

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: July 1, 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	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Rainbow* (Farmington)	3	536	0	27	0	0	4,276	0	1
Leesville (Salmon)	1	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	5	254	83	100	-	17	4	5
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	3	13	180	0	0	33	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	1,543 (final)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0 (final)	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	2	4,781	0	4	0	0	1,127	0	8
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	25	368,907	0	648	375	61	22,132	0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	1	0	0	0	0	0	42	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	11	39,890	-	0	0	0	5,153	-	-
Vernon* (Connecticut- VT)	7	25,914	-	0	0	0	422	-	3
Bellows Falls* (Connecticut- VT)	1	0	-	0	0	0	294	-	0
Wilder* (Connecticut- VT)	1	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
TOTALS=	31	374,232	1,549	942	475	61	27,585	4	17
(last year's totals)	92	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.

*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.

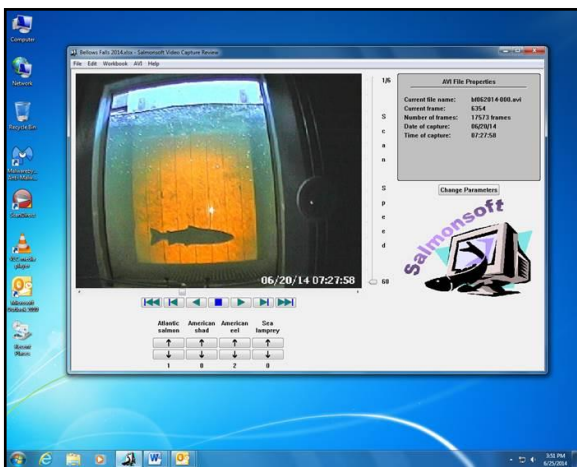
COMMENTS:

The river picked up some flow after a heavy storm forecasted for Connecticut shifted north and strafed the upper watershed. But flows are still barely over 11,000 cfs and still under 25 C (77 F, when we see salmon migration suspended). You'll see from the numbers that Holyoke, West Springfield, and Rainbow all added a few fish here and there (mostly less than 10 except for **American shad** at Holyoke, where they have lifted 1,376 during the last week. We've reached the time of year when some of the shad have already spawned but still move upstream for some reason. The fishways are pretty much operating now for that last gasp of the salmon run and resident species. Also- **shortnose sturgeon**. The count is up to three for the season for Holyoke. I don't what the plans are for Holyoke but we plan to shut down Rainbow Dam Fishway on July 10. It will be one of the last fishways in Connecticut to close.

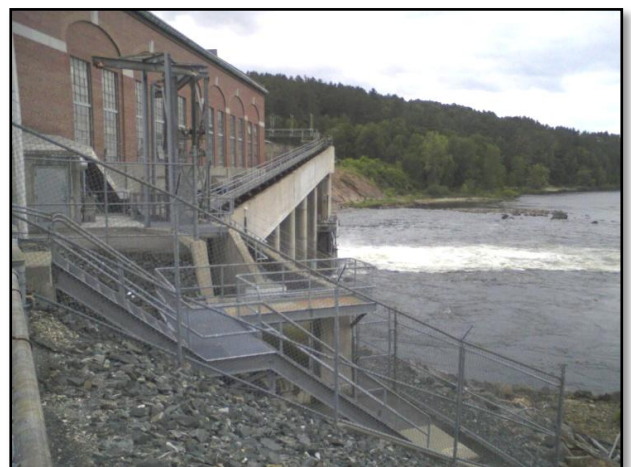
Holyoke picked up another **Atlantic salmon** yesterday—tagged and released like the others. But you may notice the count for salmon remains the same as last week. Last week we added one salmon to the Holyoke count to account for that untagged salmon was found below the falls on the Sawmill River in Montague, MA. I went into great detail speculating how that untagged salmon might have gotten past the crew at Holyoke. But today Ken Sprankle reported that he just learned the Holyoke crew released one salmon on June 8 that they decided not to tag. The fish was already stressed and tag gun was not working so letting it go ASAP was deemed the prudent move. But that accounts for the untagged salmon on the Sawmill so we are adjusting our count to one less salmon at Holyoke and the total count. So it went back down to 31 but yesterday's fish brought it back up to 32. They could not confirm the presence of any wounds so maybe the fish picked up those wounds trying to get over falls/barriers in lower Sawmill River. There has also been some confusion about that salmon that was first trapped and tagged/released at Holyoke and then later showed up at the West Springfield fishway on the Westfield River. We added it to the West Springfield fishway count and I thought we had subtracted it from the Holyoke count but now I am being told minutes ago that we did not subtract it. So now I am subtracting one salmon from the Holyoke count. These data should be considered preliminary until we have a chance in the coming weeks to review them and check for errors. You'll see from the data in the table above that the one salmon that passed through the Bellows Falls fishway (see photo below) also passed up the Wilder Dam Fishway. That fish could have been stocked in the Ammonoosuc River or farther upstream in Vermont. I'm sure Lenny Geraldini (VTFW) will assure us that it is one of his fish stocked in the Pasumpsic or the Moose.

