

**CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT**  
 Report Date: April 29, 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/r5cr](http://www.fws.gov/r5cr). For more information about Atlantic salmon, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association at [www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org).

**CONNECTICUT RIVER LOCATIONS**

<b>FISHWAY (RIVER)</b>	<b>ATLANTIC SALMON</b>	<b>AMER. SHAD</b>	<b>ALEWIFE</b>	<b>BLUEBACK HERRING</b>	<b>GIZZARD SHAD</b>	<b>STRIPED BASS</b>	<b>SEA LAMPREY</b>	<b>SEA-RUN TROUT</b>	<b>AMER. EEL</b>
<b>Rainbow</b> (Farmington)	0	66	3	0	0	0	482*	1	0
<b>Leesville</b> (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	1	0
<b>Moulson Pond</b> (Eightmile)	0	-	thousands	0	0	0	0***	0	-
<b>Mary Steube<sup>+</sup></b> (Mill Brook)	-	-	764						
<b>WestSpringfield</b> (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Holyoke</b> (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
<b>Turners Falls</b> (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
<b>Vernon</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
<b>Bellows Falls</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
<b>Wilder</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
<b>Other</b> (all sites)	1/0								
<b>TOTALS=</b> (last year's totals)	1/0 214/16	66 156,322	N.A. -----	0++ 21++	0 133	0 124	482 19,119	2 6	0 2,287

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 river had slowly started to drop over the week, approaching 40,000 cfs. This is the level that the river needs to be below before the fishlift can be effectively operated at the Holyoke Dam. However, the rain has caused the river flow to go back up again, so this may delay the opening of the lift. I assume that the West Springfield Fishway on the Westfield River is operational but I have not been able to confirm this or get counts. Rainbow started getting shad during the last week, which got pretty warm. Over the weekend, a wave of river herring arrived at Rainbow that sounded suspiciously like blueback herring (as opposed to alewife, which have been in the river). We have yet to confirm that blueback herring have arrived. Alewives were seen in the Coginchaug River, Higganum Creek, the Eightmile River (see Moulson Pond data above), and Mill Brook (see Mary Steube count above), and but not many other tributaries during the past week. Anglers are catching shad at Bart's and Loomis on the Farmington River as well as in the lower Westfield and Chicopee rivers in Massachusetts. River conditions are pretty high for fishing in the mainstem river. I haven't heard reports from netters but shad and shad roe are appearing in fish stores in Connecticut, so they must be catching some.

The rain may slow down the run of shad and river herring but may help sustain the runs in the tributaries in the long run.

The Atlantic salmon run has officially begun with the incidental catch of a bright adult salmon on the Farmington River downstream of the Rainbow Fishway on April 20. All anglers—whether fishing for shad, stripers, or trout—should be aware of the possibility that adult salmon are in the waters and must be released unharmed immediately. I have often remarked in these reports that adult salmon should not even be taken out of the water, especially to take a photo. If it is difficult to remove the hook, cut the line and report the catch to us and we'll return your tackle with fish information when we trap the fish in a fishway. These fish need to stay alive to contribute eggs to the program in November and being as gentle as possible when releasing these fish is essential.

The salmon smolt run is still going strong. We are seeing both hatchery-reared and stream-reared (fry stocked) smolts at the Rainbow Bypass Sampling during our sampling nights. The cool-off of the water temperatures is a good thing for these smolts. Last Thursday, we had scientists from the Northeast Fishery Center in Lamar, PA (US Fish & Wildlife Service) and the Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center in Turners Falls, MA (US Geological Survey) visiting to collect tissue samples from migrating smolts. The folks from the USFWS were interested in looking at scales from hatchery-reared smolts to see if a new experimental way of marking fish in the hatchery using a chemical is showing up on the fish's scales. The physiologists from Conte Lab were sampling blood from both hatchery-reared and stream-reared smolts to measure parameters to determine the rate of smoltification in these fish.

Of course, the striped bass numbers are increasing in the river along with the shad and blueback herring numbers. UConn will be doing another round of striped bass tagging on the CT River this spring. This is to support a study of the interactions between striped bass and river herring. Fish will be collected using electrofishing and nets, measured, tagged, and released. Anglers who catch a tagged fish should report the tag to UConn following the instructions on the tag. There will be two types of tags, a standard reward tag (yellow) and a limited number of high reward tags (red) worth \$50!

The sea lamprey run is gaining strength. We've had a chance to review some of the overnight digital images at Rainbow and so far it appears that the ratio of lampreys coming up the fishway at night compared to those coming up during the day is running over 2 to 1.

