

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 10, 2016



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 visit the USFWS website at www.fws.gov/r5src. 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	17	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	0	0	-	-	0***	1	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	31	298	0	59	-	10	1	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	60	25	0	0	18	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	214	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	160	0	0	0	0	24	0	1
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	32,937	0	0	185	0	239 SNS= 14		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	33,145	572	25	244	0	298	2	1
(last year's totals)	22	416,355	237	11,822	93	21	24,573	9	20,305

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:

For the third straight week the Connecticut River has been 11 C (52 F), and flowing at around 17,000 cfs. This is most unusual for the river in May. The cold weather is keeping the runs from fully developing. According to Ken Sprankle's electrofishing data, alewives are still in the lower river but it appears that upstream of Middletown, the few alewives present are done spawning and the river herring are mostly ripe blueback herring. The counts at the fishways are very low for this time of year yet the netters seem to be doing okay with shad. That seems to reinforce the description I gave last week that the mainstem Connecticut River in Connecticut may be full of fish but they are not pushing up to Holyoke or the tributaries due to the cold weather. The same is true for sea lampreys; their numbers are still very low. With some 70 degree days looming, maybe we'll have better numbers to report next week. Other than Jim seeing a small school in the Coginchaug, our volunteers have seen very few fish this past week.

I've modified the table above for Holyoke and converted the sea-run trout (which they don't count) to shortnose sturgeon (SNS). In the past, the few sturgeon we've seen there have typically come in the late summer or fall but already this year Holyoke has lifted 14 sturgeon. Why? Brett Towler suggests that it is a result of the new DOWNSTREAM fish passage facility. Huh? One of the first reports of the 2016 season I included some photos of the new gates on the Holyoke spillway designed to let downstream-migrating sturgeon and eels pass more effectively. That results in a lot more water pounding down right near one of the entrances to the Holyoke Fishlift. To avoid disrupting the attraction and use of the entrance, a flip lip was added to the downstream edge of the dam's apron. So now, the plunging water shoots up like a ski lift and leaves a relatively calm, dark water area underneath where fish approach the entrance. Brett speculates that this may be the reason for the sturgeon uptick and that they may have been trying to enter for decades but the turbulence repelled them. If this is true, it should also help us with shad passage. Shad are strong swimmers but don't like turbulence.

The current issue of *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine has several articles of interest for Connecticut River diadromous fish. Articles by me on the Connecticut River Salmon Legacy Program and the origins of the DEEP dating back to the post-Civil War effort to restore salmon, an article by Tom Savoy and Penny Howell of our Marine Fisheries Division on Atlantic sturgeon and a cool old photo of the Leesville dam and shad anglers. If you don't subscribe to the magazine, go to http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=325718&deepNav_GID=1655#CTW and look up the March-April issue. The Haddam Historical Society is hosting a **program on shad fishing on May 19**. I'll make a presentation on shad biology and some of the work that has been done in the past and there will be some active and retired shad netters to relate stories of fishing on the river. 7:00 pm at the old Haddam Town Hall- see <http://www.haddamhistory.org/>. The Connecticut River Museum in Essex will be holding its **annual shad bake** with shad boning exhibitions on June 4th. <http://www.ctrivermuseum.org/calendarevent/shad-bake/>

WORLD FISH MIGRATION DAY- MAY 21. This is an international celebration of migratory fish. I've attached a list of events taking place in CT on Saturday, May 21. You can also go to <http://www.worldfishmigrationday.com/home> and click on "events" up top and see a map of the world with 'pins' for all 360+ events including ours. The foundation launched its new WFMD #fishhead video! <https://youtu.be/T6rD8shDQxs>. I can't access it on my State computer but you might want to check it out.

In addition to CT, there will be an event at the Holyoke Fishlift in MA with the CRWC, Holyoke Gas & Electric, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Connecticut River Coordinator Ken Sprankle will be on site from 10am-3pm. At the top of each hour, he will discuss status & trends of migratory fish, & other pertinent topics, as well as fish migration. Please RSVP for the tour. For more information, to RSVP or get directions email eryba@ctriver.org or call 413-772-2020.



