

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: July 3, 2018



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/r5cfc. 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	STURGEON/ TROUT++	AMER. EEL
Rainbow* (Farmington)	0	341	4	3	1	0	896	0	5
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesett)	0	2	325	11	29	-	23	2	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	1	8	2	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	(6,989)	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	FINAL -	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield-MA)	0	5,752	0	5	0	0	138	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut-MA)	2	272,169	0	1,060	69	248	10,238	11/0	2,083
Manhan River* (Manhan-MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut-MA)	1	35,909	-	0	0	0	2,968	-	-
Vernon* (Connecticut-VT)	0	16,004	-	0	0	0	1,008	-	0
Bellows Falls* (Connecticut-VT)	0	397	-	0	0	0	38	-	0
Wilder* (Connecticut-VT)	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
TOTALS=	2	278,312	7,327	1,079	98	248	11,085	11/2	2,083
(last year's totals)	20	541,637	922	800	230	452	23,955	85	20

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 (Holyoke)/Sea-run Trout (other locations) 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:

This is the last weekly fish report of the season, but I failed to anticipate that many people who report data are on vacation for the July 4th holiday. As such, I received no updates for the Connecticut River fishways (Holyoke and above). Therefore, the data that you see above is mostly from last week. Fishways in Connecticut are mostly done and there have been very little additions to those counts. I suspect that there have been few additions to the counts for Holyoke, except, perhaps for Shortnose Sturgeon and American Eel. The numbers for everything at Turners Falls, Vernon, and Bellows Falls have probably all increased from last week since (a) workers have looked through some of the video backlog, and (b) the runs persist longer up north than down here in Connecticut.

I think there are a few general observations that can be offered:

- The shad run was smaller this year than last year (Holyoke= 272,000 vs. 535,000). However, the Holyoke numbers may not tell the entire story. This was a strange year in terms of water. We started the shad run with high and cold water. Shad were in the river but Holyoke Fishlift could not be operated. Anglers reported good catches below. When the water dropped and Holyoke could be operated, it dropped like a stone and the river warmed up quickly, shad needed to move quickly and then spawn. It is possible that more shad than normal spawned downstream of Holyoke this year, which means that the Holyoke count is not as good of an indicator of relative abundance as it normally is. Of course, we have no data on this, so we'll never know for sure.
- Meanwhile, the shad run to the Westfield River was pretty strong—almost the same number as last year.
- Data are incomplete but it looks like Vernon passed a good percentage of the shad that passed through Turners Falls.
- The Blueback Herring numbers were higher than recent years but only in a few places (Holyoke, lower Farmington River, Leesville) and only for short periods of time in some places. Other places (e.g. the Eightmile River) had very few Bluebacks. It is hard to know what to make of this year's run, even though Holyoke's count was up (1,060 vs. 875). But let's face it, for a fishway that used to count them in the hundreds of thousands, a 185 fish increase is insignificant. Some Striped Bass sneezed and let a few by.
- The Sea Lamprey count at all locations have decreased again. Last year, Holyoke passed 21,500 and Rainbow passed 2,184. This year, they have passed 10,238 and 896, respectively. We will conduct our nest surveys in the next week and expect to find the number of lamprey nests in Connecticut continue to drop. There appears to be factors at sea that are affecting this species, too.
- The Shortnose Sturgeon count is just ramping up and for this time of year we are ahead of last year, when we passed a record number of sturgeon. So far there have been no sign of injuries. We've also documented radio-tagged sturgeon safely passing through the new downstream fish bypass designed and constructed for sturgeon. One of those tagged fish turned around and took the lift back upstream again! Unlike most fishways, Holyoke will continue to operate throughout the summer and likely lift many sturgeon.
- Eel numbers will continue to increase throughout the summer, too.



American Eels removed from the Tunnel Eel Pass, prepared for transplantation (see next section).



Releasing eels from Tunnel into Patchaug Pond, upstream of Tunnel Dam (see next section).

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)	1,216	1,653	122	90	6	0	1	1
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	79
Scotland* (Shetucket R. Windham)	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	23
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	4	129	0	0	0	0	0	1,767
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	1	0	0	0	0	27	0	
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	(74)	FINAL	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	(512)	FINAL	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	(16,210)	FINAL-	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		(395,026)						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		(46)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		(738)	FINAL	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		(942)	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	(3,007	60	10	0	107	0	0)
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		24	0	4	-	9	-	31
Clarks Pond Fishway*** (Indian River, Milford)		4,041	FINAL					
Bunnells Pond* (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	40,602	FINAL	0	0	0	0	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		32,961	8,202	FINAL 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= 6/29 Taftville= 7/01 Occum= 6/20 Tunnel= 7/1 Kinneytown= 6/29 Haakonsen= 6/13 Hallville= 6/12 Hanover= 7/01 Bunnells= 6/19 Chapmans= 6/1