The yellow perch and white sucker runs have dropped off, but we may see another big push from the white suckers as the water warms up again. At Leesville, the low water levels and warm days had resulted in temperatures exceeding 65 F (18 C). With this rain, they've dropped to around 52 F (11 C), which is good.

## OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
<b>Greenville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	350	265	0	1	0	0	1	2
<b>Taftville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Occum*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Versailles Pond</b> (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Tunnel*</b> (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Kinneytown*</b> (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
<b>Whitfords Brook</b> (Whitfords Br., Groton)		present						
<b>Trading Cove Brook</b> (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		thousands!						
<b>Latimers Brook+</b> (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		2,398						
<b>Gorton Pond</b> (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		thousands?						
<b>Brides Brook**</b> (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		63,919						
<b>Fishing Brook</b> (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		present						
<b>Branford Supply Pond Dam**</b> (Queach Br., Branford)	224							
<b>Clarks Pond</b> (Indian R., Milford)		~750						
<b>Bunnells Pond</b> (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		Thousands!!						
<b>Wood Dam**</b> (Saugatuck R., Westport)		768						
<b>Mianus River Pond**</b> (Mianus R., Greenwich)		59,152	0	0				present

\*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= 4/25. Taftville= visual only. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= visual only. 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:

A great week for alewives! Strong runs reported in most of the major streams that are regularly monitored. Clearly the Mianus River is having another great year. Wood Dam on the Saugatuck continues to pass fish. Bunnells Pond in Bridgeport appears to be having its best year ever. Conservation Officer Jeff Samorajczyk reports watching ~10,000 swarm below the dam and come up the fishway and pass into the pond and above. We'd love to hear reports of the alewives reaching Twin Brooks Park in Trumbull. Anyone out there visit this park from time to time? Jeff reports watching ospreys dive-bomb the concrete apron downstream of the dam and coming up with alewives. Clarks Pond on the Indian River in Milford is setting new records each week. Fish continue to run strongly at Poquetanuck Brook in Preston and we're seeing more fish in Whitfords, Pattagansett, and Trading Cove Brook. Even some places where we haven't seen fish, we've seen birds, like black-crowned night herons at Sasco Creek. The run at Brides Brook has picked up. Dr. David Post and a graduate student at Yale were camped out at the trap to do an overnight study. Here is how he reported the events of the evening:

"We saw the start of the run (~11:30pm) and the end of the run (~7am). In the first hour of the run we saw ~250 fish pass the counter. When I got up to check the (experiment) at 4:30am, over 12,000 fish had passed the counter and the river was rolling with fish. It sounded like waves crashing on the beach. The alewives were lined up 5-10 meters below the counter and we saw thousands of alewives in the river. The total was 17-18,000 fish by 8am. Really impressive."

Last week, we reported that the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association held their annual fish rodeo and manually passed fish over the Wallace Dam in Wallingford. Executive Director Mary Mushinsky reports that they passed 530 alewives, 2 lampreys, and 2 suckers. That's a lot of fish to move by dipnet and human labor. Great job! The final designs for a fishway at that dam are being wrapped up now and we hope that spring of 2009 is the last time the QRWA will have to do this!

Alewives have been slower than expected at the Greenville Fishlift on the Shetucket River. The good news is that nearly 7% of the total alewives passed at Greenville have already been lifted at Tunnel, the next dam upstream on the Quinebaug. The shad run is coming on stronger at Greenville but no shad have yet been passed at either upstream fishway: Tunnel (Quinebaug) or Taftville (Shetucket).

The lack of rain this month had really started to have an impact. Water temperatures had climbed dramatically and streamflows had dropped off. This rain is exactly what we needed. The Shetucket River jumped from 450 to 2,000 cfs. The Quinnipiac from 150 to 1,200 cfs; the Naugatuck from 300 to 2,000 cfs. Water temperatures at some locations went from 18 C (65F) down to 11 C (51 C). This is really good to keep the runs from 'over-heating'. Plus, some of the smaller streams were getting bothered by beaver, which were starting to build dams at fishways in response to dropping water levels. This rain may get them to stop for a while.

Alewife transplanting continues. It's been a good year and we only have 3 more loads to take. Today, a load was taken to the Quinebaug River upstream of Aspinook.

Glass eels are still running strong in many locations. The seasonal total for our index site at Fishing Brook stands at 10,477. Brian Eltz reports seeing many actively using the Delaware-style eel pass on the spillway of the Mianus Pond Dam. It appears the grackles have taken notice of the run, as well!