

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 5, 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	-	thousands	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	1	0	0	0	2	149	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	3/0	1156	0	2	3	0	134	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	
(last year's totals)	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:

Not much has changed during the past week. The cool, rainy weather has slowed things down. Holyoke continues to pass shad, but at less than 2,000 the run has barely begun. Anglers appear to be doing well below Holyoke and the Holyoke Shad Derby is this coming weekend. West Springfield has passed a single shad and Rainbow is still not open although we are seeing shad in the tailrace. There are areas where the bluebacks are thick but that certainly isn't universal and the count at Holyoke remains at two. Dave Ellis helped Ben Gahagan sample herring near the mouth of the Farmington and report that the bluebacks in the river now are exceptionally large fish. The alewife run at Moulson Pond has been quiet up to last week but the Lyme Land Conservation Trust reports heavy action in the fishway this past week, with active migration up the ladder observed Sunday through Wednesday. White suckers and yellow perch are also moving at that location. No river herring were observed at Leesville or Glastonbury area tributaries this past week. A few lampreys have been seen at Leesville and Rainbow and although the counts are still low at Holyoke and West Springfield, they're probably moving up unseen in pretty good numbers at Moulson Pond and Leesville. At this point, we believe the fish counter at Mary Steube is not working and those numbers are not accurate (too low).

The first salmon of the season (actually the first three) have been trapped at Holyoke and taken to the Cronin National Salmon Station in Sunderland, MA. I don't have details on those first fish but we trust more are coming soon.

Rainbow Fishway remains out of business but we made great progress yesterday, working with a maintenance crew from the CTDEP's Western District. There was drilling, grinding, welding, hoisting, and greasing going on with follow-up today. We expect by the end of the day, the headgate will be again be operational (thanks go out to Skip Kerns, Glen, and Bruce). However, we are still waiting on our new transformer, which we hope will be installed tomorrow (if it doesn't rain). Hopefully we can open the fishway Thursday morning and operate the smolt sampler Thursday evening. There are large numbers of smolts jumping in the headpond. The downstream bypass has been working but without power to the lower facilities, we have been unable to operate the sampler.

The water temperatures have dropped back down into the "cool" category with but Holyoke and Leesville at 56 F (13 C). Flows on the tributaries in Connecticut are at seasonal levels—perhaps a bit low—but the flow on the Connecticut is about 20,000 cfs, which is quite low for this time of year. This may encourage fish to run up to Holyoke quicker but we hope we don't lose flow quickly come June.



Rainbow Fishway Headgate: The electric motor to the left turns a chain that attaches to a gear box atop the gray pedestal. The crumbling concrete was so bad under the pedestal that the headgate was pulling the pedestal out of the concrete. The 12-foot long threaded rod (not shown) was bent and a brass gear inside the gearbox was worn to nubs. The only good thing left was the 40+ year old electric motor, which won't quit. Parts were replaced and installed and a massive steel plate was bolted to the dam and the pedestal welded to it. The things we have to do to get fish upstream! This is why dam removal is so good!

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)	<i>no counts this year due to shortages of staff</i>							
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)	67,207							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	279							
Clarks Pond (Indian R., Milford)	6							
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	present (not enumerated)							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	753							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	13,303		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= no counts this year

***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:

The numbers of shad and river herring has picked up on the Shetucket River. We are still behind on our video tape counts but the Norwich Public Utilities watch engineers monitor the lifts via security cameras and report seeing some hopperfuls of shad passed late last week. Hopefully we'll be a bit caught up by next week now that alewife transplants are over and Rainbow work is done. No data yet from Taftville. Occum and Tunnel are reporting fish passing but no anadromous fish yet. The alewife runs at both Brides Brook and Mianus River have slowed down. It is still possible that the Brides run could match last years' level of 73,000 but it seems unlikely that Mianus will reach its 2008 level of 81,000. Brian reports water temperatures of 59 F (15 C) at Mianus, which is the same Nick is seeing at Clarks Pond in Milford. Sally reports 14 C at Wood Dam on the Saugatuck and a few 100+ fish nights last week. That run is also below the 2008 level but it is still a bit early to write it off yet.

Mary Mushinsky reports that the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association's 2009 Fish Rodeo at the Wallace Dam continues with another 127 river herring passed by hand last week—on top of the 129 river herring passed the week before. Bob Harris reported a couple of days of alewife activity on Fishing Brook. Larry Bonin and the town crew of Old Saybrook just finished the Crystal Lake Fishway at the head of that stream and upstream of the Fishing Brook fishway. A grand opening ceremony is planned for May 18 and this wave of fish at tidewater makes us expect to see alewives spawning in Crystal Lake soon. Photos to follow with a future report.

As mentioned earlier, the alewife transplants are done for the season. One of the last trips was to the Little River in Sprague (tributary to Shetucket River and upstream of Versailles Pond Fishway). Crack staff videographer Tim Wildman captured the process and edited it to a short clip, which I will attach. It is a large file size and this may be a problem for some on the distribution list, but the footage is so cool that I have to send it along and hope that some of you can enjoy it. It shows the fish being netting at the Brides Brook trap, placed in the truck, the truck in position on a bridge, and then releasing them, practically on top of Tim. There is above water and below water footage. It is only a minute or so long. Good luck. (And, Emily, sorry about the misspelling of your name!)

Also on the subject of alewives, kudos to program partners David Post (faculty) and Annika Walters (grad student) from Yale on the publication of a great paper on alewives in the recent issue of the *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* (66:439-448). The title is "Anadromous alewives contribute marine-derived nutrients to coastal stream food webs" and it discusses the impact of alewife runs on streams like Brides Brook, Queach Brook, Four-mile River, etc. where David's lab has been active. This may not be accessible or of particular interest to non-scientists, but interesting reading for others.

This week's featured fishway is the **HUMMERS POND DAM FISHWAY** on Fence Brook in Madison. The fishway at this small dam (former ice pond) was a wooden Denil but replaced with an aluminum replicate a couple of years ago. This run is exclusively alewives. There is no opportunity to count fish at this small fishway.