***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. ***These are counts made by a volunteer when he is present and represents an index not a census. 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:

You can see that most fishways are closed. Scotland may stay open a while as FirstLight finishes up its first year of fish passage evaluation. Hanover Pond will close any day now but Lower Guilford Lake and Clarks Pond stay open all summer, although all counting/observation has ended. What can we say?:

- Shad outside the CT River didn't fare too well. The number on the Shetucket was down a bit from last year and mostly non-existent elsewhere.
- Alewife was a mixed bag: increases at Bride, Greeneville, Latimer, Bunnells, Jordan, Clarks, and Mianus. But down at Branford, Lower Guilford, Haakonsen, Moulson, and Mary Steube. Look at the graph below summarizing Alewife counts at Bunnells Pond for the last four years—steady increases since Save the Sound finished that pool-and-weir fishway in Glenwood Park downstream of Bunnells. Remember that video of Alewives having to swim on their sides to get over that concrete apron? The new fishway probably is a big factor in this increase. Bunnells is our gold star facility for 2018.
- By the way, the transplantation to the Bronx River is starting to show results. Their count this year was 156 up from 76 (see photo below).
- Blueback Herring continued to be a no-show along the shoreline except for Haakonsen (way down) and Mianus (double the 2017 figure!).

Eels continue to trickle in from the traps listed below, but the glass eel run is pretty much over. As we close down fishways, we gear up for enhanced passage of eels at inland fishways, e.g. Rainbow, Hanover Pond, and Tunnel. Numbers of eels passed at these locations will continue to rise. Ray Baldwin is seeing an increase in the number of eels at Clarks Pond. July is often the busiest month. We have just initiated a new eel transplantation system at the Tunnel Dam. Last year, a marina expanded and impacted some fish habitat so in mitigation, it purchased equipment that allows us to effectively move trapped eels from one location to another. At many locations, there are more eels passed upstream than is needed, based upon the available habitat. Yet, there is lots of 'unseeded' habitat above distant dams. To increase the production of female eels that will eventually return to sea to spawn, we are using this equipment to take excess eels from the Tunnel Dam (with the cooperation of FirstLight Power) and release them into the many impoundments of the Patchaug River (e.g. Patchaug Pond, Glasgow Pond, etc.) where there is abundant eel habitat but few eels and so many dams that it is impractical to build eel passes at all of them. These dams don't have turbines so in 20 years, the silver eels can drop down to the sea. The photos in the first section show us moving some of those eels.

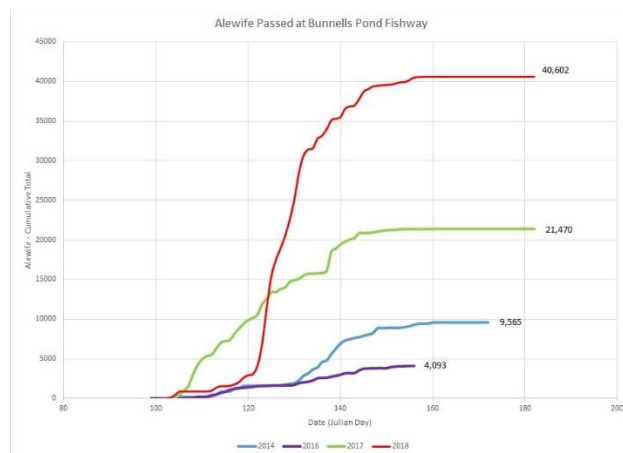
LOTS OF FISH PASSAGE WORK THIS SUMMER: AT LEAST 5 DAM REMOVALS AND ONE FISHWAY. WE'LL REPORT BACK NEXT SPRING!!!!

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 40,185 glass/197 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 43,249 glass/479 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 2,135 glass/646 yellow; Hanover Pond= 4 yellow; Greeneville Eel Lift= 31 glass/135 yellow. Occum= 52 yellow eels; Kinneytown= 36 yellow. The number shown on the previous page for Tunnel is for its eel pass, not the lift, and all fish are elvers or yellow.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is live on iCRV (www.icrvradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesdays. (This week I'll shared the microphone with Leslie Kane, Managing Director of Audubon Connecticut, who will talk about the importance of sound management of fisheries at sea and the linkage to healthy bird populations. We'll also celebrate the Year of the Bird! Happy Fourth of July) If you can't tune in at 8:00 am, listen to it at any time: www.icrvradio.com/programs/program/50.



One of the Alewives that passed through the fishway on the Bronx River this spring.



Summary of the Alewife run at the Bunnells Pond Fishway for the past four years.