CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: June 21 2011

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)	15	274	0	0	0	1	6,516*	5	132
Leesville (Salmon)	8	-	-	0	-	-	1***	6	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	1,000s	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	9,080 (final count)		-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	7	4,986	0	0	0	0	1,574	0	16
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	68/11	242,452	0	138	382	145	19,132	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/7	16,513	-	0	0	0	2,032	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	0/9	38	-	0	0	0	291		
Bellows Falls (Connecticut- VT)	0/5	1	-	0	0	0	69	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	2/0								
TOTALS=	100/11	247,712	>10,000	138++	382	146	27,223	11	148
(last year's totals)	51/10	168,430	10000s	92++	370	297	44,711	5	542

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 slowing down but salmon, shad and sea lamprey continue to trickle in. Yesterday, Holyoke lifted 308 shad and trapped 2 salmon, bringing the count up to 100. Rainbow trapped one salmon during the past week and it was bright, indicating that it had just come in from the ocean. We've had some very hot weather but the occasional thunderstorm and cool nights have kept the river from "over-heating". Water temperatures are in the low 20s (Celsius) or upper 60s (Fahrenheit), which is still okay for trapping salmon. The river flow in the mainstem is around 11,000 cfs and is approaching summer levels but the Connecticut tributaries remain fairly high for this time of year. It seems that we get a good rain every four or five days, which sends the rivers back up. At Leesville, it seems that every time we get a good rain, a few more large brown trout (and a few smallmouth bass) come up the fishway.

You can see by the table that the salmon that were released at Holyoke are moving upriver pretty well. The table shows that Vernon has passed 9 salmon whereas Turners Falls (downstream) has passed only 7. The window at Turners Falls is monitored by a video camera and the gate is left open so during turbid conditions, fish can sneak past the Turners Falls window undetected and this happens during most years. Furthermore, some of the 9 salmon seen at Vernon may not be part of the 11 salmon known to have been released at Holyoke. Some fish may have also slipped past Holyoke undetected. At the end of the season, biologists will compare notes and figure this out and adjust the final count accordingly. Five of those nine at Vernon have gone through the Bellows Falls fishway and one of those five has gone up the Wilder Dam fishway.

The number of shortnose sturgeon trapped at the Holyoke Dam Fishlift is now up to three. The number of uprunning beaver at the Wilder Dam is now one. Jay noticed a large beaver swimming up the ladder but not going back down. Maybe it was a fact-finding tour. We'd prefer it if the beaver in Connecticut began installing fishways at some of their dams on coastal streams with river herring runs.

The Penobscot River had a great week last week and the number of adult salmon counted at the Veazie Dam now stands at 2,048. The salmon count at the Essex Dam on the Merrimack River is 334 along with 12,209 shad.

Last week we reported that there was damage to some lower weirs of the Vernon Dam Fishway near Brattleboro, VT. The fishway is a modified Ice Harbor design and, like the Turners Falls fishways, every other notch on both sides of the fishway have been closed off with wooden weirboards (in a staggered fashion) to create more favorable hydraulics. Apparently high water had washed away boards at several weirs in the lowermost fishway and this had been undetectable due to high water. Once the river dropped, the problem was observed and corrected by TransCanada. Low shad numbers at Vernon this year could be due to this problem but the solution may have come too late in the season to allow significant numbers of shad to now ascend the fishway. In my opinion, a more permanent solution to this needs to be considered so that the weirboards don't go out again in the middle of a fish passage season. Fishways on big rivers are hard to repair during the spring when the fish are running due to high water. See photos below.

The lower section of the Vernon fishway with minimal flow showing missing boards across weir notches. In the photo to the right, you can see new wooden boards inserted into steel channels. These boards block off one notch of two on each weir to create favorable hydraulics. With these boards missing, water spilled through both notches, creating turbulent flow not favored by American shad (Photos by Jay McMenemy, VTFG).

The same area of the Vernon Dam as shown to the left, but with a missing weirboard replaced with new wood. The notches above and below this notch do not have boards because the blocked notches are staggered from one side of the fishway to the other. Only the notches on the far side are visible in these photos; the other side is hidden by the inner wall that runs parallel to the outside wall.

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)	992	248	0	103	0	0	0	1
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	675
Versailles Pond (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	13	6	0	20	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	1	0	0	0	0	56	8	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	many seen, thousands assumed (FINAL)						
Trading Cove Brook** (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		1,208 (FINAL)						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		2,679 (FINAL)						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		many seen, thousands assumed (FINAL)						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		196,996 (FINAL)						
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		164 (FINAL)						
Capello Pond (East River, Guilford)		many seen, thousands assumed (FINAL)						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		4,476 (FINAL)						
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		low numbers this week						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		2,103	250 (FINAL)					
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		66,521	26,395		0	0	0	1 -

**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= 6/14 Taftville= 6/5 Occum= 4/28 Tunnel=6/13 Kinneytown= 6/18

**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 river herring runs appear to be over. A few fish (presumed to be blueback herring) are lingering in the Housatonic River below the Derby Dam and we have seen scales at Bunnells Pond Dam Fishway and Sasco Brook, indicating small numbers. The scales at Bunnells could be from downrunners. The fish counters at Wood Dam and Mianus Pond Dam fishways picked up a few fish this week but this is the end of it. Both the Town of Greenwich and TNC plan to pull the counters this week.

We are getting caught up with Kinneytown Fishway data (Naugatuck River, Seymour). For anadromous species, we have passed one shad, 56 sea lamprey, and eight sea-run brown trout. We're still about a week behind and we can assume these are conservative numbers due to the problems we've had counting fish at this site this year. The fishway has also passed suckers, trout, and other resident species.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook: 23,394. Mill River in Hamden: 941. Occum: 675. Tunnel: 6,507.

FEATURED FISH PASSAGE PROJECT OF THE WEEK: **ANGUILLA BROOK FISH PASSAGE PROJECT**

Anguilla Brook is one of the last streams in Connecticut along the shoreline before you reach Rhode Island. The Avalonia Land Conservancy (the local multi-town land trust) and The Nature Conservancy have teamed up with willing private land owners and funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to put together an exciting project that will open up 13 miles—practically the entire watershed. The first dam at the head-of-tide is very historic and a sensitively-designed pool-and-weir fishway will be built there to target alewives, sea-run trout and American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), the namesake of the brook. The second dam is a former millsite (not very historic) in very poor shape and in risk of failing. It will be removed. In addition to helping the diadromous species, this removal will benefit native brook trout. The team hopes to implement this fully-designed project this fall if all of the permits are approved in time.

The Rutan Dam is not that old but is in very bad shape. Removing this dam will reconnect the upper part of the Anguilla Brook watershed with the lower part.

The Wequetequock Pond Dam is not much of a dam. Most of the spillway consists of a very large boulder called Saddle Rock, the eastern third of which is seen in this photo. This photo shows the route of a future stone weir fishway.