



CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 14, 2015

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	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Rainbow* (Farmington)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon* (Connecticut- VT)	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
Bellows Falls* (Connecticut- VT)	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
Wilder* (Connecticut- VT)	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
TOTALS=	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(last year's totals)	31	374,232	1,549	942	475	61	27,585	4	17

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 alewives have entered the Connecticut River—about two weeks late. A few fish were seen below the Mary Steube Fishway on the Mill River in Old Lyme—our most downstream fishway, on the 7th along with white suckers and yellow perch. Last night, the Tripps, who operate the Tributary Conservancy across the brook from the fishway, reported that alewives were migrating. Today, our staff reports about 300 in the brook and in the fishway (including the resting pool). The fish counter is not yet operational for the season. We need to sample and transport some of these fish directly to Rogers Lake for a study and we will install the fish counter when we have finished that. The Lyme Land Conservation Trust and DEEP crew has the Moulson Pond Fishway up and running with the camera. Ever-alert volunteer/angler Valinn reported seeing fish down at Joshuatown Road, so we should be seeing fish at Moulson soon. By the way, the great successes at the fishways in Lyme over the years was due in great part to the leadership of Linda Bireley, a familiar face to many in the fisheries world in southern New England. Linda has stepped down as the fishway coordinator for the land trust and turned the reins over to Emily Bjornberg. We thank Linda for all of her years of tireless work and we look forward to working with Emily.

Ken Sprankle of the USFWS began his river herring sampling on the lower river last week. He sampled the Salmon River and Cove but found no alewives. No surprise given the news above but his sampling next week may prove differently. The Holyoke Fishlift started lifting yesterday but I suspect it will be a while until they see anything there. Alewives do not ascend the river as far north as Holyoke and the water is likely colder up there. We will be opening the Tiley-Pratt, StanChem, Rainbow, and Leesville fishways this week. The Manhan River Fishway was inspected earlier and will likely be opened soon.

We've heard nothing about shad yet. They enter the river at 50 F (10 C) and most of our small streams are now running at 8 – 10 C. The Connecticut River often runs colder this time of year than the smaller streams due to its northern watershed and today it is 6 C (43 F) at Middle Haddam. The river is also running at about 52,000 cfs—higher than average but not exceptionally so. But the Holyoke Fishlift usually cannot operate at flows higher than 40,000 cfs, so despite the fact that it was opened for business yesterday, it may not be operating today. By the way—the visitors' center at the Holyoke Fishlift will not be open to the public this spring. The long-awaited construction of new and improved downstream fish passage at the will have the place torn up and not suitable for public visitation. The Holyoke Shad Derby will be held May 9, 10, 16, and 17.

Opening Day of Fishing season was last Saturday, April 11—a week earlier than previous years. The DEEP's Inland Fisheries Division stocked 341,000 trout in anticipation of the day. This was quite a feat considering it was a week earlier and spring is about a month late. Many stocking access roads were still snowed in and many lakes still had ice cover on Opening Day! Kudos to the crews who got the fish out. Hopefully some of those northern lakes and ponds will be open by this Saturday!

I customarily reserve the space below for photos of Connecticut River activities. But there has not been much to show yet this year. However, we have been very busy opening coastal Connecticut fishways, highlighted on the next two pages. So today I will spill some of those photos over to this space.



Steve Gephard removes a headboard from the Dorr's Mill Dam Fishway, Saugatuck River, and hands it to seasonal worker Hillary Clifton, allowing water to pass down the fishway. There are two fishways at this dam, this one at the spillway and another that circumvents the dam to the west. Both were TNC projects completed a few years ago with DEEP assistance. This fishway is immediately upstream of the Doc Skerlick Trout Management Area.



Our project supports research on river herring that can guide better management and conservation of the species. We are working with a group that is studying the movement of river herring at sea using genetics to identify the stream of origin of fish caught at sea. We will be providing genetic samples of both alewives and blueback herring from a handful of selected streams in Connecticut. Here, Dave Ellis measures the length of an alewife trapped at the Latimer Brook Fishway (today). A small snip of tissue from one of its fins will be collected, preserved and sent to the research team. The fish that were sampled were released alive upstream of the fishway.