With the season about over, you can now compare this year's totals (bottom row) with last year's totals (below that in **brown**). A quick look reveals that just about every species was down from last year—except for a few more sea lamprey. In the case of shad, the run was only a bit off last year and still respectable. It was a weird weather year so it is hard to conclude whether or not the lower numbers represent fewer fish in the river or less conducive fish passage conditions. In the case of alewife and striped bass, the counts seem to reflect reports elsewhere. In the case of blueback herring, all other reports indicated that there were MORE fish in the river than last year but we passed fewer at Holyoke for some reason.

I will close out this year's reports with a quick tale- Ken Sprankle and Darren Demaris of the USFWS were out today surveying lamprey nests on the Manhan River above the new fishway (see last week's report). Ken heard a rustling of brush and assumed Darren had flushed a deer. But it was a black bear and Darren pushed it right to Ken who scrambled out of the way. Salmon workers along streams in Alaska always have to worry about grizzlies now we learn that lamprey workers in New England have to worry about black bears! (Eating the dying lampreys?) I don't think we'll worry about that in our upcoming lamprey survey on the Salmon River. See you next year!



*This is a screen shot of SalmonSoft from the Bellows Falls Fishway on the Connecticut River in Vermont. It is an unusual image because everything to the right of the adipose fin looks like an adult Atlantic salmon. However, everything to the left is abnormally short and looks a bit stubby for a salmon. However, it was probably the exact position of the 'tail' of the fish when this photo was taken (moving away from the camera).
[Courtesy of Lael Will, VTFW]*



Most fish migrations have ended, even at the Holyoke Fishlift. However, salmon released at Holyoke continue to move upstream into cooler waters and tributaries from which they migrated two or three years earlier as smolts. Salmon are still being occasionally seen as they move up through upriver fishways, like the Wilder Dam Fishway, pictured above.

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)	2,248	787	169	120	7	0	0	8
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	55	29	0	2	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour) (out of order)	0	1	0	0	0	14	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	47	Season Final Count		0	-	0	
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	17,003	Season Final Count					
Gorton Pond- (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	-	no counter this year						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		265,969	Season Final Count					
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)		90	Season Final Count		-	-	-	
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		1,395	Season Final Count		-	-	-	
Landon Dam** (West River, Guilford)		886	Season Final Count			-	0	0
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	4	3,078	862	136	0	140	3	FINAL
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		9,031	0	0	0	FINAL		
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		3,456	Season Final Count		0			
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		49,081	29,424	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= over Taftville= ?? Occum= ? Tunnel= ? Kinneytown= over Haakonsen= over Hallville= over

**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:

We finished closing down all of the coastal fishways yesterday, ending with Bunnells Pond and Kinneytown. Most fishways are closed now or will be within a day or two. Some very small fishways (like Vargas Pond) or fishways that are incorporated into the natural stream channel (like Lower Guilford Lake, Clark Pond or the western fishway at Dorr's Mill Dam) are left open all summer. However, we close most fishways during dry summer months (when fish don't need them) to ensure the fishway does not cause the headpond to draw down and water to stop spilling over the dam. It has been a very dry June and according to our State's inter-agency drought working group, we may be on the verge of a mild drought soon.

