



CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 17, 2016

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/r5src. 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	17	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	0	many below	-	-	0***	1	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	36	303	0	81	-	11	4	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	5	80	1,700	0	0	22	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	391	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	1,686	0	0	0	0	86	0	1
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	209,273	0	8	365	0	3,800	SNS= 16	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=	0	211,017	774	1,708	446	0	3,926	5	1
(last year's totals)	22	416,355	237	11,822	93	21	24,573	9	20,305

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:

Finally some progress! Those two warm days near 80 degrees finally got the runs cooking. Water temperatures went up to 14 – 17 C (57 – 63 F), which is still a bit low for this time of year but closer to normal. Fish started coming into the tributaries and using the fishways. Holyoke passed 54,000 shad in one day (a record) and had a couple of 28,000 fish days. This time last week, Holyoke was at 32,000 shad. Now it's over 200,000. You can see the shad run is building in all locations but still too early to say what kind of year it will be. The return of cool temperatures have slowed the passage once again. We saw strong waves of blueback herring entering lower tributaries like Falls River, Eightmile River, Salmon River, Pine Brook, a few in Moodus River but not a lot of reports from tributaries farther upstream, other than the Farmington and Chicopee rivers. The key day seems to have been Friday the 13th when many were reporting blueback herring in the streams. This was the day after the two warm days. I snorkeled Leesville that day and saw thousands of bluebacks actively spawning below the dam (see photo below). There were also very large numbers of spottail shiners, which were feeding on the eggs of the herring. Still lots of white suckers with spawning colors (late for them) and building numbers of darters. Ehren from the Pine Brook team brought in a specimen that we confirmed as a blueback. Other samples elsewhere also indicate blueback herring so we believe the alewife run is over. But on May 9, Ken Sprankle of the USFWS electrofished the Chicopee River and one of the river herring he captured was an alewife. I believe that to be the farthest upstream this species has been collected. One species that seems to be having a real low run this year is sea lamprey. By now, we should be seeing quite a lamprey going through fishways and all numbers (both Connecticut River and elsewhere) are uncharacteristically low. No clear reason for that. Although Ken did report a few spawning in the lower Chicopee River and that seems early for spawning. A couple more shortnose sturgeon lifted at Holyoke. Anglers report lots of striped bass off the mouth of the river but we haven't seen too many upriver yet. Fun to be at Moulson Pond when an American shad was moving through. We also snorkeled the East Branch Eightmile River where Ed Bills Dam used to create a pond. The river is restoring its gravel streambed nicely and the stream is full of fish! See the photo below and note the clean gravel where muck and sand used to be.

The Turners Falls and Vernon fishways are open, passing fish, and video recording the fish. However, they are relying on students from a local community college and those students are behind in review due to end of semester work. We hope to start having data to report from these upriver fishways by next week. The river herring runs are picking up all over the Northeast, NY to NH, where the runs began this past week. Alewives moving up the Penobscot River past Milford Dam, where the fishlift has been repaired.

VENUE CHANGE- I'm giving a **talk on shad fishing** to the Haddam Historical Society this **7:00 pm Thursday, May 19**. After my presentation, some active and retired shad netters to relate stories of shad fishing on the river. Previously we reported this to be at the old Haddam Town Hall. It has now been changed to the firehouse at 439 Saybrook Road, Haddam. See <http://www.haddamhistory.org/>.

WORLD FISH MIGRATION DAY- THIS SATURDAY- MAY 21. This is an international celebration of migratory fish. I've attached a list of events taking place in CT on Saturday, May 21. You can also go to <http://www.worldfishmigrationday.com/home> and click on "events" up top and see a map of the world with 'pins' for all 400+ events including ours.

In addition to CT, there will be an event at the Holyoke Fishlift in MA with the CRWC, Holyoke Gas & Electric, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Connecticut River Coordinator Ken Sprankle will be on site from 10am-3pm. At the top of each hour, he will discuss status & trends of migratory fish, & other pertinent topics, as well as fish migration. Please RSVP for the tour. For more information, to RSVP or get directions email eryba@ctriver.org or call 413-772-2020.



Actively spawning blueback herring below the Leesville Dam, Salmon River. Large numbers of spottail shiners (underneath) were swarming the area, feeding on eggs. An osprey was fishing overhead.



A male common shiner feeding over newly exposed gravel beds in the stretch of stream formerly occupied by Ed Bill Pond. This native minnow thrives in free-flowing streams. If you enlarge the photo, you may see whitish bumps over his eye—nuptial tubercles. A temporary feature during spawning season, like a hook jaw on a salmon. (Photo Sally Harold, TNC).

