

# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 20, 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/r5csrc](http://www.fws.gov/r5csrc). For more information about Atlantic salmon, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association at [www.ctriversalmon.org](http://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* (WFMD) (Farmington)	1	482	0	25	0	0	2,753	0	1
Leesville(WFMD) (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem*(WFMD) (Mattabeset)	0	1	252	22	17	-	16	0	5
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	23	0	0	0	18	0	-
Mary Steube*(WFMD) (Mill Brook)	-	-	1,543 (final)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+(WFMD) (Mill Brook)	-	-	0 (final)	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0/0	2,934	0	4	0	0	831	0	0
Holyoke (WFMD) (Connecticut- MA)	4	246,042	0	569	150	5	3,727	0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)									
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	4,384	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon* (Connecticut- VT)	0	173	-	0	0	0	4	-	0
Bellows Falls* (Connecticut- VT)	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
Wilder* (Connecticut- VT)	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
<b>TOTALS=</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>249,459</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7,345</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(last year's totals)</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>397,486</b>	<b>9,597</b>	<b>3,228</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>24,939</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>

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.

\*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:

The **American shad** run continues to be strong. Holyoke lifted over 70,000 since last Thursday; West Springfield is still passing many and even Rainbow is getting in the act. Lael Will from VTFG reports the first shad through Vernon, although not that many yet. The water temperature at Holyoke is still just 14 C (58 F), which is cool. It is probably cooler upstream and that might be slowing down the ascent of shad to the upper fishways. I know we've had some hot weather but with the water temperature only 14C by Memorial Day, it means that the shad run could still have a couple of weeks left before they spawn. It sounds like a front is moving through tonight which may also snap this hot spell. That bodes well for upstream fishways and I hope to see those numbers at Vernon (as well as other sites) climb for next week. Dave Ellis of our program has begun trucking shad out of Holyoke and he'll be back at it tomorrow. I'll join him with some engineers who are working on the design for a fish lift at Rainbow.

The last rain pushed the **blueback herring** out of Leesville and I was wondering if that was it for them this year. But as of today, they're back in good numbers, spawning and feeding striped bass. A second strong wave for Leesville is good news! Ken Sprinkle of the USFWS has moved more bluebacks since our last report, pulling them from Wethersfield Cove to the Oxbow, Manhan River and elsewhere.

The **Atlantic salmon** count is now up to four. Bruce Williams of our program trapped, tagged and released the first of the season at the Rainbow Fishway yesterday. It was a bright female about 33 inches long and in great shape. It is now on its way upstream. We know of one salmon that got past us at Rainbow by accident about 10 years ago but this is the first to swim those waters in a long time and the first to be deliberately released. I've talked about how all salmon must be released immediately in past reports. If you can easily read the tag, fine, but release the fish without harm. And report it to us. I thought I had the first salmon in the trap today at Leesville on the Salmon River but it turned out to be a large brown trout.

The big **Atlantic sturgeon** found dead in Lyme and previously reported here made big news. Don Gerber (Lyme Land Conservation Trust, and whose grandchildren reported it on Facebook) said a relative of his saw it on the news in New Zealand! On the heels of that, Tom Savoy of DEEP's Marine Fisheries Division reports catching a very small juvenile Atlantic sturgeon in the Connecticut River estuary on May 20. (See photo below) Tom believes this fish is too small to have migrated in from some other river so it was likely hatched in our river. That means rumors of the extinction of this species in the Connecticut River have been greatly exaggerated (to mutilate a Mark Twain saying). Sturgeons are tough to assess: there aren't many, they're hard to find (it's not like they swarm into shallow tributaries to spawn like bluebacks) and they spawn every five to seven years so you could look one year and find none and the next year when you're not there, they are. For an interesting article on the Atlantic sturgeon by Tom, see the March/April issue of *Connecticut Wildlife*. In that same issue is a good article about American eels, eel passes, and what we're doing to help them, written by Tim Wildman of this program and Brian Eltz, an alumnus of this program and the Greenwich Conservation Commission (Mianus Pond Fishway) and now a fisheries technician in our Division in the Western District. If you don't know about the *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine, go on our website to learn how you can get a (cheap) subscription. [For a wrap up on World Fish Migration Day, see the next section of this report.](#)



