

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 5, 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.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	229	0	1	0	0	86	2	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	0	27	0	0	-	17	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	3	1	0	0	0	3	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	128	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	46	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	1	6,606	0	0	0	0	7	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	-	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	6,884	156	1	0	0	118	2	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:

Maybe spring has finally arrived and the fish are starting to trickle in. Water temperatures are warming up (11C/53F at Holyoke; 17C/63F at Rainbow) and stream levels are dropping. We could use some rain! But the Connecticut River got a bit of a bump and is now back up to 35,000 cfs. Shad are now running strong (and the shadbushes are finally blooming). Holyoke lifted 5,252 yesterday. Yesterday was a good day for the Rainbow Dam Fishway with 221 shad blasting through and heading all the way up the fishway. Shad were first seen at Rainbow on Saturday. Catches by netters in the lower river are up and Rich McBride from Woods Hole has begun his shad research in the lower river. Tom Savoy of Marine Fisheries Division is out netting shad for him now. We've already passed three shad at the Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River (see photo below) and that is probably a season record for that site—the Eightmile isn't really big enough to host a large shad run. The first Atlantic salmon of the year was trapped, tagged, and released at the Holyoke Dam early this morning. That is pretty early compared to recent years and especially early considering the late spring and that the water is still very cold.

The blueback herring have entered the river. I snorkeled Leesville on Friday and saw about 5 alewives and 5 blueback herring. Yesterday, the lower Moulson Pond Fishway was full of blueback herring (none passed the camera yet), and today the lower Rainbow Dam Fishway is full of them. There are a few alewives still mixed in. There seems to be one last little surge of alewives in the river and across the state but unless they come up big in the next two days, it will go down as one of the worst alewife runs in memory. At Mary Steube, we often pass between 5,000 and 30,000. This year we grabbed everyone we could get from the screened fishway to transfer up to Rogers Lake to support David Post's (Yale) research. All we could muster was 128! One solitary alewife has been counted at Moulson Pond.

Remember the silliness about Maine legislature closing the fishways on the St. Croix River in Maine to protect the (non-native) smallmouth bass? After allowing the run to crash from millions to dozens, the State finally came to its senses and re-opened the fishways and the fish are returning. But there was a bill in this session of their legislature to close the fishways again! Luckily it was not passed. <http://asf.ca/alewives-dodge-a-dam-closing-on-st-croix.html>

Former seasonal employee Kevin Job is working in Maine, operating fishways on the Penobscot and reports the first alewives arrived at the new Milford Dam Fishlift (now the first dam on the river) yesterday.

Salmon fry stocking continues. Elizabeth Kendall (also of the Connecticut River Salmon Association) was out with aquaculture students helping Bruce stock one of the state's loveliest streams: Belden Brook. If you don't know where it is, I'm not telling you. ☺

Eels: Fishing Brook= 1,057/769 elvers (still pretty slow); Lower Millpond= 1,725 glass eels/57 elvers.



An American shad swimming out of the exit of the Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River in Lyme. The bugs have been worked out on this camera that was new last year and we are now getting very good images.



Lamprey are starting to move up the Rainbow Fishway on the Farmington River. Also seen in this photo is a sea-run trout. Two were seen passing this week. The other fish is a smallmouth bass.

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)	35	253	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	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	85	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	22	0	0	-	0	3	1
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	3,075	0	-	-	-	0	-
Gorton Pond-- none seen this week, but a few birds (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)								
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		199,702						
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)	-	0		-		-	-	
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		280	-	-	-	-		
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		449	-			- 0	0	
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	305	0	0	0	46	0	
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		-fish have arrived but our camera is malfunctioning!				0	0	
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		1,799	0		0			
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		2,464	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= 4/28 Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 5/03 Kinneytown= 5/03. Haakonsen= 5/01 Hallville= 5/03

**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 shad arrived in the Shetucket River days before the Connecticut River but the run at Greenville seems to have stalled. Only a few more since last week and none seen at upstream fishways or at Kinneytown (Naugatuck River) or Haakonsen (Quinnipiac River), the other places we see them. We are seeing a bit of a new pulse of alewives. Nothing very large but finally some of the zero counts are disappearing. We saw a wave through Lower Guilford Lake Fishway, where Dave and the crew showed up today to collect genetic samples. A few in Hallville, a few in Branford, a few at Bunnells—although the camera is still down there so we have no way of counting them yet. But Greg Dancho and the folks at the Beardsley Park Zoo reported that they were in. However, numbers at Mianus, Haakonsen, and Latimers are still lagging behind. Volunteers at Clarks, Gorton, and lower Quinnipiac River tributaries are not seeing fish.

For fish to pass up Bunnells Pond Fishway, they have to pass over the dreaded Pequonnock Apron. But a couple of years ago, Save-the-Sound installed a fishway through that apron and now fish can pass. I have reported on it previously but never got a good photo of it. Usually the tide was high and the fishway was totally underwater. I was there a few days ago and took the photos below, which show the structure well, with clear water. You can see more pools still underwater. As the tide goes out, more pools are exposed and become needed by the fish. At high tide, all pools are underwater. Zoom in on the photo to the left and you can see the other pools. You can see how shallow the water is over the concrete to the left. Before the fishway was installed, the fish had to struggle up that fast, shallow water. This fishway is very effective at helping fish go upstream.

The run at Brides Brook is still lagging behind normal years but we have enough to truck. Rhode Island DEM has taken about 4,000 alewives to help support alewife restoration in that state. Dave Ellis was trucking alewives to the Farmington River today. Last year the Kinneytown Fishway was not functioning and I had a note in the count table. This year it is functioning and the camera system is up and running but I inadvertently left the note on the count table. I discovered that and have removed that note, so fear not—Kinneytown is working. So far, lots of white suckers in the Tingue Fishway.

Some numbskull caught a sturgeon in the Thames River in Norwich, pulled it out onto a sidewalk, took a photo, and posted it on Facebook. We might give him the benefit of the doubt and assume he threw it back, but that is no way to treat a federally-listed Endangered Species. You cannot mistake a sturgeon for anything else. If you coincidentally catch a sturgeon while fishing, you are obligated to release it immediately without any undue stress or delay. That does not include placing it on a sidewalk—not the species' natural habitat! Leave the fish in the water, unhook it, and let it go. If you have a friend that can take a quick photo of you cradling it in the water—fine. But don't lift it out of the water. The same goes for adult salmon that are now coming up the Connecticut River and likely to be caught by shad anglers. And striped bass you're not going to keep. If a fish is legal to keep and eat, go for it. But if not, let's keep them in the water so they can stay healthy and spawn later. An abused fish may swim away but not survive for the next few weeks or months before it can spawn.



The Pequonnock Apron Fishway is a series of pools recessed down into the concrete apron that was constructed across the river decades earlier. The pools are separated by concrete weirs with a notch in them. The fishway provides adequate depth of water for fish to migrate. The water in the fishway is 2 – 3 feet deep. The water outside the fishway is 2 – 3 inches deep.



Another photo of the Pequonnock Apron Fishway, showing the nice plume of water shooting through the notches in the weirs. The lowermost weir is underwater and not critical to the fish at this tide. But at lower tidal stages, that weir is exposed like the upper two are in this photo and it is helpful for allowing fish to get upstream.