

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 26, 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)	7	28	0	0	0	0	783*	3	10
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	1***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	thousands	??	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	9 (broken)	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	773	0	0	0	2	393	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	45/11	112,328	0	37	38	143	14,113	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	1/1	253	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	1/1	0	-	0	0	0	6	-	-
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=	52/11	113,129	0++	37	38	145	15,290	3	10
<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:

No more complaining about the Rainbow Fishway. The motors were repaired in rapid fashion and the fishway is operational. The lamprey run is increasing, the shad run remains flat, and the salmon numbers for this date are disappointing. We got two salmon on Saturday but to get through the Memorial Day weekend with a count of seven is below expectations. The same can be said for Holyoke (45) and certainly West Springfield (0). Memorial Day was a bit early this year and we can only hope that good numbers of salmon show up during the next seven days. The salmon count on the Merrimack (Lawrence) is 9 and on the Penobscot (Veazie) is 52.

The shad run at Holyoke is still doing okay and there is still time to pass some large numbers. But the lift numbers have dropped off since Thursday: 14,000, 11,000, 10,000, 7,000, and yesterday 3,000. But the flow in the river has really plummeted. This time last week, the flow was about average at 20,000 cfs. Today it is less than 9,000 cfs, which is really low. Parts of CT and MA got heavy thunderstorms yesterday but not enough to bring the flows back up. The weather forecast calls for rain the next three days and that could help freshen flows and bring another wave of shad up. The temperature at Holyoke remains good at 66 F (19 C) but the temperatures in the tributaries are starting to inch up (Leesville, for example, was 72 F/22 C yesterday) so the rain will help those stay moderate, as well. We are shad trucking today and hope to continue throughout the week. The plan for today is a "double run": the first truck to Chesterfield, NH to augment the upstream escapement to the Connecticut River and a second load back to the Farmington River.

The data for Turners Falls and Vernon in the above table will always be a little behind the report date since FirstLight (Turners Falls) and VTFW (Vernon) are reviewing images off the computer (SalmonSoft). Today's data is as of May 19 and May 24, respectively. Turners Falls data may not be complete since Vernon often counts more fish than Turners Falls. Since a salmon has passed Vernon, the Bellows Falls, VT fishway was opened today. This fishway has a nice public viewing area and if you're traveling up I-91, you should visit this location. Just head down toward the river and the bridge to New Hampshire and follow your nose. The US Army Corps of Engineers will open the Townshend Trap on the West River in VT today, too, since the salmon through Vernon could be bound for the West River. Speaking of visiting—Rainbow will hold its annual open house on Saturday June 6. Hopefully we'll have more to show you than shiny, repaired motors. See the attachment to the email for directions and details. Darleen reports that the Holyoke Fishway has had 2,400 visitors so far. That fishway visitors center is open Wednesday through Sunday, 9 to 5 pm.

The salmon smolt run seems to be tapering off. We saw fewer than 30 last Thursday. We'll sample again tonight. The latest in a series of diadro-videos is attached to the email and it shows us sampling salmon smolts at the Rainbow bypass, with a few surprise guests. Like the others, it's rather large (6 MB) but only two minutes long.

Another slow week for river herring—none reported at Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River or at most Connecticut tributaries. We saw a handful at Leesville on the Salmon River and this morning one of my volunteers flew away from the dam with a river herring (blueback?) in its talons. Our division is observing an increasing number of anglers catching river herring, claiming they are hickory shad, and using them for bait. Conservation Officers will be on the outlook for such prohibited acts. Although there are some small hickory shad in the river, their shad-like mouth distinguishes them from river herring (see photo below).

Last week, I mentioned the potential loss of the USGS stream gage stations and the associated data. I've heard word that parties are rolling up their sleeves to put together the necessary funding to keep these stations active. Let's hope it works!



Hickory shad (*Alosa mediocris*)

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)	1,577	190	0	6	5	2	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)	1	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)	74,513							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	3,477							
Clarks Pond (Indian R., Milford)	6							
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	present (not enumerated)							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	1,401							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	27,663		4,577	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= 5/21 Taftville= n.a. Occum= ? Tunnel= 5/23 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:

All runs have slowed. Shad are continuing to pass at the Greenville Dam on the Shetucket River but the rate has slowed down. We picked up our first sea lamprey at Greenville. River herring runs have dropped off in most locations. We saw little bumps in numbers at Mianus, Wood, Brides, and Branford, as well as seeing some fish in the Housatonic below Derby Dam and the Pattagansett below Gorton Dam. Brides Brook has surpassed its 2008 figure but it is probably just about done and David Post doesn't expect to see much more at Branford. We're seeing spent alewives come out at a number of locations, including via the Rainbow Dam downstream bypass on the Farmington River (see other report), where all of the alewives were trucked in from Brides. Some of the sites that also support runs of blueback herring may still see some fish—like Mianus and Wood Dam on the Saugatuck. In fact, some of the numbers posted for alewives on the Saugatuck may, in fact, be bluebacks. For simplicity I am posting them as alewives now but we will go back and standardized the counts by calendar for locations where no observations are possible. However, all fish sampled on the Housatonic and Pattagansett were still alewives. Last week, I reported tagging shad at Greenville for the studies for Taftville and Tunnel fishways. Bob Stira of FirstLight reports that 13 radiotags have shown up at (but not through) an upstream fishway (out of 20 radiotagged fish). No PIT tagged shad have been detected yet. One untagged shad has passed through the Tunnel fish lift.

We've seen a larger than typical number of feeding lampreys on shad entering the rivers this year, particularly at Greenville and Holyoke. These are larger than the typical "recently transformed" animals. It appears that some year class—whether it is this year's or last year's—was pretty strong. But since we don't know where the shad pick them up, it is impossible to know if this is a particular river or region or coast-wide. We have seen a number of lamprey marks on migrating salmon smolts on the Farmington River but no attached lampreys and no free-swimming lampreys. Curious.

The Town of Stonington has just informed me that they have taken possession of the newly-fabricated Vargas Brook Fishway and plan to install in this August so that it will be in place to pass alewives next spring. Vargas Brook is one of three small streams that flow into Stonington Harbor and the small dam at the head-of-tide was used to create an ice pond for by-gone times. The 18" dam is enough to block alewife runs but the small aluminum Denil will allow them to access the spawning habitat. The small aluminum Denil at Capello Pond in Guilford (see below) is similar to what was fabricated for Vargas Brook, only the Vargas Brook fishway is even smaller.

The glass eel count at Fishing Brook is up to 6,538.

I will be attending the annual meeting of NASCO next week and will be gone for the next two reports. Tim Wildman will be sending out these reports in my absences. I think he has more videos up his sleeve. If you have information to share, please send it to him at timothy.wildman@ct.gov.

This week's featured fishway is the **CAPELLO POND FISHWAY** on the East River in Guilford. The aluminum Denil is 2 ft wide and replaced an earlier wooden structure a few years ago. The total dam height is 3 feet high. This is downstream of the nature-like Lower Guilford Lake Fishway—both have passed lots of alewives this spring.



Without water.



With water.