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Greenville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	970	1,358	0	7	0	0	0	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	33	0	2	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	5	0	4	0	13	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	15	0	lots of trout		-	0	0
Trading Cove Brook** - (Trading Cove Brook, Montville)	-	0	0	open/not counting		-	-	0
Jordan Brook** - (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	98	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** - (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	4,208	0	-	-	-	0	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		147,311						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		1,433	-	-	-	-		
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		3,909	-			- 0	0	
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	1,066	38	22	0	78	2	
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Meriden)		5	0	0	-	3	-	0
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	2,576	0	9	0			
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		1,666	0					
Mianus Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		11,940	2,923	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:

Greenville= 4/308 Taftville= 5/14. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 4/23 Kinneytown= 5/15 Haakonsen= 5/10 Hallville= 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.

+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:

Each week we declare the alewife run over and then we see another wave. This week, we had another 12,000 come in at Bride Brook but it has tapered off and now we think it may actually be over in eastern Connecticut. All of the fish sampled from the Greenville Fishlift were blueback herring. However, alewives are still hanging in at sites in central (Quinnipiac River) and western (Housatonic River at Derby). But down in Greenwich, Denise and Mike sampled two fish in the Mianus Pond Fishway and both were blueback herring.

Greenville Fishlift on the Shetucket River is the only bright spot for shad outside the Connecticut River. The numbers we've posted above are only up to the end of April and plenty more have been lifted. We are behind on our video review for this fishway. Norwich Public Utilities have trucked over 300 shad upstream. We have not seen any shad through either Taftville or Tunnel fishways but we are behind on those counts, too. Speaking of trucking fish, I ran out of space in the Connecticut River section, but our crew assisted Ken Sprinkle with the collection of over 500 blueback herring from Wethersfield Cove and he released them into the Oxbow in Easthampton, MA.

Much of our discussion about stream conditions found in the Connecticut River section pertain to the coastal streams, too. These smaller streams cool down faster so the cold nights really drop the water temperatures. All runs seem behind but at this point it is hard to tell whether they are just late or low for the year. Certainly, the Bride Brook run has experienced another big drop and is a cause for concern. I think it is safe to say the alewife run has been very bad. Speaking of Bride Brook, there was some press on the fact that an osprey got tangled in our trap there this past week. Our staff was there in the morning but by the afternoon, an EnCon officer found a tangled osprey and released it. <http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/EnCon-officers-save-trapped-osprey-from-7466794.php#photo-10060759> There was some social media buzz that suggested that we may be doing something unsafe for osprey. This trap has been fished by us for over ten years and we have never had a bird problem. We check it daily. And this osprey flew away, unharmed. There is no reason for concern about this trap putting birds at risk.

Bunnell's Pond Fishway in Bridgeport, streaming video: <http://www.ctenvironment.org/#!/fish-cam/c1e11>.

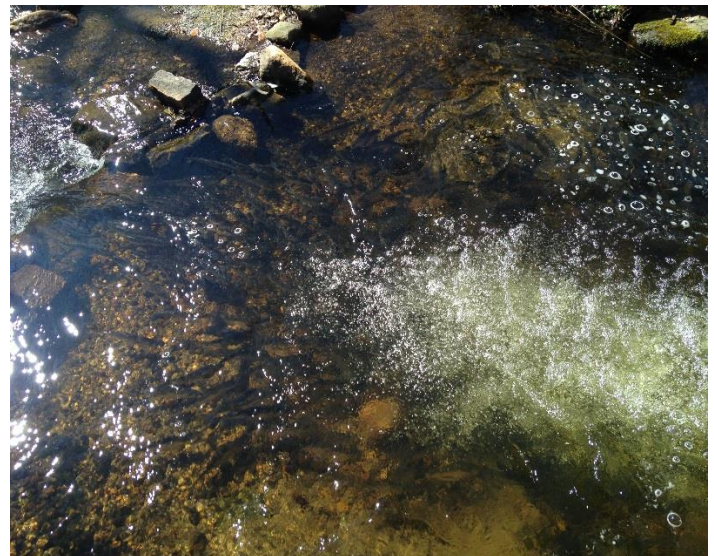
Hallville Fishway in Preston, streaming video: <http://conservect.org/eastern/CurrentProjects/tabid/528/Default.aspx>

EEL PASSAGE: Fishing Brook= 5,450 glass/152 yellow; Mill River= 21 glass/51 yellow; Greenville= 8 glass/245 yellow.

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 and 8 am on Saturday. In addition to updates on fish runs, this week we'll be talking about river herring conservation.



Seasonal Worker Pat Wendt samples scales off an alewife at Bride Brook Trap.



Alewives collected below the Latimer Brook Fishway during this past week's run.