

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 14, 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.ctriversalmon.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 | 132 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 208 | 0 | 1 |
| Leesville(WFMD) (Salmon) | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | - | 0*** | 0 | 0 |
| StanChem**(WFMD) (Mattabesset) | 0 | 1 | 252 | 22 | 17 | - | 16 | 0 | 5 |
| Moulson Pond** (Eightmile) | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | - |
| Mary Steube*(WFMD) (Mill Brook) | - | - | 1,274 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Rogers Lake+(WFMD) (Mill Brook) | - | - | 0 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA) | 0/0 | 659 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Holyoke (WFMD) (Connecticut- MA) | 0/0 | 14,818 | 0 | 47 | 24 | 1 | 146 | 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 | 15,610 | 1,374 | 73 | 41 | 0 | 379 | 0 | 6 |
| (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:

American shad have been in the river for some time. Anglers and netters have been catching them but they had not been going up fishways, probably due to the cold water. As of a few days ago, they were in the tailrace below the Rainbow Dam but not entering the fishway. With the warmer weather, this has changed and fish are now being passed at Rainbow, Holyoke, and West Springfield. Holyoke passed over 14,000 over the weekend but the temperature is still low for this time of year: 13.5 C (56 F). Flows on the river at Thompsonville are around 26,000 cfs—about normal for this time of year. As of last night, the Farmington River was full of shad and blueback herring—more than we've seen in years.

I have not heard whether or not **Turners Falls Fishway** is open but I suspect that it is or will be soon.

Not much more to add about **river herring** for this week. Sightings of **blueback herring** at many locations continued. Last night, they were spawning below the Leesville Dam in the moonlight. A few are starting to pass fishways but hopefully just the beginning. Ken Sprankle netted about 400 blueback herring out of Wetherfield Cove and trucked them to the Oxbow on Monday before he had equipment problems. We plan to join him there on Thursday to move more. Our trucks will go to the Farmington River. As indicated last week, it appears that the alewife run is over. Most of the ones we've seen have been post-spawned, going back to sea. More on this in the next section, but the alewife run in the lower Connecticut River was poor. (Recall that alewives do not reach far into Massachusetts, so all alewife data come from Connecticut tributaries.) The three streams for which we have counts are Mill (Mary Steube & Rogers), Eightmile (Moulson Pond), and Mattabeset (StanChem). All counts were lower than in recent years. (We only have one previous year's data for StanChem.) Moulson Pond was a huge disappointment. However, that fishway entrance is hundreds of feet downstream of the dam and in high water (which we had a lot of this spring), fish can miss the entrance and go up to the dam. That might explain the low numbers in the fishway. We have no explanation for Mary Steube. With improvements at Upper Millpond Dam Fishway and the new fishway at Rogers Lake, we had hoped to see alewives enter Rogers Lake for the first time in 200+ years. We did not pass any alewives at Rogers Lake and we assume that it is due to the low numbers at Mary Steube. There is plenty of habitat in Lower Millpond and Upper Millpond for the 1,200 alewives to spawn. It is likely that we need many thousands of fish to enter the Mary Steube Fishway to 'push' fish up through upstream fishways. There will be an Open House at both Mary Steube and Rogers Lake fishways as part of the **World Fish Migration Day** events, as well as a stop at both as part of the 'progressive fishway tour' that I will lead. For more details, see the link in the graphic below, right. By the way- a few alewives were verified in the Blackhall River (Old Lyme) this year but it is unclear if they can get past the culverts at the Ames Open Space parcel.

Today is the last day for our **salmon fry** stocking for the season. The **Atlantic salmon smolt** run at the Rainbow Fishway picked up with the increasing water temperature. Rainbow Fishway will also host an all day Open House for World Fish Migration Day. There will also be events at the Holyoke Fishway, hosted by the Connecticut River Watershed Council. Since it is not in Connecticut, it is not on our website but to learn more about that location, see <http://www.worldfishmigrationday.com/events/459/crwc-tour-of-holyoke-fish-li>



Moulson Pond Fishway image: We haven't stocked the Eightmile River with Atlantic salmon fry since 2011. But here is a clear image of a salmon smolt (no doubt) descending the fishway on its way to the sea. This fish must be a 3-year old smolt—fairly uncommon in Connecticut. Most are 2-years old. It may have been living in a cold tributary such as Burnham Brook.



