

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 22, 2009



This is a report generated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection/ Inland Fisheries Division- Diadromous Program. For more information, contact Steve Gephard, 860/447-4316. 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	0	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	0	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	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
Other (all sites)	0/0								
TOTALS=	0/0	0	9	0++	0	0	0	0	0
<i>(last year's totals)</i>	141/11	156,4926	-----	89++	110	551	66,521	8	213

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 that were not counted at downstream fishways. The number after the slash is the number of those fish 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.

*** Population estimates based on 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:

Zeroes continue to dominate the board. Mary Steube is holding with a total of nine alewives—the same as last week. We know that there are alewives in the Eightmile as far up as Moulson Pond Fishway but none have been observed using the fishway there yet. With the new gate in the millrace, fish now can pass through quickly and it is possible that some alewives have moved up undetected. I also observed low numbers of alewives at Leesville on the Salmon River, while snorkeling. It appeared to me that there were a few blueback herring mixed in with the alewives. This would be highly unusual for this time of year. Furthermore, identifying river herring underwater is not a sure thing. But that's what it looked like to me. Folks out there who are collecting or monitoring herring runs should keep this in mind and take the time to verify the identity of the fish, when appropriate. Joe Zaiantz of the Shad Museum in Higganum reports that anglers have caught a few shad in the river as far north as Hartford. No netters have reported taking any shad yet, but they have only been out for a couple of nights. One shad has been lifted on the Shetucket River (see next page). The Holyoke Fishlift has test operated and conducted staff training yesterday. They are prepared to operate but so far no fish to lift. Mickey Novak of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) reports that anglers fishing off the mouth of the Chicopee River have not seen shad yet. Rainbow and Westfield River fishways remain closed. Leesville is opened and passing white suckers. Ospreys are circling overhead.

Connecticut's Opening Day of inland fishing season was last Saturday and anglers and trout abound. A few bass boats are plying the lower Connecticut River, no doubt in search of stripers. There are already plenty to be had. The water temperatures on the tributaries crept up last week to 59 F (15 C) but the mainstem remains colder. Without rain, the flows of streams dropped considerably last week but we got about an inch of rain last night and local streams responded immediately. The Farmington River is 1,450 cfs and rising; the Salmon River jumped up to 828 cfs and the Eightmile is at 243 cfs. This is a welcome event. The Connecticut River remains low for this time of year at about 25,000 cfs. The water temperature at Old Lyme today is 48 F (9 C), after the rain. This is still cold for shad but some fish might have snuck in previously when the temperature was a bit warmer.

Stocking of Atlantic salmon fry in Connecticut tributaries has begun and Bruce Williams is meeting groups of volunteers daily. The Eightmile River is finished and much of the Salmon River has been completed. Stocking of the Farmington River will continue for weeks. Dave Ellis and seasonal employees have finished the first round of alewife transplantation, including the Farmington River.

As some of you may have heard, Jan Rowan has left the Connecticut River Coordinator Position and is now the lead person for the USFWS/ Region 5's Fish Passage Program. We thank her for all of her hard work for Connecticut River diadromous fish restoration over the many years she was in that position and we wish her luck in her new job. We look forward to working with her to provide additional fish passage in Connecticut. The USFWS announced that Ken Sprankle, currently with the USFWS's Federal Aid Program, will assume the position of Connecticut River Coordinator as of May 11. Until then, Joe McKeon will serve as acting coordinator. Ken is no stranger to the program or diadromous fish. In fact, the West Hartford native started his career with our program as a seasonal worker at the Rainbow Dam Fishway when he was still in college. I could probably embarrass him by digging out old photos from our archives but perhaps I will save that to use as a future bargaining chip. We welcome Ken aboard and look forward to working with him.

