

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 25, 2017



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)	0	80	0	0	0	0	41	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	20	0	0	1	1	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	2,299	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	89	0	0	0	0	0	SNS**=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	184	2,319	0	0	1	45	0	0
(last year's totals)	6	391,096	792	3,558	684	619	36,914	6	19,799

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. ++Shortnose Sturgeon
 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 Connecticut River has dropped to around 32,000 cfs and the Holyoke Fishlift began operation yesterday. The water is still cold but obviously the shad are making it up there. The posted number of shad does not include what they lifted today. Rainbow and West Springfield have continued to pass small numbers of shad. Anglers are catching fish at the Farmington and netters are getting them from Old Saybrook to Rocky Hill. It's just the beginning, of course, but the run is now on in earnest. With rain the rest of this week and warm weather coming next week, we are anticipating logging pretty good numbers next week.

The river herring picture is a bit cloudy. We expected big things this week and not much happened. You'll see in the next section, Bride Brook had a very big week for alewives but no big runs were reported in the tributaries of the Connecticut. Very few at Mary Steube, just about zero at Moulson Pond on the Eightmile (although we didn't get an update), and very few river herring seen right up the river—Moodus, Salmon, Pine, Coginchaug, Farmington, Roaring. Snorkeling showed little activity at Leesville. A moderate number of White Suckers but that's about it. I think the water temperature is the key. It has been hovering between 12 and 14 C (54-57 F), which is pretty cold for this time of year. We need that warm up that is promised for this coming week to really get things in gear.

The Nature Conservancy hosted a work day for volunteers to help plant native riparian vegetation around the former headpond of the Norton Millpond Dam (Jeremy River, Colchester) this past Monday. Shadblow, red osier dogwood, alder, red maple, hemlock, and mountain laurel were among what was planted. We also "planted" some salmon fry (see photo below, left). The habitat continues to evolve and just get better and better five months after the dam came out. This area is excellent salmon habitat. WSFB-TV and the Norwich Bulletin covered the event. The water remains cold in the Jeremy River but White Suckers, Brown Trout, Yellow Perch, Common Shiners, and Tessellated Darters were observed. Based on reports elsewhere, Sea Lamprey could be showing up from Leesville soon. This new streambed will be excellent spawning habitat for Sea Lamprey.

One of the things that has dominated the work load for biologists working on the Connecticut River has been the re-licensing of hydroelectric projects at the Turners Falls Dam and Northfield Pumped Storage Facility (First Light Power) and the Vernon, Bellows Falls, and Wilder dams (TransCanada). At this time, the state and federal resources agencies work with the licensees and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to decide what studies are needed to determine the impacts of the projects on the river and what actions are needed (as conditions to the new license) to eliminate or mitigate those impacts. For example, improvements to fish passage at the Turners Falls Dam are anticipated to be addressed as a condition(s) to the new license. Biologists and engineers from the States, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NOAA, the licensees and their consultants and even folks from some conservation groups are very much engaged in this effort right now.

In the summer of 2016, **the Town of Darien built the Upper Pond Fishway on the Goodwives River** in Darien (see photo below, right). This is the second dam on the stream. The first one (Rings End Dam) also has a fishway built by the Town. This project was part of a project to rebuild the dam and dredge the pond. The pond is maintained as a sediment trap to minimize sediment entering Gorhams Pond. The fishway is a steep pass and targets alewives. This extends the run another half mile upstream to the next dam. An eel pass was also installed on the spillway of the dam. This project was part of a long-term effort by the Town to rehabilitate streams and ponds that flow into the Goodwives River. We appreciate the work the Town has been doing and including fish passage in their plans and the continued coordination by Darren Oustafine, Assistant Director of Public Works.



Sally Harold of TNC releases salmon fry into the Jeremy River in newly restored habitat that used to be under the pond behind the former Norton Mill Dam. Sally managed the dam removal project.



The Upper Pond Dam Fishway at high tide. To the right is the spillway where there is an eel pass.