A reminder to visit the website shown above to learn about all the events taking place at fishways and other sites in Connecticut on May 24th.

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) | 157 | 780 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 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 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour) | | out of order | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Hallville Pond* (WFMD) (Poquetanuck Br. Preston) | - | 33 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Latimers Brook** (WFMD)- (Latimers Br., E.Lyme) | | 16,759 | | | | | | |
| Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme) | - | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme) | | 265,969 | Season Final Count | | | | | |
| Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford) | | 68 | 0 | - | - | - | - | |
| Branford Supply Pond Dam** (WFMD) (Queach Br., Branford) | | 1,395 | 0 | - | - | - | - | |
| Landon Dam** (West River, Guilford) | | 787 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |
| Haakonsen Fishway* (WFMD) (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford) | 0 | 2,491 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 2 | |
| Bunnells Pond*(WFMD) (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport) | | 2,278 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport) | | 3,285 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| Mianus River Pond* ** (WFMD) (Mianus R., Greenwich) | | 31,464 | 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= 5/07 Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 5/09 Kinneytown= 4/12 Haakonsen= 5/11 Hallville= 5/12

**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:

All counts are behind. We expect to add a lot of numbers by next week. The Kinneytown camera is back up and running but we don't have any data to report yet (other than 4 lamprey). It seems to us that the alewife run in New London County is over. We had to pull the fish counter at Bride Lake to allow the post-spawned fish to exit and return to sea. We are starting to see more **river herring** passing at Greenville on the Shetucket River but cannot verify their identity. Dave and the crew will be over there today with FirstLight, Kleinschmidt, and Norwich Public Utilities to tag shad for upstream passage studies. Dave will try to sample some herring and get a better idea if these are a late component of the alewife run or blueback herring (or both).



One shad and a group of river herring passing the Greenville Fishlift window.

We had been seeing LOTS of alewives in the Housatonic River at the beginning of the week but they disappeared. Given the weather, it could be that they all spawned and left. There are still low numbers present but they could be bluebacks. We're still seeing fish in the Quinnipiac. We did not get an update on numbers from the Mianus Pond Fishway this week.

Save the Sound (STS) had a great morning on Saturday celebrating the new **Pequonnock River Apron Fishway in Bridgeport**. Speakers included Curt Johnson (STS), Senator Richard Blumenthal, Gregg Dancho (Beardsley Zoo), and myself. Afterwards, volunteers from many groups helped plant native vegetation along the river bank (see photos below). While we were there, ospreys were plucking alewives from the stream! We also saw two sea lamprey nests (empty) below the bridge to the Wonderland of Ice. This is the first confirmation of this species in this stream.

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 7,049; Mill River Eel Trap= 1,424; Greenville Eel Lift= 147, Lower Millpond (Lyme)= 54,079.

Op-ed in New York Times by Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard titled *Tear Down 'Deadbeat' Dams* - <http://nyti.ms/1iuHSnH>
Some amazing **alewife migration photos** from Damariscotta Mills ladder in Maine. <http://damariscottamills.org/photogallery.html>
The CTDEEP/Inland Fisheries Division is proposing some **regulation changes**. We lack space here to describe them all but they include changing harvest regulations on American eel, American shad (harvest only in the CT River, otherwise catch-and-release), establishing a permanent cold water refuge (no fishing) at a cold spring on the Salmon River, moving Opening Day for Fishing season, etc. A link to the proposed regulations is available on the Department's website at <http://www.ct.gov/deep/publicnotices>. These documents can also be obtained by contacting Bill Foreman by phone at (860) 424-3474, or by email (deep.inland.fisheries@ct.gov). Public comments may be submitted through June 3.



Some of the people who gathered at the Pequonnock River Apron Fishway for the dedication and native shrub planting on Saturday. Back row- left red tie is Senator Richard Blumenthal, right red tie is me, Steve Gephard, next to me is Gwen MacDonald, project manager for Save the Sound and kneeling with white cap is STS's Curt Johnson. (both photos courtesy of Laura McMillan, STS).



Volunteers and Save the Sound staff planting vegetation in Glenwood Park, Bridgeport. The Apron Fishway is barely visible at the end of the sloping concrete wall. It was high tide and most of the fishway was underwater. The plantings are intended to improve riparian habitat, beautify the site, and discourage geese—not to discourage anglers or visitors as a local newspaper erroneously reported.