

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 19, 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)	5	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	236	0	0	0	2	282	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	19/3	51,504	0	32	22	24	3,061	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=	24/3	51,771	0++	32	22	34	3,410	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:

The woes at Rainbow Fishway continue! We finally got our transformer installed yesterday (see photo below). However, the motor that lifts the trap malfunctioned and the trap wouldn't rise. We had two salmon in the trap and had to partially dewater the fishway to get them in a truck to Cronin. So the trap motor is off to the repair shop for re-winding and hopefully it will be back later this week along with the motor that raises the headgate. We're having problems with two other motors but one has already been fixed. Why do we hire fish biologists for this job—we should be hiring electricians! Anyway, we have captured 5 salmon—two from hatchery smolts and three from fry stocking. The shad and river herring runs are still slow and the lamprey run is slowly picking up. There were only a couple lampreys seen moving through last night when Tim and I were there to sample the smolt run at the bypass. We only captured 26 smolts (25 wild, 1 hatchery) and we don't know if the low numbers are due to the run winding down or if it is the cold weather. We'll sample again Thursday night (after a couple of days in the 80s) and it will be interesting to see if the numbers pick back up again. Holyoke is up to 19 adult salmon—16 taken to the Cronin Salmon Station for fall spawning. Two were released upstream wearing radio-tags so that we can track their migration. A third release was unplanned and is not wearing the sophisticated jewelry.

Speaking of salmon—the fry stocking is almost over in CT. We have about 5 more days left. I've attached to the email the latest in a series of Wild Man Production videos—this one on salmon fry stocking. It's rather large (6 MB) but only two minutes long and gives you a glimpse of the operation from the hatchery (Kensington) to the stream (Salmon). Great underwater footage showing how these young salmon instinctively dive for the stream substrate. When you stock the fry into good habitat, they are able to get into the rocks and protect themselves quickly.

The shad run at Holyoke is picking up. Some shad have passed Turners Falls but we don't have numbers from FirstLight. VT Fish & Wildlife has opened the Vernon Fishway but no anadromous fish yet. We began our shad trucking yesterday. Dave Ellis had to wait for quite a while for the fish lift to collect the 75 fish that we take with us. But the next lift had 200 shad in it and we will be able to fill up our tank and hit the road for Hanover Pond on the Quinnipiac River. Holyoke ended up lifting 3,259 shad by the end of the day. Dave's back up there today, getting a load of shad to transplant into the Naugatuck River. I think the State of Rhode Island will be there today as well. Another slow week for river herring—none reported at Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River or Leesville on the Salmon River.

River conditions remain good. The mainstem is running at about 25,000 cfs and Holyoke reported 60 F (15 C). The Salmon River has dropped to 138 cfs after the last rain and remains cool around 60/15, as well. I just saw on the USGS/CT website that they may be forced to drop the operation of a number of stream gaging stations in CT due to lack of partner funding. The Salmon River (Comstock Covered Bridge) is one of them. That gage has been providing water flow data for 81 years. Another threatened gage is at Harford (CT River), which has provided data for 104 years. These data are important to those of us who work on rivers and this will be a real loss.

Maine DMR began tending the trap at Veazie Dam on May 5 and has seen 19 salmon so far. The spring angling season for Atlantic salmon on the Penobscot River has been terminated. See the attachment to the accompanying email.



Rainbow Fishway Transformer: Rainbow Fishway has a shiny new transformer. Since we get electricity straight from the Farmington River Power Company's powerhouse, this is not a NU pole or transformer and when it needs replacing, we have to do it. It's sad that this is the featured photo this week rather than a fish, but sometimes it is boring equipment like this that keeps us in the business of passing fish upstream.

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)	1,025	190	0	6	5	0	2	9
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)	69,399							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	3,460							
Clarks Pond (Indian R., Milford)	6							
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	present (not enumerated)							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	1,318							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	21,151		3,203	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= 5/13 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 shad run on the Shetucket River has really picked up. We've trucked some around Taftville Dam to support the Occum study but no reports of any entering the Occum fishway yet. No numbers reported for the Taftville or Tunnel fishways from FirstLight. A team of workers tagged shad at Greenville last week to support the fishway evaluation studies. Over 100 shad were tagged with PIT tags and released into the Greenville headpond to head up to Taftville and Tunnel. Of those, 20 were also outfitted with radiotags. Tim is developing a little video showing the tagging operation that we will send along either next week or the week after.

Last week was quiet in terms of river herring. Counts of alewives only inched up. We can assume that the alewife run is dwindling for the year. Brian Eltz at Greenwich reports passing 3,000+ blueback herring at Mianus, mostly on Thursday. David Post from Yale University and the data keeper for the Branford Water Supply Dam Fishway reports that the 2009 run just exceeded the previously high year of 2006. In fact, this is probably the first year class to have spawned in the pond to return as adults. Alewife trucking is over for the season but if you want to see some photos, visit the Darien Land Trust's website at <http://www.darienlandtrust.org/> and click on the second "event" listed. We trucked in alewives to their Olson Woods Preserve on the Noroton River to support a future fish passage project at the I-95 culvert on the Noroton River. More on that in future years.

Brian reports see a bunch of glass eels at Mianus (uncounted) but our counts are relatively low so far: Fishing Brook= 4,974; Kinneytown= 570; Lower Millpond= 41; Greenville= 39; Mill River= 0. Elver numbers are picking up at Leesville and elvers seem to hold a particular interest in the artificial spawning substrates for tessellated darters set out by Yale researcher Kelly Stiver.

Last night, the Town of Old Saybrook dedicated its new Crystal Lake Fishway, located in a town park in the headwaters of Fishing Brook. Bob Fish took the lead on the project, which was designed by Nathan L. Jacobson Associates of Chester and built by the Town Public Works, Larry Bonin and staff. The event was well attended. See photos below.

This week's featured fishway is the **CRYSTAL LAKE FISHWAY** on Fishing Brook in Old Saybrook. The bypass channel is on a slope of about 1 on 30 and occupies a former emergency spillway channel. The total dam height is 4 feet high. The fishway is still brand new but we think at least one group of alewives have used it to enter the pond.



A view of the top of the Crystal Lake Fishway, showing the water control structure (top weir) and two lower stone weirs.



A look at the lower Crystal Lake fishway. It re-joins the brook down by the footbridge.