities is a drastic undercount due to the way the fishways are monitored. Population estimates for these streams will be provided by using end-of-the-season nest surveys.

+There is an electronic fish counter at this fishway. ++This total does not include the imprecise estimates at Moulson Pond Fishway.

NOTE: All fish that pass through the Turners Falls, Vernon, Bellows Falls, and Wilder fishways had to first go through the Holyoke Fishlift where they were counted. Therefore those fish are not included in the totals at the bottom.

COMMENTS:

The big news so far this spring has been the high water. With lots of snow on the ground in VT and NH, we can expect lots of water coming down the river. Currently, the river at Thompsonville, CT is running at ~65,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). It is cold, too. Elsewhere in CT, the snow is long gone and the other watersheds are relying on rain (we need some!) and are warming up. All fishways are open and operating except for the Holyoke Dam Fishlift in MA. It is ready for operation but cannot operate until the river drops below 40,000 cfs. We could be waiting a while. Elsewhere, flows have dropped quickly. For example, the Farmington is at 1,000 cfs (average for this time of year= 1,500); the Salmon is at 159 (average= 240) and the Eightmile is at 33 (average= 48). These flows make stocking of salmon fry easier but may become a problem if rain doesn't come soon. Salmon fry stocking has begun in CT and Bruce Williams of our program will be leading groups of volunteers out on the Farmington and Salmon River watersheds daily, Monday - Friday. The Eightmile River has been completely stocked, using fry from the streamside incubator in Old Lyme, operated by the Tributary Mill Conservancy. The salmon smolt run has begun but it is a bit late. We saw our first two smolts at Rainbow Dam on Thursday night and will be back up there tonight, expecting many more fish.

The run of American shad is just now getting going on the Susquehanna River, which is late. The Conowingo Dam Fishlift opened on April 16 and the PA Fish and Boat Commission is reporting passing only 71, to date. Shad have begun running about five days ago in the Shetucket River (see next page) but had not been reported in the Connecticut River until about an hour ago. The first shad has appeared at the window of the Rainbow Dam Fishway on Monday afternoon. Water temperatures are 16 C (61 F). With weather conditions stable, this could be the first of a strong wave this week.

Alewives are in the Connecticut River and entering lower tributaries. The first report of alewives above the Hartford area came from Rainbow. None have been seen in the fishway but Jeremy of our crew has reported seeing them in the tailrace. The Mary Steube Fishway in Old Lyme has already surpassed the total count for 2007 and the Lyme Land Conservation Trust reports three strong days a week ago at the Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River. We hope to have some precise numbers for the Moulson Pond Fishway this year. The LLCT has installed an underwater video camera at the top of the fishway. It may take a while for volunteers to view the tapes so until we are provided with numbers, we'll report the visual estimates as we've done in the past. The LLCT also used a LIS Futures Fund Grant to replace the gate at the top of the millrace where fish must swim to continue upstream. It is expected that replacing the submerged knife gate with an open air butterfly valve will allow all migrants to enter the headpond. At the next stream north, Joshua Creek, the LLCT has been working with the Humane Society of America and us to try to develop a 'beaver deceiver' that will pass alewives. Beavers have been building their dams not only on top of the small concrete dam but also inside the pool-and-weir Lower Pond Fishway. 'Beaver deceivers' are systems made of turkey wire and flexible black pipe meant to allow some flow to pass under the beaver dam to control the water level of the pond. It remains to be seen if the alewives will use the black pipe.

Alewives have been running in Pattaconk Brook in Chester and the Salmon River at Leesville (East Haddam) and two tidewater tributaries, Pine Brook and the Moodus River. The run of white suckers is in full force with the males displaying breeding colors. On Saturday, the trap had 350 suckers in it. On the day before, we passed the first sea-run brown trout of the season. Yellow perch have been spawning and strands of eggs have been observed in several streams. There have been reports of striped bass being caught all winter in the coves. We reported last year that striped bass are now over-wintering in the Connecticut River as they have in the Shetucket River for many years. A few striped bass have been seen in the Salmon River.

In past years, we have monitored the glass eel run using a fyke net in the Connecticut River at our Old Lyme office. This year, that site has been retired and our official index site has been established at Fishing Brook in Old Saybrook, a location that we reported on last year. The glass eels arrive later in the season at Fishing Brook and we've just begun to see them, even though they probably have been entering the river since late February. This morning we captured about 4,900 eels in the trap. The seasonal total is now in excess of 7,000. Mitchell College and the Tributary Mill Conservancy at Lower Millpond Dam in Old Lyme will be monitoring the eel run in Mill Brook this year and have reported seeing strong glass eel runs.