An Atlantic salmon smolt captured by the USFWS electrofishing the mouth of the Farmington River for river herring. There is still a smolt run down the Farmington River thanks to the continued fry stocking in upstream habitat as part of the Legacy Program.



Our crew loading up some alewives from Bride Lake trap to give to Rhode Island DEM as part of their efforts to restore runs of alewives in formerly blocked streams.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Greenville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	785	1,176	0	7	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	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	2	0	0	0	6	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	14	0	lots of trout		-	0	0
Trading Cove Brook** - (Trading Cove Brook, Montville)	-	0	0	open/not counting		-	-	0
Jordan Brook** - (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	77	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** - (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	3,913	0	-	-	-	0	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		135,197						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		753	-	-	-	-		
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		3,193	-			- 0	0	
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	716	0	22	0	37	1	
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Meriden)		1						
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	1,634	0	0	0			
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		1,439	0	(Tennis balls can lie)				
Mianus Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		12,393	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:*

Greenville= 4/28 Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 4/23 Kinneytown= 5/8. Haakonsen= 5/8 Hallville= 5/8

******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 really thought the alewife run was over and was prepared to dismantle the Bride Brook trap. But we got another wave of fish in over the weekend a weekly tally of nearly 16,000 fish. Such a late strong wave is unprecedented in the years we've been operating that counting station. A number of the early spawners departed but new fresh fish came in. This occurred not only at Brides but also at Mianus Pond and Wood Dam fishways. Amanda at Mianus was unable to sample the Mianus fishway for species identification but hopes to next week. Sally and Cynthia of The Nature Conservancy have their Wood Dam Fishway fish counter back up and running with assistance from Dave Ellis of our program. On the Quinnipiac River, Haakonsen Fishway added a few alewives and continues to pass suckers, bass, and other species. At the next upstream dam at the Hanover Pond Fishway in Meriden, we know more alewives and sea lampreys have come up through but we did not receive those data in time for this report. We hope to have some numbers for next week. Not many more alewives at Greenville on the Shetucket River this week but the shad run is picking up and Norwich Public Utilities trucked a couple hundred shad upstream around dams (see photos below). To see press coverage in the New London Day, visit- <http://www.theday.com/local/20160509/shad-on-move#comments>. Matt from the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District reports shad and schoolie bass being caught in Norwich Harbor amidst all those bunker. The boards finally went up on the Kinneytown Dam on the Naugatuck River and that fishway is now back in full operation but we have few fish to show for it. We're getting reports there are no herring below or in the Housatonic below Derby. We're hearing reports that not many fish have shown up at the Potter Hill Fishway, the first on the Pawcatuck River. The White Rock Dam (short distance below) was removed last summer. Maine DMR reports that the Milford Fishlift (gateway to the Penobscot in Maine) is down for the count with some broken bolts. They have to bring in a crane to fix it—just as their run is ramping up! That makes us feel better about the Tunnel Dam lift on the Quinebaug River. First Light Power reports that it is limping along with a restricted lifting schedule due to a pulley problem but we hope it will be fixed soon without any cranes!

We have two streaming on-line video links of alewife cameras to share with you. First is the one on Bunnell's Pond Fishway in Bridgeport. It is: <http://www.ctenvironment.org/#!/fish-cam/c1ei1>. This fishway is still passing alewives but they mostly come at night. Try 8-11:30 pm. The Hallville Fishway also has streaming video. It hasn't passed many alewives this year but lots of trout and other species. Go to: <http://conservect.org/eastern/CurrentProjects/tabid/528/Default.aspx> and click on the drawing of the alewife.

EEL PASSAGE: Fishing Brook= 3,657 glass/129 yellow; Mill River= 11 glass/9 yellow; Greenville= 8 glass/175 yellow.

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 and 8 am on Saturday (new hours). In addition to updates on fish runs, this week we'll be talking about imprinting and homing.



Norwich Public Utilities nets shad out of the Greenville Fishlift hopper and puts them in a truck and transports them above upstream dams to accelerate the restoration process. The worker is standing on the grate, which crowds fish into the hopper as it is raised. The water and fish are discharged out the gate to the left normally but the hopper is held up while workers net out fish.



Three Shetucket River shad about to go into a truck for a ride upstream.