We are still tuning up our eel passes and getting them into good shape for the summer yellow eel migrations. As of June 26, FirstLight Power had passed an estimated 11,500 eel upstream at Tunnel Dam. Over 9,500 of them passed on from June 6 to 10. Tim and I will be touring eel passage facilities on the upper Quinebaug River next week and also swing by and visit the new eel pass below the Scotland Dam, which has already passed around 50 eels after only a few days of operation.

Speaking of the Scotland Dam: this Shetucket River hydroelectric project was recently re-licensed by FERC. One of the conditions of the license to FirstLight Power was that the company did not have to install a fishway until studies showed that American shad that moved up through the (downstream) Occum Dam fishway would migrate all the way up to the Scotland Dam. As part of the first year study by FirstLight and contractor Kleinschmidt Associates, a number of shad were radio-tagged and released above Occum. The data from the stationary radio receivers at the dam show that the number of shad reaching the dam in the first year exceeded the previously agreed to trigger number so the design/construction of upstream and downstream fish passage at Scotland has commenced. FirstLight is well upon its way toward the design of a fishlift at this dam and will be pursuing construction permits by early next year.

Eel Counts: Fishing Brook= 14,724; Mill River= 5,024, Greenville= 1,246; Lower Millpond= 61,101; Tunnel= 11,500 [Note that some of these numbers had errors from previous weeks. Staff went through all past data sheets today to 'clean them up' and we believe these data are accurate.]

A quick summary of 2014: The good shad run in the Connecticut River seemed not to carry over so much in other Connecticut streams. Greenville had a moderately good year but the fish didn't push through the next two fishways in significant numbers. The Kinneytown camera was down much of the season so we lack good data for the Naugatuck River and the other 'shad fishways' are still building their runs so with counts of less than 10, there is not much we can say those streams. The alewife numbers were down from 2013 and this is consistent with the reports we got from Rhode Island and Massachusetts. This was in contrast with the last two year trend in eastern Connecticut where the runs had been increasing. The blueback herring run in the Connecticut River was strong (see above) but that trend did not carry over to the coastal streams. It was business usual for bluebacks from recent years—which is not a good thing. We haven't seen many sea-run trout and we don't collect data for sea lampreys in many streams but what counts we have appear to represent an average year. The new fishway at the Pequonnock River Apron in Bridgeport seemed to work well and the 'alewife cam' set up by Save the Sound at the Bunnells Pond Fishway seemed to work well after we got the kinks out of it. It was a year for unexpected visitors—cormorants and otters in many fishways, including the now famous Ollie the Otter at Occum. Also see the photo to the left below. And we got a lot of human visitors on May 24 on World Fish Migration Day, which was a lot of fun and we look forward to bigger and better WFMD in 2016. Thanks for your interest and thanks to the many fishway partners and volunteers who help us pass fish upstream and contribute to these reports. See you next spring.



This is the fish counting weir at the Mianus Pond Fishway in Greenwich. It is pulled out of the fishway to clean off debris. You can see weeds and leaves in the upper part of the weir and below is a dead cormorant jammed up against the counting tubes. We speculate that the bird was chasing alewives coming out of the tubes and got impinged against them.



The trigger to proceed with fish passage at the Scotland Dam was reached by a shad radio-tracking study. Here Bob Stira of FirstLight Power and Dave Ellis of our program insert a radio tag down the throat of an American shad on the Shetucket River.