

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 28, 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	-	-	1***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	present	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	68	0	1	1	0	5	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	68	0++	0	0	6	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:

The shad have arrived. Holyoke had begun passing them a few days ago and was up to 18. Today, they are already up to 50. (Water temperature at Holyoke is only 55F [13C].) According to Saybrook Seafood, the first night the netters at the mouth of the river caught anything was Sunday night. The catch was light but delicious nonetheless, as I can attest. Anglers reported the first shad near the mouth of the Farmington River on April 16 but it wasn't until this past weekend that they started catching them reliably at Holyoke and at the mouth of the Chicopee River.

Last week I reported seeing both alewives and blueback herring together at Leesville and Ben Gahagan later sampled both species in Wethersfield Cove. This, along with the fact that Holyoke has already lifted one blueback, confirms that they are in along with the alewife. We think we are having problems with the electronic fish counter at Mary Steube and suspect many more fish have passed than the nine we show. We will try to troubleshoot that unit soon. There are fewer sightings at Moulson Pond this year (where there is not a fish counter) but we think it is because after the land trust replaced the upper gate, river herring move through the system so easily that they are all gone by morning. The high flows pushed river herring out of Leesville and as of Sunday they had not returned. A strong spawning run of white suckers continues and today we caught a sea lamprey in the trap. This is unusual because lampreys usually go right through the gates that hold back salmon, shad and other species but I think this one got blocked by all the white suckers in the trap and couldn't find its way out before the trap was lifted.

Rainbow Fishway remains out of business due to an inoperable headgate and no electricity. It now looks like we won't be able to address these problems until NEXT week (groan).

The water temperatures on the tributaries have shot up due to the hot, unseasonable weather. The temperature of the Salmon River was up to 66 F (19 C) but by this afternoon it should go even higher! Rain and cooler weather are forecasted beginning tomorrow, which will be welcome. Flows in the tributaries are pretty good but the Connecticut River remains low at 25,000 cfs. The high temperatures in the tributaries are complicating the release plans for salmon fry—both our stocking and that of the many schools that are part of the Fish Friends program. Many schools are releasing this week and next and may have to slowly introduce stream water into the transport containers to ensure the fry don't experience too rapid temperature increase.



Students releasing salmon fry in Salmon Brook, Granby.

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	4	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	0	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)		44,486						
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)		572						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		12,259	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= 4/21 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:

Only one shad seen at Greenville. Blueback herring have been sampled from the mainstem Shetucket River along with alewives. The alewife count last week at Tunnel is not right since Greenville still has not passed that many alewives. The fish must be drop-downs from our trucking releases upstream of Tunnel. We have zeroed that number from last week and wait for new data. Herring runs along the shoreline seem sporadic. They are strong in some places but not others. Both Brides Brook and Mianus River (normally the reliably strong runs) had lackluster weekends, even with such warm temperatures. On the other hand, Guilford's East River is really coming on. Vincent at Lower Guilford Lake reported alewives working their way up the fishway over the weekend and I visited the stream on Monday and found alewives distributed throughout the river, above the head-of-tide. There were large numbers at the Capello Pond Fishway and the Lower Guilford Lake Fishway—more than we've ever seen there. I met long-time fishway advocate Jerry Silbert at the fishway and we figured that since alewives first were reported above the dam in 2004 (maybe 2003, but we're not sure), these fish are probably the first fish that were spawned by parents that hatched above the dam. This is a real success story.

Strong runs also reported at Poquetanuck (Preston) and Pequonnock (Bridgeport). That run also seems to have turned a corner in its restoration, as well.

Mary at the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association reports on the 2009 Fish Rodeo at the Wallace Dam- which is ongoing. They've already netted and passed over the dam: 129 river herring, 10 sea lamprey, 2 white perch, some suckers and smallmouth bass. They hope to pass more today.

We didn't get reports from many of our partners this week so cannot update many counts, but we assume fish are moving in many locations and we hope to have updates next week.

This week's featured fishway is the **MIANUS POND DAM FISHWAY** on the Mianus River in Greenwich. This steep pass fishway has been around for over 10 years and passes lots of alewives and some blueback herring. The Town of Greenwich wanted to get a better handle on what it was passing and this year installed a camera using a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. In the photo below, the fish come up the fishway from the right, pass through the box to the left and exit the fishway. The camera toward the bottom of the photo captures their image on a computer hard drive using a motion detection function. A special software called SalmonSoft helps record and compile the data. If the file size isn't too great, I will try to attach a video clip to the email. We expect much more precise data from this arrangement than with the electronic fish counter alone and will also be able to distinguish up-runners from down-runners.

