

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 16, 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 | 305 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 530 | 0 | 0 |
| Leesville (Salmon) | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | - | 0** | 0 | 0 |
| StanChem* (Mattabesset) | 0 | 1 | 80 | 0 | 65 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 13 |
| Moulson Pond* (Eightmile) | 0 | 0 | 6 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | - |
| Mary Steube* (Mill Brook) | - | - | 8,522 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook) | - | - | 0 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| West Springfield (Westfield- MA) | 0 | 473 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Holyoke (Connecticut- MA) | 1 | 44,517 | 0 | 27 | 41 | 1 | 30 SNS**=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= | 1 | 45,296 | 8,608 | 53 | 106 | 2 | 593 | 0 | 13 |
| (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 came down for several days and by Saturday was back down to ‘normal’, around 25,000 cfs. But after the recent rain, it has shot back up and is once again hovering around 40,000 cfs. I think the real story is the water temperature which remains remarkably low for this time of year. It never got above 11 C (52 F) at Holyoke this past week and currently is 13 C (55F) at Rainbow Dam Fishway. That is lower than last week and still comparable to a normal April. (Western Connecticut saw frost last week. I understand Maine got snow!) Today is supposed to be in the 70s and 90s by Thursday, so we’ll see... Look at the Holyoke shad numbers. Everyone is saying that the river is full of shad but we’ve only passed 44,000 at Holyoke. This time last year we had passed 209,000. The fish just don’t want to move upstream. I was told that the netters in the lower river are starting to see ‘racers’ (post-spawned fish going back to the ocean). Even though there hasn’t been warm temperatures, the fish have been in the river for a month and a half and the degree-days are starting to add up. Last week I mentioned that cool wet years tend to allow fish to swim farther upstream before they spawn. That may not be true this year if many of the fish are close to spawning. Once the warm weather comes, it may trigger them to spawn—and stop migrating. Many may not have the chance to reach the upper fishways. The situation could be similar with Blueback Herring. They are not coming up to the fishways. We’ve had reports that there are many herring in Hamburg Cove and the lower Eightmile River but the count upstream at the Moulson Pond Fishway is abysmal. Our monitors are not reporting any herring in the Coginchaug, Moodus, Roaring, or Pine. If we don’t see fish by this weekend, we can conclude the run is very poor.

Below, left, is a photo of a Blueback Herring with a young Sea Lamprey attached. We frequently remind folks that anadromous Sea Lamprey are not a threat to our fish and do not feed in freshwater, as they do in the Great Lakes where they are not native. This represents a slight exception. This fish was electrofished from the Farmington River by Ken Sprankle, USFWS. Typically, the transformant Sea Lampreys (young migrating to sea, analogous to a salmon smolt) go out in the fall. They rely on the fall rains to help transport them downstream. Whenever we have a dry fall, many do not go out and wait until the next spring to go out. Last fall, we were in a serious drought and we can assume many Sea Lamprey transformants did not go out. The staff at Rainbow Dam Fishway are seeing a lot of them going out now. When this happens, the outgoing (and hungry) lampreys pass the incoming shad and river herring in the lower river and estuary. Some of them latch on and end up coming back upstream with their host. Often they drop off. This minor incidence of attaching does not represent a threat to our fish populations. Vermont has just put out some good news releases about lamprey in Vermont:

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/vermont/articles/2017-05-16/vermont-officials-say-connecticut-river-sea-lamprey-normal>

<http://news10.com/ap/vermont-officials-say-connecticut-river-sea-lamprey-normal/>

<http://www.onthewater.com/vermont-public-reminded-not-disturb-spawning-sea-lamprey/>

<https://vtdigger.org/2017/05/16/public-reminded-not-disturb-spawning-sea-lamprey-connecticut-river-drainage-sea-lamprey-native-connecticut-river-beneficial-aquatic-ecosystem/>

Patrick Skahill, the science reporter for WNPR radio tagged along with Bruce Williams during a recent stocking of Atlantic Salmon fry in the Farmington River. A broadcast date has not been announced. Stay tuned.

We will host our annual Open House there this coming Saturday, May 20 from 10 am until 3 pm. At this time, the gates will be open and you can come in and inspect the fishway, go downstairs and see the underground viewing window and watch fish swim past. **Mike Beauchene of the Fisheries Division plans to do a Facebook Live event with Bruce Williams at the Rainbow Fishway this Friday, May 19 at 1:00 pm.** Those of you on Facebook should check it out.



Two wild anadromous fish interacting—a Sea Lamprey transformerant latched onto an adult Blueback Herring. If the herring stays in freshwater for a while, the lamprey may drop off.



The Manhan River Fishway is at the first dam on the Manhan River in Easthampton, MA, upstream of where it flows into the Connecticut River. It is operated by the USFWS and volunteers. The dam is off camera to the left. Fish counts are not yet available from this fishway for this year.