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)	204	260	0	1	0	0	0	3
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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	233	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	2,510	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., East Lyme)		1,263	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		316,195						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		1,943	0	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		947	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	434	0	0	0	24	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		0	0	0	-	1	-	3
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	4,000	0	0	0	0	0	-
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		12	0	-	-	-	-	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		14,473	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= 4/24 Taftville= n.a. Occum= 4/23 Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= n.a. Haakonsen= 4/18 Hallville= n.a. Hanover= 4/18 Bunnells= 4/23

******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.

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:

Everything picked up a bit from last week but like the Connecticut River, the water remains cold. We had a very good week at Bride Brook, where the run numbers more than doubled and surpassed the 300,000 mark. This ends a three-year decline at Brides. Last year's total was 148,000. Bunnells Pond Fishway in Bridgeport is also having a very good year, perhaps a record year (see photo below, left). Ray Baldwin and his team at Clarks Pond cannot get exact numbers of fish going up that fishway but they make the same observations year after year and this year appears to be their best in some time. Last year, their index was 7. This year so far they're up to 68. [To see some underwater footage of the run at Clarks Pond, go to YouTube at [Herring Run has Begun April 22, 2017.](#)] But other traditional strong runs are low—Mianus Pond and Latimer Brook have yet to log large numbers. It is too early to tell how the runs will stack up in many streams.

The shad run on the Shetucket River is off and running with shad now being lifted at Greenville. No reports from Taftville yet. Nate Rocha at NPU reports lots of suckers and trout moving through Occum Fishway but no diadromous fish, yet. Over on the Quinebaug, Tunnel Fishlift is still not operating. We're waiting for more details from First Light. The flashboards are still out at Kinneytown on the Naugatuck River so that fishway is likely passing very few fish. Fish are starting to come up the Quinnipiac River. Volunteer Dennis Bennett is finding them spawning in lower tidewater tributaries. The herring run is just kicking in at Haakonsen Fishway in Wallingford. NEH's Pat Wendt reports a lot of suckers and some trout moving through the upstream Hanover Pond Dam Fishway and he's seen one of the 24 lamprey that passed through Haakonsen Fishway. Sally and TNC got the counter back in at Wood Dam on the Saugatuck River in Westport and while the numbers are not huge, the fish are moving through. It is clear that many more alewives used that fishway while the fish counter was out for repairs. I will be very interested in seeing what all of these numbers are like by the end of next week. Based upon past experiences, the alewife run could have peaked in New London County, but the numbers are not great in many places and the water temperature has been unseasonably low. However, the cool temperatures have not stopped the fish from coming in at Brides Brook. It is hard to interpret. If there are still alewives out there, they could come piling in next week if we have a big warm-up. The streams in the western Sound have plenty of the season left and next week could be big for them. Shad in the Shetucket, Quinnipiac and Naugatuck still have plenty of time.

Last week we were celebrating the announcement of the first alewife to use the Bronx River Fishway. By Thursday, 12 had been counted. We visited the site on Thursday to contribute 400 Bride Brook alewives to their cause. It was good to see Marit Larson and the crew over there but sad to bid Danielle Bissett adieu as she takes on another conservation position in the City. John Waldman, George Jackman, and Joe Rachlin and other fishheads were on hand to join in. The fishway and eel ladder look great. I hope they'll continue to report their counts to us.

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 2,738 glass eels/74 yellow eels; Mill River Eel Trap= not operational yet; Greenville Eel Lift= not operational yet; Lower Millpond (Old Lyme)= not operational yet. The team at Branford Waters Supply Ponds has observed glass eels at their dam and they have installed the seasonal eel pass next to the fishway.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is live on iCRV (www.iCRVradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesday and re-played at 3:00 and 7:00 pm that day 8 am on Saturday. iCRV now archives shows so if you miss one, you can go online and click on "Outdoors" and the "Fishing" and find past shows to listen to.



A herd of alewives passing up the Bunnells Pond Fishway. This run has already exceeded last year's tally.



This gizzard shad was taken from the Harry Haakonsen Fishway on the Quinnipiac River. The species isn't known for its looks but they are anadromous.