

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 21, 2019



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/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	STURGEON/ TROUT++	AMER. EEL
Rainbow* (Farmington)	0	143	1	0	0	0	145	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	1	60	0	27	-	11	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	13	51	0	0	2	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	11,232	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	285	FINAL -	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	1,938	0	4	0	0	67	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	67,543	0	428	227	3	408	0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	79	-	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	69,625	11,591	483	254	4	633	0	0
(last year's totals)	2	281,328	7,326	1,079	99	268	23,955	91/0	2,083

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:

Well, the first order of business is a *mea culpa* on last week's report. I accidentally entered Holyoke data onto the Manhan River Fishway row, resulting in the best run of shad for that fishway in its history! Of course, Ken Sprankle gave me some good natured ribbing about that but then he did the same thing with his report yesterday with the Westfield River and Holyoke. I think he did it just to make me feel better. I hope to get the numbers straight this week. The Connecticut River had been steadily dropping for the last four or five days and the fish responded by surging upstream. Holyoke raised a couple of crest gates by the spillway lift, improving approach conditions at the spillway lift entrance and yesterday they lifted 30,514 shad. They had full hoppers right until 'closing time' so they kept lifting. After yesterday's cool front passed through with thunderstorms, the river is rising again, heading up toward 40,000 cfs, so we'll see where it stops. Rich Murray of Holyoke Gas&Electric reported that the warmest the water got at Holyoke last week was 12.3C (54F)! It seems that the weekend was strong throughout the river. We had another big wave of Blueback Herring at Leesville on the Salmon River. I snorkeled Sunday and saw more bluebacks than at any time in recent years. They were everywhere but not actively spawning. Maybe they spawned that night. Rowan Lytle reported that they first arrived in low numbers on Thursday and slowly built up to the peak Sunday night. There were also a lot of bluebacks in Wethersfield Cove but lots of the other places were vacant. Ken reports decent numbers of bluebacks in the lower Chicopee River but very few in the lower Westfield River. There were no bluebacks in the Rainbow Dam tailrace over the weekend. The season continues with contradictory observations. Just like the coastal Alewife run that had its high points but also many low points, the bluebacks seem to be strong in some sections/tributaries of the river but nearly absent elsewhere. I think we need to give runs more time to see what happens, particularly as the river drops and finally warms up. The shad netters at the mouth of the river are still getting just modest catches but with these water temperatures, a lot more fish may still be coming. Rhode Island and the Conte Lab have already been in at Holyoke to truck American Shad. We hope to be there next week to move shad into some of our watersheds.

Tim presided over our annual Rainbow Dam Fishway Open House on Saturday, which was a beautiful day. Around 190 visitors toured the facilities and saw American Shad and Sea Lamprey moving up the ladder. Friends from the Connecticut River Salmon Association were also on hand. The next day, Bruce hosted another Rainbow tour for 60 guests of the Windsor Historical Society and the fish were still running then. Although no adult salmon have been seen yet, four Atlantic Salmon smolts have been counted going down the fishway. Speaking of salmon, the first Atlantic Salmon of the season has been trapped at the Milford fishway on the Penobscot River.



A group of visitors watch as the trap at the Rainbow Fishway is raised to show American Shad during the Open House.



Swimming with the fishes. A strong run of Blueback Herring in the Salmon River. Almost knocked my dive mask off!

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)	617	699	0	12	0	0	0	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland* (Shetucket R. Windham)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	33	0	0	0	0	0	1
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	16	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	116	Final	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	26,390	Final	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		296,703	Final	-	-	-	-	-
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Brook, OSaybrook)		14,279	Final	-	-	-	-	-
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	379		0	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		349	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	1	2,059	3	13	1	297	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		2	0	0	-	12	-	0
Clarks Pond Fishway*** (Indian River, Milford)		512	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	9,102	0	1	0	28	0	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		6,027	3,551	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= 5/19 Taftville= 5/13 Occum= 5/19 Tunnel= 5/13 Scotland= 5/13 Kinneytown= 5/16 Haakonsen= 5/16 Hallville= 5/19 Hanover= 5/20 Bunnells= 5/19 Chapmans= 5/15 **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:

The Alewife run is winding down although a few locations are still reporting a few fish moving through. Alewives persist longer in western Long Island Sound and some rivers like the Quinnipiac, Saugatuck, and Mianus have both species. We have been unable to sample these runs effectively due to high water and timing of the waves so we really don't know what the ratio is and at this point we are relying on traditional proportions for the calendar dates. There may be some corrections we have to make in the future. The data in the table above for Mianus Pond ends on Saturday but Sarah from the Town of Greenwich reported that yesterday they passed 13,000 fish—more than the entire rest of the season. Those data will be added for next week. Sarah joked that those fish were probably scared up the ladder by the Great White Shark reported in Long Island Sound off Greenwich. https://www.wfsb.com/news/great-white-shark-recorded-off-coast-of-ct/article_15242d3a-7b26-11e9-b5c2-4b688c8abd26.html?fbclid=IwAR2O-OLZ9Q1fro_M6321Y-fCap34ynRt4d_jAL8fAwyA--4eGJyJyAAcdGo Mianus Pond has always had more Alewives than Blueback Herring so that big wave could have been mixed. For the Quinnipiac, the numbers are still building at Haakonsen Fishway but not many of those fish are being logged at the next fishway up, Hanover Pond, which is now just barely spilling. Dennis Bennett continues to monitor the lower tributaries of the Quinnipiac and although he is still seeing birds, no fish were seen this past week. More zeroes were registered along the Norwalk River. No birds are even seen over on the Thames/Shetucket, although the shad run is starting to pick up. We hope to start trucking shad out of Greenville tomorrow to support the Scotland Fishlift evaluation studies. Then, with luck, we will begin hauling shad out of Holyoke the following week. Occum Dam Fishway is finally opened and passing resident fish. A lot of fishways are passing a variety of resident fish, notably White Suckers: Scotland, Hanover, Kinneytown, Rainbow, StanChem, Haakonsen, Greenville. Hanover, Hallville, Haakonsen and Chapmans Pond have been passing trout and Greenville has passed a bunch of White Perch, which have shown up at other fishways as well. Sea Lamprey have made a good showing at Haakonsen and Bunnells (only the second or third year this species has been documented in the Pequonnock River). Jon from Save the Sound documented a Sea Lamprey in his trap on the West River, which is the first of its kind documented above the former site of the Pond Lily Dam. Unfortunately for the lamprey, there was a big snapping turtle in the trap as well and it was in the process of eating the lamprey. In other states, the Bronx River fishway has documented 31 Alewives as of April 21, so you can see they're way behind on video, but they know they were passing fish this past weekend. The last week was slow in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire for river herring (although the Herring River in Harwich, MA may break 1 million Alewives). Last week there were no Alewives in Maine. This week, the Sebasticook River has already reported 340,000.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 49,571 glass/177 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 12,239 glass/119 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 3,792 glass/21 yellow; Hanover Pond= 98 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= 0 glass/0 yellow. Occum= 0 yellow eels; Kinneytown= 0 yellow, Lower Millpond= 18 glass/0 yellow. The water is too high to effectively operate Greenville and Kinneytown. The eel count at Fishing Brook is the second highest in the time series.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is live on iCRV (www.iCRVradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesdays. If you can't tune in at 8:00 am, listen to it at any time: www.icrvradio.com/programs/program/50. **No show this week due to schedule conflicts.**



A 'yellow' American Eel netted out of the Mianus Pond Fishway during its recent Open House.



Alewives moving through the Moulson Pond fishway past the camera.