REMINDER- It is usually this time of year when some angler posts a photo of a rod-caught Atlantic salmon on the web. Possession of Atlantic salmon is illegal and if you incidentally catch one while fishing for shad, stripers, or trout, you must return it to the water without harm or delay. If you must photograph it, photograph it while you hold it in the water. Avoid ridicule in these electronic pages—don't hold the fish up out of the water!

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Greeneville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	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	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	no report						
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		none seen						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		present (not enumerated)						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		present (not enumerated)						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		38,000						
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		none seen						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** 17 (Queach Br., Branford)								
Clarks Pond (Indian R., Milford)		6						
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		present (not enumerated)						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		156						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		8,763	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:*

Greeneville= 4/17 Taftville= n.a. Occum= 4/20. Tunnel= 4/19. 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:

All fishways are now opened. Greenville has lifted 1 shad and 1 alewife. Tunnel has reported passing 24 alewives. That may not be as impossible as it sounds since we are about four days behind on viewing Greenville tapes while Bob Stira at FirstLight Power with his fancy pants new SalmonSoft software is up-to-date, having already viewed the weekend traffic. Presumably, Greenville passed a number of alewives over the weekend and some boogied right up to Tunnel. We have no reports from Taftville yet—perhaps the analog tapes have not been viewed. Drew McGrath with the City of Norwich (former seasonal with this project) reports that Occum is up and running and passing suckers, trout, and broodstock salmon but he has not seen anything anadromous yet. Reports on alewives indicate that things may have been busier this past week in eastern CT rather than western CT. Thousands were observed in Poquetanuck Brook. We have no updated numbers for the Branford fishway but the Mianus Pond (Mianus R., Greenwich) and Wood Dam (Saugatuck R., Westport) fishways posted only modest increases last week. Alewives were captured at Wood Dam in a basket trap. Ray's son Nick Baldwin has taken over monitoring at Clarks Pond in the Indian River in Milford and reported 6 alewives seen last week but none reported so far for this report. Charlie Cobb and the ever-suffering Chalker Millpond volunteers observed a solitary alewife below that fishway in Old Saybrook. We removed a bunch of beaver debris yesterday and hope more are on their way.

Most but not all eel passes are open for business. The pass at Leesville was damaged by high water over the winter and we need a crew to re-hab it in the next couple of weeks. No catches at Mill or Kinneytown yet. The glass eel count at the Fishing Brook eel pass/trap is up to 812. Glass eels were also seen at Mianus and Mill Brook, Old Lyme. We scared up a couple of large elvers yesterday as we worked on the new Crystal Lake Fishway in Old Saybrook (more about that fishway next week?).

I'll be giving a talk at the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library in Old Lyme on Saturday April 25 at 10 am. That will be followed by a tour of the Mary Steube Fishway on Mill Brook in Old Lyme, co-hosted by the Old Lyme Conservation Trust, the owner of the fishway. The fishway is a steep pass fishway with viewing window in the resting pool and an electronic fish counter at the exit. Hopefully, alewives will be running and visible. There is also an eel pass and trap. The event(s) is free but the library is asking for folks to register to attend, to assist in planning. For more information, visit www.oldlyme.lioninc.org.

This week's featured fishway is the **LOW DAM FISHWAY** on the Saugatuck River in Weston. This fishway was built last fall by The Nature Conservancy using a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. It was built at the same time by the same contractor who built the Grossman Fishway, featured last week. It is on the fifth dam up from Long Island Sound. All lower dams have fishways. This fishway targets river herring, sea-run trout, American eel, and perhaps sea lamprey. The fishway was designed by Curt Orvis of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The dam and property is private and not opened to the public but it can be viewed from the River Road bridge in Weston (see right photo). It is now operational for the 2009 season.



SG, Tim Wildman, Dave Ellis and seasonal Gabe Luongo pose for photo after inserting the last weir into the fishway last fall. (photo by Sally Harold, TNC)



The Low Dam (named for the owner not the height) and the pool-and-weir fishway to the right, as observed from the downstream bridge. (photo by SG, CTDEP)