*This juvenile Atlantic sturgeon was netted in the Connecticut River estuary on May 20 and is too small to have likely migrated from other rivers. This suggests that we still have a remnant population of the species in the river, which is great news. (Photo Tom Savoy, CTDEEP)*



*Yeah there used to be a dam there! World Fish Migration Day brought out many people to see 15 sites across the state. Most were fishways but here Eileen Fielding of the Farmington River Watershed Association shows visitors where the Spoonville Dam used to be before the FRWA removed it. This was a good opportunity to talk about the value of dam removal. Wait— isn't that Dave Kozak from the DEEP????*

## OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
<b>Greeneville*</b> (WFMD) (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2,102	786	169	99	6	0	0	5
<b>Taftville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Occum*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Tunnel*</b> (Quinebaug R., Preston)	7	18	0	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Kinneytown*</b> (Naugatuck R., Seymour) (out of order)	0	1	0	0	0	11	0	0
<b>Hallville Pond*</b> (WFMD) (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	47	0	0	-	0	0	0
<b>Latimers Brook**</b> (WFMD)- (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	17,003	Season Final Count					
<b>Gorton Pond</b> (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	-	0	0					
<b>Brides Brook**</b> (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		265,969	Season Final Count					
<b>Clarks Pond</b> (Indian River, Milford)		90	0	-		-	-	
<b>Branford Supply Pond Dam**</b> (WFMD) (Queach Br., Branford)	1,395		Season Final Count -		-	-	-	
<b>Landon Dam**</b> (West River, Guilford)		886	Season Final Count			-	0	0
<b>Haakonsen Fishway*</b> (WFMD) (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	3	3,048	787	134	0	132	3	
<b>Bunnells Pond*</b> (WFMD) (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		7,893	0	0	0			
<b>Wood Dam**</b> (Saugatuck R., Westport)		3,368	0	0				
<b>Mianus River Pond* **</b> (WFMD) (Mianus R., Greenwich)		45,040	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= 5/18 Taftville= 5/19 Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 5/09 Kinneytown= 5/14 Haakonsen= 5/25 Hallville= 5/26

\*\*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 keep saying the alewife runs along the shoreline are done but we keep seeing a few more fish, all west of the Connecticut River but many of those runs (like Landon in Guilford and Branford) are also done. But Bunnell's Pond Fishway was still passing some yesterday. We've reported on the alewife cam there—we've shared the link previously. But if you don't want to stay up until 2 am to see live feed of the fish going through, you can see a video clip that Tim prepared—sort of a Bunnell's Pond greatest hits—and see what is going on. Save the Sound is going to post both this clip and the live feed so that viewers can see both. The clip is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoBAgZv66CE>.

Pat Vogt, a seasonal employee with us was stationed at the East Haven Diversion Dam Fishway on the Farm River in East Haven for World Fish Migration Day and saw alewives spawning upstream of the fishway. The strongest wave yet for the Mill River was seen below Sasco Brook on May 23 and the Housatonic River got its third big wave of the year on May 23, with tens of thousands of river herring. I keep thinking they must be blueback herring like what we're seeing on the Connecticut River but my guys are sampling them and say they're still alewives.

Andy Goode of the Atlantic Salmon Federation sent me a great video link for underwater footage of alewives passing through an electronic fish counter on Blackman Stream, about a mile downstream of the Leonard's Mill Fishway (trib of the Penobscot). We have similar footage but their water is gin clear and they have the camera on the upstream end of the counter so you can see the fish counting right at you. Pretty cool. 35,000 alewives had passed as of May 19. <https://vimeo.com/95823027>

The shad run on the Shetucket River is still going strong. We helped First Light with tagging and that is now done but Norwich Public Utilities will continue to truck some shad upstream. A few have passed the Tunnel Dam Fishlift but Bob Stira of FirstLight has seen neither shad nor river herring pass Taftville. We are responsible for the counts at Occum and we have not even started reviewing the video yet so it will be a while before we really know what is going on there. Speaking of Occum, many of you have probably seen the Ollie the Otter schtick on the news. We reported the otter in the Occum fishway but a local news station picked up on it. Check out the video of the otter going after trout at: [http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Otter-Dines-at-Fish-Ladder-260002661.html?\\_osource=SocialFlowFB\\_CTBrand](http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Otter-Dines-at-Fish-Ladder-260002661.html?_osource=SocialFlowFB_CTBrand)

**Glass eels**- Fishing Brook = 13,428; Mill River Eel Trap= 2,836; Greenville Eel Lift= 1,041, Lower Millpond (Old Lyme)= 61,101.