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)	0	30	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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour) (out of order)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	0	0	0	-	0	1	
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	86	0	-	-	-	0	-
Gorton Pond- (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	-							
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		9,881						
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)	-	0		-		-	-	
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		265	-	-	-	-		
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		1	-			-	0	
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	0	0	0	0			
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		0	0		0			
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		115	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= n.a. Haakonsen= n.a. Hallville= n.a.

**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 warm weather has accelerated the alewife runs but we still have not seen a huge wave anyway. We're starting to see fish show up in a few more places: Branford, Guilford, Greenwich. Jeff Lortie of Norwich Public Utilities reported lifted about 30 alewives in their first lift at Greenville a couple of days ago. NPU has a camera set up to monitor the lifts, which are done by computer remotely—no one is on site. They can see approximately how many fish come up in the hopper and get dumped into the exit flume but it is not an exact count. We compile the official counts off the computer in the countinghouse. As the fish swim out of the exit flume and into the upper river, they swim past a window and the video camera is on the other side in the countinghouse. The images are saved to the computer and our crew shows up every few days and downloads the images onto a thumb drive. We review the images on a computer back at our Old Lyme office and compile the counts—species and numbers. But the counts are always lagged a few days from when the fish actually passed. That is why we have the dates listed by the single asterisks above in the fish count table. We have not started viewing tapes yet so that is why there are no dates yet. That will begin soon. Bob Stira of First Light Power reports that the Taftville Fishway is now opened but we're waiting to confirm the opening of the Tunnel Fishlift.

Yesterday, we assisted a crew from The Nature Conservancy with the opening of fishways on the Saugatuck and Aspetuck rivers in Westport and Weston. See the photos below showing the installation of the fish counter weir at the Wood Dam. Tim also opened the Harry O. Haakonsen Fishway on the Quinnipiac River in Wallingford. He was pleased to find the counting house dry. We may have finally solved our flooding problems there. The upstream Hanover Pond Dam Fishway was opened last week. Today, we opened the brand new Tingue Dam Fishway on the Naugatuck River in Seymour. This is a big fishway and the setting of the gates is complicated. We did not get it right today and will continue to work on it. More on this later. We saw our first sea-run brown trout of the season, zipping past the viewing window at the Hallville Fishway in Preston.

Denise Savageau reports that the Town of Greenwich held their first open house of the season for the Mianus Pond Fishway. They had about 50 attendees and one eagle! Their next open house will be Saturday, May 9, 1 – 3 pm. For more information, contact the Town of Greenwich's Conservation Commission. Alert long-term reader Jerry Silbert noticed that I forgot to change the river name for Lower Guilford Lake in the table above. That fishway is on the EAST River in Guilford but last week I still had the WEST River down—because that row in the table was used for the Landon Dam Fishway last year and I forgot to change it. It is correct now. So far, no glass eels at our Fishing Brook Monitoring Site in Old Saybrook. They should be showing up soon.

We're all busy, right? But our team is extraordinarily busy this spring with many different tasks. We are still scrambling to open the last of our fishways, we need to spend more time fine-tuning the Tingue Fishway, we have to collect genetic samples of river herring for an East Coast research project, we need to trap and transport, and genetically sample 500 alewives from Mary Steube Fishway to Rogers Lake (again, for research), we need to solve a camera problem at Moulson Pond, we need to stock salmon fry in the next two weeks, we have to help tag shad on the Shetucket River—and we need to do all of our routine duties, such as monitor streams, keep fishways clear of trash, fight the beavers, monitor the glass eel run, train volunteers, attend important meetings about future fishways, and transplant alewife and shad—if we can get our transport truck back from the shop! So if we're a bit late in responding to your inquiries, please understand.



A joint DEEP-TNC work team preparing a new fish counting weir before lowering into place at the Wood Dam Fishway on the Saugatuck River. Sally Harold of TNC applies epoxy foam between PVC pipes. When cured, the foam will prevent fish from wedging themselves between the pipes and force them to pass through the pipe where they will be counted.



The fish counter weir in place at the exit of the steppass fishway. The cables send the electrical signals from the PVC pipes in the weir to the electronic counter in a nearby lockbox. The white pipe to the right is part of an auxiliary attraction water system (siphon). A Delaware style eel pass is just off photo to the right, also installed on this day.