

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 12, 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)	1	31	0	0	0	0	96*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	1***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	thousands	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	9 (broken)	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	94	0	0	0	2	183	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	9/0	14,897	0	17	21	8	1,445	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=	10/0	15,022	0++	17	21	10	1,725	0	
<i>(last year's totals)</i>	<i>141/11</i>	<i>156,4926</i>	<i>-----</i>	<i>89++</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>551</i>	<i>66,521</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>213</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 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:

Rainbow Fishway is finally open—on emergency mode. The headgate is fixed but we still need a transformer. We waited 10 weeks for delivery of a new transformer only to un-crate this week and learn they built us the wrong one. So we have an emergency generator hooked up that allows us to operate the trap (see below) but we can't operate the automatic attraction water system, our computer and SalmonSoft, etc. Once the fishway was open, fish immediately started coming up, including shad, lamprey, suckers, bass, trout. We captured our first salmon on Sunday. It originated from a 2007 hatchery-stocked smolt. Holyoke continues to pick up salmon (last one on Sunday) but the shad numbers remain low. They lifted 2,700 on Saturday and 1,400 on Sunday. However, Bob Stira of FirstLight reports that the Turners Falls fishways were opened late last week and some shad have already cleared the Gatehouse ladder (no official numbers to post yet). That's pretty early for Gatehouse and pretty good considering that Holyoke has passed fewer than 20,000. Jay McMenemy from VTFW plans to open the Vernon fishway before the end of the week. Anglers report inconsistent action with shad. Some (particularly around Holyoke) are seeing good action while it is very slow in others places, including the Farmington River. Netters seem to be doing okay and there was certainly no shortage of shad in the fish markets this past weekend. **See the email attachment on an Open House at Holyoke Fishway.**

Blueback herring runs have been spotty, which seems to be the way of the past few years. Most tributaries remain empty although a wave showed up at the Eightmile River and the Salmon River at Leesville over the weekend. The fish were actively spawning at Leesville but the numbers were not great. A patch of numerous bluebacks has been sampled in the lower Farmington River. See the reference to river herring in the next comments page.

The Atlantic salmon smolt run is strong. Tim and I were able to sample the Rainbow bypass for the first time of the season last night thanks to the generator. We sampled about 150 smolts, of which 10% were hatchery-origin. We also got a few sea-run brown trout smolts and six downrunning 140 mm alewives. What's up with that? Bob Stira reports good sampling at Turners Falls as part of the mark-recapture population estimate effort on the mainstem. They got around 1,000 smolts Sunday night.

River conditions are pretty good. The mainstem is running at about 31,000 cfs, which is a bit above average but not enough to cause problems. It is an improvement over last week, when it was dipping toward 15,000. Temperatures at Holyoke are around 58 F (14.5C), which is nice and cool and good for the smolts and prolonging all runs. Temperatures are higher in the tributaries. The last few days, Leesville has been averaging around 63 F (17C).

To our south on the **Susquehanna River**, they've passed the following shad: Conowingo= 16,548, Holtwood= 3,220, Safe Harbor= 2,390. To our north on the **Merrimack River**, they've captured 4 Atlantic salmon and passed 115 shad, 1,436 river herring, and 100 sea lamprey. No numbers have been posted yet for **Maine rivers**.



Rainbow Fishway Generator: This device is keeping us in business at Rainbow until a new transformer shows up. The blown transformer is on the pole shown in the photo. CTDEP Western District staff wired the panel below so that we could plug in this gas-powered generator to supply power to the fishway. It does not supply enough power to operate all systems of the fishway, but it allows us to run the trap and turn on some of the lights.

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)	466	180	0	2	3	0	0	2
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	none seen yet						
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)	small numbers seen							
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	present (not enumerated)							
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	good numbers seen below (not enumerated)							
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)	68,690							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	3,275							
Clarks Pond (Indian R., Milford)	6							
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	present (not enumerated)							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	1,244							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	21,841		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= 5/6 Taftville= n.a. Occum= ?. Tunnel= ?. 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 about a week behind on our video tape counts so the actual number is greater than what the table above shows. We are beginning upstream trucking of shad from Greenville today and hope to do our annual shad tagging (PIT and radio) tomorrow to support upstream fishway evaluation studies. Upstream fishways are passing fish but at this point, the most exciting thing is broodstock salmon. While on the subject of the Shetucket and Quinebaug rivers, for those interested in outdoor and conservation-related activities in these watersheds, you might want to check out <http://www.thelastgreenvalley.org/sourcetosea.html> for some events associated with The Last Green Valley's Source-to-the-Sea program.

The entire Connecticut coast seemed to get a new wave of river herring—at least alewives—during the last few days. Good showings at the Mianus, Saugatuck, East, Pattaganset, Latimers, Poquetanuck and even Brides last night—we thought that run was winding down. It also appears that lots of spent adults are trying to leave Brides Lake already. David Post and Tom Cleveland report a surge of fish into Queach Brook and up the Branford Water Supply Dam Fishway over the weekend with a lot of attendant interested avian stakeholders. The numbers through the fishway have exceeded the previous high year and it will be interesting to see where it ends since this is probably the first return of fish that hatched above the dam.

Mary Mushinsky took time away from seeing the latest Star Trek movie (inside joke for Hartford Courant readers) to conduct yet another round of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association's 2009 Fish Rodeo at the Wallace Dam to pass another 264 river herring. She apparently entertained participants by stepping on a sea lamprey that subsequently jumped inside of her waders before high-tailing it downstream. There have been concerns of river herring poaching at Wallace Dam but it sounds like CTDEP Law Enforcement has made some pinches down there some maybe the word will spread.

We had a good meeting at the Mianus Fishway with the Town, NYC Parks & Recreation (Bronx River folks), and Scott Tucker, who is producing a film on river herring. The Bronx River folks are still working on design for their first fishway. Marit- you asked about small Denil fishways- see below. There is another film in the works on river herring and their conservation. Ayala Fox, a URI student, is producing a film for a class assignment that she hopes to expand for a wider audience. On the subject of river herring conservation, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has approved Amendment 2 of the Shad and River Herring Fishery Management Plan that requires all states to close all fisheries for river herring in their waters by January 1, 2012 unless before that date the States can prove that the fisheries are sustainable. For more information on that and other aspects of the amendment, visit ASMFC's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/>, click on 'press releases' and then 'May 7- river herring amendment'.

This week's featured fishway is the **GORTON POND DAM FISHWAY** on Pattaganset River in East Lyme. The 2-ft wide Denil fishway is at a State-owned small dam. This run is exclusively alewives. There is no opportunity to count fish at this small fishway but the run is in the thousands. The fishway appears to perform quite well.



A side view of the Gorton Pond Fishway, showing the entrance.



A look at the inside of the fishway with its wooden baffles.