

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 22, 2014



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.ctiversalmon.org.

CONNECTICUT RIVER LOCATIONS

FISHWAY (RIVER)	ATLANTIC SALMON*	AMER. SHAD	AMER. ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Rainbow (WFMD) (Farmington)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leesville(WFMD) (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem**(WFMD) (Mattabesset)	0	1	48	0	0	-	1	0	0
Moulson Pond** (Eightmile)	0	0	11	0	0	0	5	0	-
Mary Steube*(WFMD) (Mill Brook)	-	-	849	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+(WFMD) (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manhan River** (Manhan- MA)									
Turners Falls** (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon** (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	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=	0/0	1	908	0	0	0	6	0	0
(last year's totals)	92/4	397,486	9,597	3,228	824	208	24,939	18	16

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. **There is a video camera that records passage. 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.

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. (WFMD)- Tours or open house for World Fish Migration Day, May 24 (<http://nature.org/ctfish>)

COMMENTS:

Not a lot to add for the Connecticut River for this past week. During the week, the freshet topped out at around 90,000 cfs. All the regular springtime flooding—Keeney Cove, Rt. 17A in Portland by the fairgrounds, the Salmon River boat launch access road, etc. But the Goodspeed Docks did not go under water—that's when it gets my attention. We were passing several hundred white suckers at the Leesville Dam Fishway but when the Connecticut River backed up about 5 feet up the dam, the attraction to the fishway suffered a bit and the sucker count dropped off. I did not snorkel due to turbid and cold (7C/44F) conditions. Rainbow Dam Fishway was opened on Friday and started doing business passing white suckers going up and Atlantic salmon smolts going down. We saw our first shad passing the StanChem Fishway on the Mattabesett (and a few dozen alewives and over 100 suckers) but that run dropped off during the peak of the freshet. My guess is that when the river floods out Deadman Swamp in the lower Mattabesett River, it is difficult for fish to discern which way is upstream. The river is now dropping and I expect runs to resume. Another interesting observation from StanChem is that our unique underground eel pass is already passing eels, which is earlier than I expected. These are not young-of-year but probably eels that came up last year. Dave was cleaning out the exit filter and a bunch of eels wiggled out and dropped into the headpond.

The Holyoke Fishlift has not been operational due to high flows. The flows in Connecticut are now approaching 40,000 and it will probably be a matter of a day or two before they can resume lifting. I have not heard any reports from shad netters but fish markets at the mouth of the river are selling Connecticut River shad, so the netters are obviously starting to take them. Joe Zaiantz reports a seal in the river.

The Tributary Mill Conservancy reported their first glass eels passed this week on the Mill Brook in Old Lyme. A total of 150.



As you have already heard, our Program is co-sponsoring events with The Nature Conservancy and Princeton Hydro (an engineer consulting firm) for World Fish Migration Day (May 24) in Connecticut. There will be open houses or tours at 15 fishways across the state, including those on the previous and subsequent pages marked with **(WFMD)**. Myself and Sally Harold of TNC will make presentations in the morning at the Lyme-Old Lyme High School and then lead a progressive tour of 5 fishways, including the Greenville Fishlift in Norwich (there is a cap on attendees for that—you have to register online), and other staff will be posted at other fishways across the state including Rainbow, Haakonsen, StanChem, Bunnells, etc.—oh yes! And a sneak peak at the Tingue Dam Fish Bypass Channel under construction on the Naugatuck River in Seymour. Too much to recount here—go to <http://nature.org/ctfish> to learn all directions, get details, and sign up for the progressive tour is you wish. You'll see reminder notices in these reports leading up until May 24. Hope to see many of you at one or more of the locations.



The Connecticut River was higher this past week than recent springs. Here at Eagle Landing State Park in Haddam, CT, the docks went underwater. Across the river at the Goodspeed Opera House, the docks were not quite overtopped—the mark of a notable freshet.



Image of an alewife from the Moulson Pond Fishway camera. For those who don't deal with these fish, this must seem enigmatic but for fish folks, this silhouette is clearly that of an alewife. We may be experimenting with lifting the lid to get more light in so we can see some colors on the fish, per suggestion of local volunteer fish monitor Valinn.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Greeneville* (WFMD) (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	67	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Hallville Pond* (WFMD) (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	2	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (WFMD)- (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	11,393						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	-	0	0					
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		189,144	0					
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)		0	0	-		-	-	
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (WFMD) (Queach Br., Branford)		763	0	-	-	-	-	
Landon Dam** (West River, Guilford)		221	0	-	-	-	0	0
Haakonsen Fishway* (WFMD) (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	462	0	0	0	25	2	
Bunnells Pond* (WFMD) (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		179	0	0	0			
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		error(100s)	0	0				
Mianus River Pond* ** (WFMD) (Mianus R., Greenwich)		11,877	0	0	0	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= n.a. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= 4/12 Haakonsen= 4/5 Hallville= 4/12.