On May 21, the Old Saybrook Board of Finance voted to recommend the Town contribute \$3 million to **the purchase of The Preserve**, a 1,000 acre tract of open space in Old Saybrook, Essex, and Westbrook. This is great news for lots of reasons but we have three fishways that send fish up into that land to spawn, so its preservation will help diadromous fishes. The Essex Rotary Club will hold its annual Shad Bake (planked) at the Connecticut River Museum (foot of Main St., Essex) Sat. June 7th 3-630. There will be a shad boning demonstration and Tim Visel will have great old time shad netting displays. (This should have been in the Connecticut River section but I ran out of space!)

**World Fish Migration Day**—last Saturday. What a great day! I have not had a chance to tally up all the numbers of visitors yet but all 15 locations had people to come by and learn about diadromous fishes and our conservation efforts. The leader may have been Rainbow with 257 visitors. It is clear that attendance would have been greater had it not have been Memorial Day weekend. But all sites report the same thing—all of the visitors were incredibly enthusiastic, asked great questions, and supportive. High points of the day may have been the young sons of Commissioner Klee sharing the stage at the Lyme-Old Lyme High School, the lifting of shad and one broodstock salmon at Greenville, various fish passing the window at Rainbow, and the osprey at Harry Haakonsen Fishway (Wallace Dam on the Quinnipiac) that dove down and grabbed an alewife in front of the visitors! And the rain held off! We kept hearing the message to do it again. At this time, it sounds like the next one may be May 17, 2014 but we need to learn more. We will talk to our partners and learn and improve. But let me take a moment to thank all of the hosts, the organizations, and our co-sponsors, **The Nature Conservancy** (tip o' the hat to *Sally Harold*) and **Princeton Hydro** (a tip o' the hat to *Laura Wildman*). I'd like to thank all the individuals who staffed the sites but I'm sure I'd forget someone and space is dwindling. I'll at least thank my staff: Tim, Bruce, Dave, Kirk, Kevin, Pat, Rick, and Rob. I've added bonus photos this week to commemorate the day!



**World Fish Migration Day at Hallville Pond Dam Fishway.** Participants in the progressive fishway tour were able to get up close and personal with this fishway in Preston, owned and operated by the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District. Note that one fellow in the background is on his knees with his hand in the fishway, checking out the hydraulics. This photo shows the top of the last ramp of steeppass as it descends to the entrance. It is a good shot of the vanes and the turbulent water descending. (Photo by Sally Harold, TNC)



Jim MacBroom of Malone and MacBroom (in vest) addresses visitors to the tour of the **Tingue Dam Fish Bypass Channel in Seymour** where 38 people showed up for a sneak peak since it is still under construction (photo by fellow tour guide Tim Wildman, CTDEEP).



Part of the people in the progressive tour watching the **Greenville Fishlift coming up**. The cables on each wall lead down to the hopper, which is still underwater. The grate in the back is where the attraction water comes from. The fish will be dumped through the gate at the upper right (photo Sally Harold, TNC).



Great spirit for **World Fish Migration Day!** Seen at the site of the former Spoonville Dam, Farmington River, East Granby (photo Eileen Fielding, FRWA).



The clean-up crew at the **Bunnell's Pond Fishway in Bridgeport**. World Fish Migration Day was a great chance to promote stewardship of our streams. (photo by Kevin Job, CTDEEP).



Steve Gephard of the CTDEEP demonstrates the unique fish trap at the **Latimer Brook Fishway** on Latimer Brook in East Lyme. There is no electricity at the site so the lightweight trap was designed to be hand cranked. The trap is used to count alewives (after the electronic fish counter is removed) and trap and inspect returning sea-run brown trout. Hey- isn't that Stu Winquist from the Middlesex Land Trust??? Mike Goodwin of the Thames Chapter of Trout Unlimited also showed up for this stop. TU was instrumental in getting the trap installed (photo by Sally Harold, TNC).