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) | 1,071 | 705 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 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) | - | 15 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford) | - | 389 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme) | - | 5,644 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., East Lyme) | | 1,916 | FINAL- counter pulled due to downrunners | | | | - | - |
| Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme) | | 386,325 | FINAL- counter pulled due to downrunners | | | | | |
| Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton) | | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford) | | 2,727 | 0 | 0 | - | - | - | - |
| Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford) | | 2,715 | 0 | 0 | - | - | - | - |
| Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford) | 0 | 5,276 | 32 | 32 | 0 | 159 | 0 | 0 |
| Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden) | | 0 | 2 | 0 | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport) | - | 14,865 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport) | | 5,315 | 0 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich) | | 18,374 | 33 | 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:*

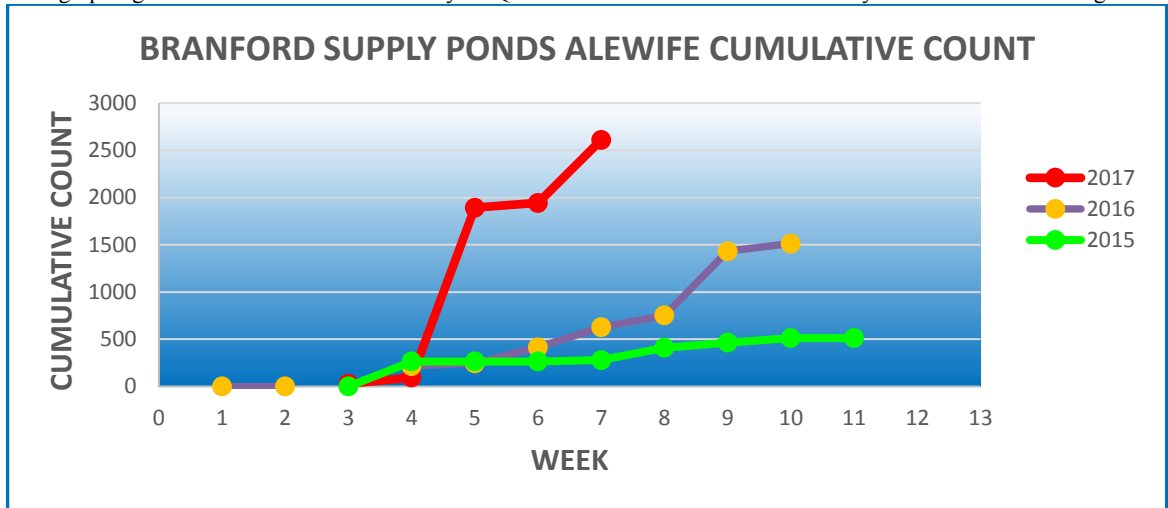
Greeneville= 5/14 Taftville= 4/21 Occum= 5/16 Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= n.a. Haakonsen= 5/14 Hallville= 5/14 Hanover= 4/29 Bunnells= 5/11

******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:

We're starting to see downrunning Alewives at several fishways in the east but holding out hope for one more big push in the central and western coast. However, we are assuming that Blueback Herring are showing up in places like the Mianus and Saugatuck rivers. I checked fish at Bunnells Pond this past week and they were all Alewives. But 29% of the fish sampled at the Haakonsen Fishway on the Quinnipiac River were Blueback Herring. Monitors Captain Ian and Lauren report lots of herring in the Mill River in Southport. Reader John Watson has been graphing data from the Branford Fishway on Queach Brook. You can see how this year's run is much stronger than the past two years.



Ray Baldwin continues to collect index data from the Clarks Pond Fishway in Milford. Another 336 fish this week for a seasonal total of 4,272. Another success story is Bunnells Pond on the Pequonnock River in Bridgeport. Last year we had 4,113. This year we are already over 14,000. Remember that video the Mayor took back in 2010 or 2011 of alewives having to flop on their side to struggle up the sloped concrete apron that spans the river downstream of the dam while gulls and herons picked them off? Then recall that three years ago Save the Sound built a unique pool-and-weir fishway recessed into the concrete apron. The increase in adult alewives this year probably represents increased survival of spawners and, thus offspring, in 2014 due to that new fishway.

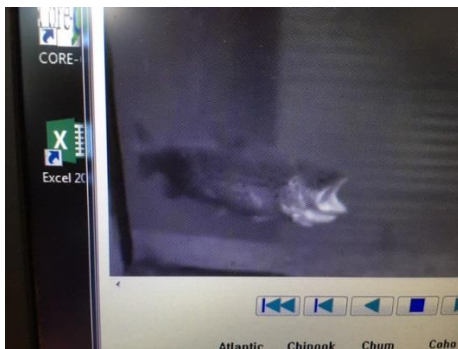
If you want to count some river herring yourself, go to this link that Bill McWha just shared with me—video clips of herring going up a Massachusetts fishway. Click on “count fish”. <https://www.mysticherring.org/>

The Greenville Fishlift was shut down for several days due to high water. It re-opened today. No data from Tunnel and Taftville fishways. Occum is passing lots of trout, suckers and a few broodstock salmon but nothing anomalous yet. New England Hydro is preoccupied with fixing an electrical glitch at Hanover Pond today and did not get me new numbers (other than eels, below) but Pat Wendt reports that they have passed a few more Alewives and Sea Lamprey. *Hot off the presses—Save the Sound seasonal workers Hillary and Greg have documented alewives moving up through the former Pond Lily Dam impoundment—where STS removed a dam two years ago!*

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 6,279 glass eels/158 yellow eels; Mill River Eel Trap= 24 glass eel/151 yellow eels; Greenville Eel Lift= 1 glass eels/99 yellow eels; Hanover Pond= 230 yellow eels (some lost to tank overflow).

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.

Tomorrow Alicea Charamut from the Connecticut River Conservancy will join me and talk about how you can help control Water Chestnut on the Connecticut River.



This female trout is seen feeding in front of the video window at the Hallville Fishway. Hallville hasn't passed many herring yet but had passed a lot of trout.



Herring monitor Lauren Salvioli reports striped bass are moving into our rivers now. (She was a bit vague on where she caught this one. 😊)