**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. (WFMD)- Tours or open house for World Fish Migration Day, May 24 (<http://nature.org/ctfish>)

COMMENTS:

I'll repeat my first sentence from last week's report: Alewives are in all over but no huge numbers, yet. Well, Bride Brook is now catching up. We're right around the 50% date and crowding 200,000 so that's not bad. Pretty good numbers starting to show up at Mianus, Wood (we didn't post the number because we think there are 'issues' with their electronic fish counter—we'll check it out later this week), and Latimer Brook. Branford Water Supply Ponds has already surpassed its total count of 2013. Greenville has been down most of the week due to high water but it resumed lifting yesterday morning. Note that the Tunnel Fishlift (next upstream dam on the Quinebaug) has already lifted 4 alewives, so that is a good start. Nothing yet at Taftville. We got hit by some high water at Kinneytown on the Naugatuck and during a trash sluicing incident, our camera got dunked. So we've been out of operation there for a few days. We hope to have an update on that fishway by next week. Construction work continues on the fish bypass at Tingue Dam, the next barrier upstream. We're not sure when that will be ready to operate—maybe late May??? At Haakonsen on the Quinnipiac, we're passing a lot of fish, including over 800 suckers. No one move that new tree that fell down on the eastern end of the spillway. It decreased the attractiveness to that end of the spillway and improved attraction to the fishway. The alewives came into the Pequonnock River in Bridgeport this week and apparently screamed up the new Apron Fishway without pausing and went up the Bunnells Pond Fishway. The count from the camera is still low but I don't think we have all the video reviewed yet. John Champion of Save the Sound was up this morning at 3:30 am working hard to improve Long Island Sound when he checked STS's webcam for Bunnells Pond (<http://68.197.202.82:57555>) and he saw alewives moving through at a rate of one every two or three minutes. Right now that link doesn't work well with Internet Explorer (they're working on it) but if you have Firefox or Safari (or a Droid phone like me), you should be able to call it up. It's live so don't expect alewives to pass 24/7. Seasonal Kevin Job reported that as he approached the site, he could smell that the fish were in. Veteran alewife watchers know exactly what he means. Plus the area was full of black-crowned night herons, even during the day, perched all over the fishway and trees. One night heron appeared to have eaten itself to death next to the fishway, with many of its companions standing around staring at it. ("Dude, I told you not to eat that 10th alewife!") Also lots of birds at the Mianus Pond Fishway, the Housatonic River by the Derby Dam (we didn't see fish, but they're probably in), and Bride Lake where there is a happy eagle flying around. Some people get dismayed by the number of fish the birds eat, but that is part of the deal. We are not just restoring fish runs—we're repairing the ecosystem and rebuilding the foodweb.

Our crews did not see any fish at other locations than reported above except for at the Gorton Pond Fishway in East Lyme and Fence Creek in Madison (see photo below). Captain Ian reported some fish in Sasco Brook and Mill River in Fairfield but most other sites in Fairfield County were quiet. Ted Gardziel reports a few fish coming up the Lower Guilford Lakes Fishway on the East River in Guilford.

Glass eels- the count at Fishing Brook is still low (total count= 178); Mill River Eel Trap= 46; Greenville Eel Lift= 12. More observed at the Branford Water Supply Pond Dam this week, as well.

Lots of folks saw the article by Richard Conniff in the NY Times about alewives returning to Rogers Lake and David Post's research: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/21/opinion/an-evolutionary-family-drama.html?ref=opinion&r=0>). Also, a nice brief article on the upcoming removal of the Pond Lily Dam on the West River in New Haven: http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/pond_lily_dam/. Some news coverage on Opening Day of fishing season (last Saturday): <http://wtnh.com/2014/04/16/fish-hatcheries-get-ready-trout-season/>. Some fun video from our old friend Bill McWha over in Rhode Island lifting alewives around RI dams without good fishways: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQcTj8qEPiM> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnJEV2EF4iQ>. If you haven't read the Connecticut River section of this report yet, check out the last paragraph for the link for World Fish Migration Day, May 24. I'll be giving an Earth Day Event talk tonight at the Lyme-Old Lyme High School on alewife restoration along with Dr. Paul Spitzer who will be talking about osprey restoration. The two go hand-in-hand! (<http://www.theday.com/article/20140421/NWS01/140429933/-1/NWS>). I'll also be speaking the annual meeting of the Middlesex Land Trust on Saturday, April 26 in Portland (www.middlesexlandtrust.org).



The mouth of Bride Brook at Low Tide: Sea gulls hang out at the sandbar in case some foolish alewife jumps the gun and decides to make a run for the culvert at the beach before high tide or nightfall.



Perhaps the smallest fishway in CT: The Hummers Pond Fishway on Fence Creek in Madison started life as one of our earliest ones made out of wood but replaced with aluminum. It gets a call out this week because it appears that a wave of alewives have gone up it this past week!