

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 13, 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. 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)	3	79	4	2	0	0	1,278*	1	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	3	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	thousands	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	797	800					
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	119	0	0	0	0	132	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	2/0	11,645	0	3	25	1	471	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
Other (all sites)	1/0								
TOTALS=	6/0	11,843	N.A.	5++	25	1	1,881	4	0
<i>(last year's totals)</i>	<i>214/16</i>	<i>156,322</i>	<i>-----</i>	<i>21++</i>	<i>133</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>19,119</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2,287</i>

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 is getting pretty fishy, now. Flows dropped suddenly last week, although recent rain brought the mainstem back to 25,000 cfs. Tributaries in CT are near seasonal levels, although the Farmington could use a bit of rain. Cold nights are keeping the water temperatures lower than normal, in the 51 - 55 degree range (11 - 14 C). Shad are being lifted at Holyoke now and the run is getting stronger by the day. On Monday, Holyoke lifted 6,405 shad. The cool water temperatures may slow the run down a little but they may also serve to lengthen the run. "Shad for Sale" signs are popping up around the valley and I served my traditional Mothers' Day dinner on Sunday of grilled shad, asparagus and new potatoes—with smoked shad as an appetizer. We are fortunate to be able to harvest fish from our population. Shad runs elsewhere are not doing as well. Look for an article on the shad run in the Hudson River in yesterday's The Hartford Courant, with quotes by Kathy Hattala of NYDEC and Karin Limburg of SUNY. The fisheries on that river have been completely closed and their shad festivals this year will not have any shad served. The blueback herring run has begun, with a couple passed at both Holyoke and Rainbow. Justin Davis reports seeing "above average" numbers in the river near Windsor Locks. A good slug of bluebacks entered the Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River and I saw a small school at Leesville on the Salmon River.

The Atlantic salmon run is on—Holyoke trapped two at the end of last week and I helped staff handle and truck the first salmon at Rainbow on Saturday. It was a nice, bright, robust male about 31" and 10 pounds. The only flaw was a healing seal wound near its tail. The next day, an almost identical female (w/o the wound) was trapped at Rainbow and yesterday and third one was trapped. The third one was pretty beat up and it looked like it had been caught by an angler. However, it appeared it had been released and the staff at Richard Cronin National Salmon Station will be able to nurse it back to health in time for fall spawning. We will likely not be so lucky with the fish displayed by some clueless angler on the Internet a couple of days ago. A striper fisherman caught a salmon, ripped up its mouth pretty good and then held it up for the camera. My guess is that this fish is now dead. Anglers like to brag that they are the true conservationists—this guy lost such bragging rights. Remember, every single fish is needed to promote restoration. Plus, this kind of action is illegal. If you hook a salmon, you must release it ASAP. We recommend cutting the line near the boat/shore and then contact us and we see that you get your tackle back when the fish is captured. (This salmon has not been included on the count yet, pending more information.) **OPEN HOUSE FOR THE RAINBOW DAM FISHWAY: June 7. SAVE THE DATE, MORE INFORMATION TO COME.**

The salmon smolt run has been very strong. Tim Wildman and seasonal Amy Koske had their hands full at the Rainbow Bypass Sampler on Thursday night with hundreds of smolts in just a couple of hours. So many that they pressed visitor John Waldman of CUNY into service! Last night, I ran the sampler and the smolt run was pretty slow—only about 30 fish, all wild smolts. The water temperature was only 11, which may have been a factor.

One of our Atlantic salmon streams was just given federal designation as a Wild and Scenic River, thanks to a bill passed in Congress and signed by the President. The Eightmile River was studied for this designation for years and the local residents strongly favored federal protection. We stock it with about 35,000 salmon fry annually and we are transplanting alewives to promote run restoration. There are two fishways in the watershed—Moulson Pond and Ed Bill's Pond—and two dams have been removed: the Pizzini and Zemko dams. Congratulations to a fine little rural river and all the folks who worked hard for this designation. Go to www.courant.com/eightmile to read an article with quotes from Nathan Frohling of TNC and Anthony Irving of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust. Also see: <http://www.eightmileriver.org/>.



The Eightmile River, which flows through East Haddam, Salem, and Lyme, CT was recently designated a Wild & Scenic River. To the left, the river flows through The Nature Conservancy's Burnham Brook Preserve and to the right, a volunteer stocks Atlantic salmon fry into the river. (Photos courtesy of Damon Hearne)

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)	1,011	482	0	51	1	0	6	8
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Versailles Pond (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	393	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	present at undetermined levels (one American shad observed)							
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)	thousands (moderate numbers this past week)							
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	2,632							
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	thousands (strong run this past week)							
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)	64,850							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	1,377 (no report this week)							
Clarks Pond (Indian R., Milford)	~1,260							
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	Thousands!! (no report this week)							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	2,131 (no report this week)							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	75,392		2,949	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= 5/08. Taftville= ???. Occum= ??? Tunnel= ????. Kinneytown= 4/15.

**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:

Alewives are still coming in, but at much lower rates. They're just trickling in at Brides, Latimer, Poquetanuck and Joe Clark Brook (a first for the season) but Clark's Pond, Gorton Pond (Pattagansett River), and Trading Cove Brook had a decent waves come in during the last week. All sampling in eastern CT indicated that all river herring were still alewives but blueback herring were verified in the Connecticut River (see preceding section) and Brian Eltz with the Town of Greenwich confirmed bluebacks ascending the Mianus Pond Fishway. The Quinnipiac River Watershed Association conducted its second fish rodeo on Mothers Day and passed 7 river herring. The species was not identified, but I suspect they were probably bluebacks. One gizzard shad was also lifted. We have not been able to sample river herring on the Shetucket River recently.

The shad run on the Shetucket River is coming on strong and we have begun trucking fish from Greenville to upriver locations to seed habitat upstream of barrier dams. On Wednesday of last week, we worked with Norwich Public Utilities and FirstLight Power to tag shad out of the Greenville Fishlift trap and release them upstream for tracking at the Taftville and Tunnel fishways. One-hundred shad received PIT tags and 20 of them also received radio-tags. So far, none of the tagged fish have been detected at these two upstream dams but it is typical for handled shad to 'sulk' a while before resuming the upstream migration. Hopefully, we'll 'see' them soon up there. Both fishways have PIT tag antennae and recorders so if PIT-tagged shad enter the fishways, their presence will be recorded. There are radio tag antennae in place around both dams so if the radio-tagged shad don't enter the fishways but approach the dam, that presence will also be recorded. Of course, both fishways also have viewing windows, cameras, and VCRs. We've been pleased with the passage of alewives at Tunnel Dam but the review of the Taftville tapes is behind and therefore we don't know how many alewives have gone up that Denil fishway yet. No indication of any American shad using either fishway yet. Many non-diadromous fish are using the Taftville, Tunnel, and Occum fishways—including broodstock salmon, trout, bass, suckers, and perch. These species are much more abundant than past years and seem to be responding positively to changes made at the fishways during the off-season.

With the shad run picking up at Holyoke (see preceding section), we will begin trucking shad from the Connecticut River to other streams in Connecticut soon. Targeted rivers include the Farmington, Naugatuck, and Quinnipiac.

Glass eels are still running in many locations. The seasonal total for our index site at Fishing Brook stands at 12,874+. Other eel passes are being set up for the season in inland locations. A few elvers have been seen at Leesville and the new provisionary eel pass at Tunnel Dam is passing quite a few eels of various sizes.

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A great photo of a load of alewives released into the Saugatuck River to promote run restoration. (Photo courtesy of Sally Harold, TNC).