A big story for the Connecticut since the end of these reports in July of 2007 was the discovery of an invasive alga on the upper Connecticut River. "Didymo" is the shortened version of its scientific name although some folks refer to it by its less elegant nickname of "rock snot". It can create massive nuisance 'blooms' on the streambeds of clear, cool trout and salmon streams, enveloping the rocks with a sewage-like appearance. There are lots of things we don't understand about this, including where it came from and what its ecological impacts are. However, all New England States wish to limit its spread to new streams. It is believed that it can be spread readily via the soles of boots. Anglers, boaters, and naturalists who spend time wading around in streams and visit the Connecticut River upstream of Hanover, NH, the White River and Battenkill in VT should familiarize themselves with this problem and be certain to disinfect gear before returning to CT. More details can be found in our agency's "Anglers Guide" or by Googling "didymo" or "rock snot" on the internet.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Greenville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	>100	>10	0	0	0	0	1	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Versailles Pond (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)		?						
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		?						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		1,346						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		hundreds?						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		31,177						
Ingham Hill Pond (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		present						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** 20 (Queach Br., Branford)								
Clarks Pond (Indian R., Milford)		~850						
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		hundreds?						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		437						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		43,820	0	0				

*Fish passage is video-recorded and counts are made off of tapes several days later so these data are always lagged a little behind. This report covers passage up to the following dates for these fishways:

Greenville= 4/19. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= n.a.

**These locations have an electronic fish counter and are used as index sites for river herring runs. The counter is checked daily Monday-Friday. Monday counts typically include all weekend passage. These counts are usually up-to-date but some may lag behind a day or two, occasionally.

+This location has a fish trap and fish are enumerated prior to release.

Counts in parentheses indicate numbers seen in a run that is now over and no further fish were counted during the past week. Typically used for alewife runs later in June.

COMMENTS:

Lots of alewife activity statewide. Numbers are lagging behind expectations at Brides Brook but the flow is very low. However, runs have been strong at Poquetanuck Brook, Latimers (surpassed 2007 total), Clarks Pond (surpassed all past years), and Mianus (on its way to another bang-up year). Counts are not possible at Bunnells Pond but Gregg and the crew at the Beardsley Zoo report seeing lots of fish. Sally and Lia of The Nature Conservancy are reporting lots of hits on their fish counter at Wood Dam on the Saugatuck River and that run is already 50% of last year's total. They are getting fish in basket traps, as well. Vincent Samuolis reports watching good numbers of alewives ascending the nature-like Lower Guilford Lake Fishway and enter the lake at 9:00 pm Sunday night. Bob Harris reports seeing alewives below the Fishing Brook Fishway in Old Saybrook so they must be going upstream there. Both Ben Gahagan (grad student working with alewives) and the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association has reported alewives below the Wallace Dam on the Quinnipiac River in Wallingford. The QRWA was to have one of their annual fish rodeos (net fish below and release fish above the dam) on Sunday and we'll look forward to reports on how they did. This year, we have two Waterford High School Students (Kyle and Griffin) monitoring the Jordan Millpond Fishway in Waterford and hope they will be seeing some fish at that new fishway soon. Many of these numbers are out of date. For example, we haven't had a recent report from Dr. David Post of Yale on the Branford Fishway count but hope to have more current numbers next week. If you want to see a fish-eye view of what these fish counters are like, click on <http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/ourwork/research/pilot-projects.htm> and scroll down to the paragraph titled "Herring in the Agawam River" and watch a brief video clip of alewives swimming through the fish counting tubes.

We have not had time to review tapes from Kinneytown (Naugatuck River) yet. The flow is low (398 cfs vs normal of 690) and there is no spill over the dam. Quick reviews indicate many suckers are passing as well as one sea-run trout and some sea lamprey, but exact counts will wait until next week. We were surprised to see lampreys this early and the Ben reported seeing some at Wallace Dam, as well.

The Shetucket River has been slow to get going this year, for some reason. It just started to pass shad and alewives late last week. We won't have a chance to pick up tapes until tomorrow but Al of the Norwich Public Utilities reports a good weekend with at least one lift with 100 shad. We expect that run to accelerate under the current conditions. First Light Power opened the next upstream fishways (Taftville Fishway on the Shetucket River and Tunnel Fishlift on the Quinebaug River) today. By noon, Tunnel had already passed at least 6 alewives—more than last year! The third fishway on the Shetucket River, Occum Dam Fishway, is owned by Norwich Public Utilities and that was opened last week. NPU seasonal Chenoa reports the water temperature on the Shetucket today is 16 C (61 F).

I was snorkeling below the Wood Dam on the Saugatuck River and witnessed numerous glass eels working their way up toward the dam. Ray and Nick Baldwin report seeing good numbers at Clarks Pond Fishway and Brian Eltz of the Town of Greenwich saw 15 glass eels ascending the Mianus Pond Dam Eelpass. We have one fishway under construction right now: a steppass fishway being installed at the Rings End Dam (Gorham Pond on Goodwives River) by the Town of Darien. Darren, the assistant director of Public Works for the Town, is overseeing the construction by Terry Construction. It should be done by May 1.