

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: June 23, 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)	11	37	0	0	0	1	1,861*	4	39
Leesville (Salmon)	2	-	-	0	-	-	1***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	- thousands	??	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-9 (broken)	-	-	-	-	-	-	439
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	1	1,360	0	0	0	2	538	0	11
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	56/10	157,223	0	39	58	545	18,983	0	3,761
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	5/5	2,878	-	0	0	0	7,237	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	7/7	18	-	0	0	0	1,549	-	-
Bellows Falls (Connecticut- VT)	4/4	0	-	0	0	0	101	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	1/1	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0/0								
TOTALS=	70/10	158,195	0++	39	57	430	21,380	4	3,726
<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:

Runs are winding down, although Holyoke passed over 1,000 shad over the past weekend and picked up one more salmon. It passed 429 shad yesterday. However, things have been very quiet on the tributaries: West Springfield, Rainbow, Leesville, and Moulson Pond. We snorkeled Leesville yesterday and found it uncharacteristically empty. The spring fish are gone (no river herring, white suckers, or darters) but the summer fish have not arrived (sunfish, bass, and minnows). Flows are atypically high and temperatures atypically low. It is as if the calendar and the stream conditions don't jive with each other and the fish can't figure out how to react. Certainly, most spring spawning runs are just about over anyway. The biggest question mark in my mind is the sea lamprey run. We have yet to see many nests in traditional lower river areas nor have we seen fish with a lot of secondary sex characteristics, although they are starting to come on now. Yesterday, while snorkeling, I grabbed the only lamprey I saw (an act not entirely appreciated by the other participant) and it was a feisty male that appeared not to have begun nesting. This is quite late for this species and if we get the 80 F weather later this week, as forecasted, we may get one last wave of spawning. I would think that would also push the remaining shad in the river over the edge (so to speak) as well.

Shad numbers for Turners Falls are as of June 10, so there may be more to add there. Vermont data are of yesterday, June 22. Another count that doesn't make it to the table is the blind trap at the Townshend, VT. This is on the West River and is located at a flood control dam operated by the Army Corps of Engineers. One salmon has been trapped there and trucked around that and another upstream flood control dam. You can see from the table above that 7 of the salmon released at Holyoke have been seen passing up through the Vernon Dam Fishway but only 4 have passed through the upstream Bellows Fall Dam Fishway. So, 3 salmon are somewhere in between and since the West River flows into the Connecticut River between these two dams, that Townshend fish is one of them.



A nice bright salmon holding in front of the trapping station viewing window at the Holyoke Fishlift. An American shad is milling around in the background. The floor of the trap can be seen underneath the salmon.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. <u>SHAD</u>	<u>ALEWIFE</u>	BLUEBACK <u>HERRING</u>	GIZZARD <u>SHAD</u>	STRIPED <u>BASS</u>	SEA <u>LAMPREY</u>	SEA-RUN <u>TROUT</u>	AMER. <u>EEL</u>
Greenville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2,168	190	0	12	7	4	2	190
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2	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)	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	<i>no counts this year; sea lamprey, American shad, sea-run trout observed above fishway</i>							894
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)	74,774							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							8,544
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		321					
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	23,086		9,519	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:*

Greenville= 6/15 Taftville= 6/18? Occum= ? Tunnel= 6/18 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:

There were a few additional blueback herring that came into western Connecticut during the past week (Saugatuck and Mianus rivers) but the run is probably now over and the Town of Greenwich may pull their fish counter this week if no more "hits" occur. The west got more rain than the rest of the state in the latest round of our Sogfest and many lingering herring may have been flushed out of these systems. At Greenville, 21 additional shad were passed and FirstLight saw a bit of a blip in activity of tagged shad upstream but we don't expect much more movement by them either, as they should now all be spawning. FirstLight has been documenting some unanticipated vibration in the Tunnel Fishlift and working to reduce it. There is some indication that the vibrations may have discouraged fish from entering the fishway entrance, so it will be very interesting to see how these improvements effect numbers. It is probably too late in the season to give this a good test.

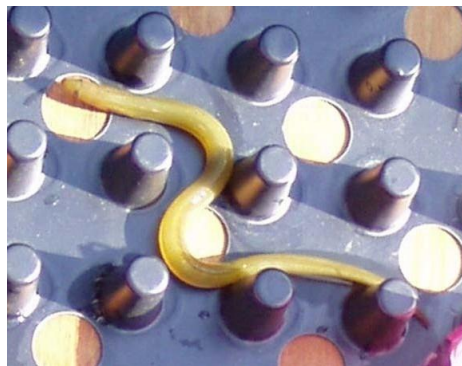
As the anadromous fish runs wind down, the passage of the catadromous American eel tends to pick up. We are starting to see numbers climb (although some of the problem may have been due to a lack of timely reports). Last week I reported some numbers in the 'Comments' section but had not imported them into the two fish number tables, which I did this week: Greenville, Kinneytown, Fishing Brook, Tunnel, and (on the other table) Mary Steube and Holyoke. The one eel pass that isn't included on either list is Mill River (New Haven area) and that number is up to 567. That has always been a leader in eel passage for us and when we saw that it had only passed about 40 up until two weeks ago, it didn't seem right. So Tim visited the site and found a problem with the substrate, which he fixed. This past week, it passed over 500 eels—suggesting that Tim had correctly identified the problem. Numbers have also been quite a bit lower than in the past at Tunnel where Ken at FirstLight has had some problems with the trap tank. We hope those problems are solved and we'll start seeing those numbers increase. We need to get some data from Occum.

Later this summer, FirstLight expects to install another eel pass at the tall Stevenson Dam on the Housatonic River. You may recall that an earlier facility was swept away in a flood. This new pass is an entirely different design and we expect to show you photos in these pages next year. FirstLight will also be installing a new eel pass at the Taftville Dam on the Shetucket River later this summer.

The long-awaited removal of the Main Street Dam on the Rippowam River in Stamford is beginning! This will take out a worthless and aging dam at the head-of-tide and allow anadromous fish to have access to many additional miles of upstream habitat. This project is sponsored by the City of Stamford and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The river should be again free-flowing by the time these reports resume in April of 2010.

We have no video to share this week. When we went snorkeling at Leesville yesterday, we had hoped to get some underwater footage of diadromous fishes but the visibility was really marginal so it was not worth using the camera.

At this point, it appears that we will probably issue two more weekly reports: June 30 and July 6. It would be good to get all relevant information from partners at all the various facilities in time to include in these final reports.



Young eel climbing an eel pass (Akwadrain substrate)