

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: June 25, 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	276	1	0	0	0	957	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	2	62	5	46	-	12	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	4	13	51	0	0	5	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	11,232	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	285	FINAL -	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	4,043	0	5	0	0	418	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	2	313,250	0	5,052	318	194	18,247	3	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	21,797	-	1	0	0	2,428	-	-
Vernon* (Connecticut- VT)	0	9,364	-	0	0	0	46	-	0
Bellows Falls* (Connecticut- VT)	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
Wilder* (Connecticut- VT)	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
TOTALS=	2	317,575	11,308	5,113	364	194	19,639	3	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:

Not much happening. The numbers of the downstream tributaries are mostly unchanged. There was a small up tick for the numbers at Holyoke, including a third sturgeon being lifted. Numbers at Turners Falls and Vernon are going up but not dramatically. Numbers for Vernon are as of June 14, so we still could see some numbers added. That may be especially true for Sea Lampreys. Of all the species, that is the one that seems to have increased the most during the past week. It seems like they put on a last minute surge to get to upstream spawning habitat. Melissa Grader of the USFWS reports that the 60 reported so far at the Manhan River fishway in Easthampton is the most ever counted at that facility. The number of Gizzard Shad at Holyoke is less than last week. That represents a correction of an error from past weeks.

I was on the river in Haddam yesterday and the water temperature was 20.5 C (69 F), but it is cooler farther north.

An interesting observation is that the UMass crew doing Blueback Herring research on the lower river have captured 1+ year old Blueback Herring. Ken Sprankle reported seeing some in his work in the Wethersfield Cove area. This means that some of the young-of-year don't leave the river but stay all winter long. This is very surprising. We have seen such fish in Long Island Sound but not the river.

The Milford Lift on the Penobscot is up to 597 salmon and 1,583 American Shad. That salmon number is the best since 2011.

This time of year, we think about downstream migrants as spent fish head back to sea. At large hydroelectric dams, there are facilities designed to guide and collect migrants and deliver them safely downstream of the dam. At small dams with fishways, often the fish have to go over the spillway. Sometimes that is not a great option. In the photos below we show the stream below the spillway at the Branford Supply Ponds where large amounts of wooden debris has accumulated over the years. In addition, a lot of aquatic vegetation washes over the spillway and gets jammed on the woody debris, creating dams that are hard for fish to get through. Trying to get through can injure the fish or leave them more vulnerable to predation. When we cleared the debris, we found a dead adult Alewife in the pile. You can see in the photo to the left where the jam has dammed up a pool and collected duckweed. In the photo to the right, you can see the same area after our crew cleared the pile of debris, restoring free-flowing water and a reliable avenue for emigration.



The bypass reach at the Branford Supply Pond Dam, clogged with debris, discouraging downstream passage.



The same area after Kevin Job and the crew cleared the debris. The edge of the steep pass fishway can be seen to the left.

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)	807	699	0	19	0	0	0	4
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11
Scotland* (Shetucket R. Windham)	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	54
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	3	33	0	0	0	0	0	9
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	54	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	16	Final	2	-	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	Final	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	385		Final	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		364	Final	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	3	2,070	42	20	1	561	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		4	0	0	-	321	-	1
Clarks Pond Fishway*** (Indian River, Milford)		541	Final	-	-	-	-	-
Bunnells Pond* (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	12,340	Final	1	0	61	0	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		6,030	21,911	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= 6/24 Taftville= 6/21 Occum= 6/17 Tunnel= 6/21 Scotland= 6/21 Kinneytown= 6/24 Haakonsen= 6/246 Hallville= 6/2 Hanover= 5/23 Bunnells= 6/14 Chapmans= 5/21These 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:

Not much to report. If you take the time to compare the counts with last week (not recommended as being a good use of your time), you'll find that we added one or two fish here and there but there have been no substantial increases. NPU will be closing down Greeneville and Occum on Monday and Greenwich will be shutting down Mianus Pond. Pat from New England Hydro is on his honeymoon so has not reported updated counts but that will be shut down soon after his return but we expect some of his numbers will go up after he has time to review video files. FirstLight needs to conduct a hydraulic study at Taftville on Tuesday but will likely shut down that Denil fishway shortly after that. I will be onsite for that work and will try to send out my last report of the year later that day. Anyone who has any last minute numbers or photos should have them in to me by the morning of the 2nd.

Last week we reported that NOAA declined to list either Alewife or Blueback Herring under the federal Endangered Species Act. The findings were reported in the federal register and you can read it at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/06/19/2019-12908/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-endangered-species-act-listing-determination-for> My take is that for its decision, it relied on: (1) within each recognized DPS there is one sizeable run per species that is unlikely to disappear anytime soon. So if all the other runs in the region winked out, that one run would maintain the DPS. (2) River herring stray. So if you lose all those other runs within the DPS, eventually fish from the larger run would colonize the vacant streams. (3) It accepted 1,000 fish as a threshold for sustainability. So if any stream in a DPS had 1,000 fish, the stock would be OK. (4) It used the ASMFC conclusions regarding which runs were declining, stable, or increasing (from a five year look back). For Connecticut streams, most were deemed as stable. A stream that had 630,000 fish 25 years ago but for the last five years the numbers have hovered around 100 fish—that population would be deemed as 'stable'. I think we could debate some of these criteria. Certainly there are geneticists who do not feel the most current data were used. But I think we must accept the fact that the ESA is meant only to prevent the extinction of species and is not meant to implement proper and sound management of species. For that, we need to look elsewhere.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 55,342 glass/189 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 81,730 glass/891 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 3,930 glass/159 yellow; Hanover Pond= 499 yellow; Greeneville Eel Lift= 37 glass/136 yellow; Occum= 7 yellow eel; Tunnel= 854 yellow; Kinneytown= 2 yellow, Lower Millpond= 18 glass/0 yellow.



A river herring moving through the Moulson Pond Fishway this spring. Not a great year for that fishway.



Just an old favorite of alewives storming the gates at the Bride Brook trap. Dusted off from the archives of this past spring.