

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 18, 2017



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	18	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	20	0	0	1	1	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	2,299	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 SNS**=0	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	-	-
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	0	2,299	0	0	0	0	0	0
(last year's totals)	6	391,096	792	3,558	684	619	36,914	6	19,799

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
 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:

The Connecticut River has dropped a bit but is still running over 50,000 cfs. The Holyoke Fishlift has not been able to open yet. A few days ago, it was still at 6.5 C (44 F), which is unseasonably cold. We opened the Rainbow Fishway yesterday and it was 14 C (57 F) and there were shad in the tailrace and by the end of the day had made it up five or six pools of the fishway. The difference, of course, is snowmelt and warmer weather in Connecticut than Vermont and New Hampshire, where that cold water is coming from at Holyoke. I bought my first boned shad last night in Old Saybrook. Apparently there has been only one boat out fishing but they're getting shad.

This morning, our crew at Rainbow reported an Atlantic Salmon smolt in the viewing window, so the smolt run is on! By the afternoon, our seasonal Sam reported the numbers posted above along with early StanChem numbers. White suckers are also using the fishway. I snorkeled Leesville over the weekend and saw around 1,000 river herring below the dam. It appeared that there were both Alewives and Blueback Herring present. Not much else in for now—a few hundred White Suckers, which is not much for this time of year, and a handful of Tesselated Darters. The water is still cold. River herring have been seen in Mill Brook, Eightmile River and its tributary Falls Brook in Lyme, Falls River in Essex, Moodus River, and Pine Brook, and the Mattabesset River. They are probably all the way to Hartford and the Farmington River by now but we have not observed that far up. Other observations include spawning yellow perch—including ribbons of eggs seen in the Moodus River. White Suckers are being seen everywhere. This season is starting off similar to last year: an early start to Alewives, a hiatus due to more cold weather, and now a strong start due to warm weather. Also, the blurring of the timing of the runs of Alewife and Blueback Herring. Back in the 1970s, the Alewives would run in the Connecticut River in April, leave and a week later—usually the first of May—the Bluebacks would arrive. Then the Blueback run started a little earlier. Then there was a bit of an overlap. Now, they seem to run together. Ken Sprankle was finding Bluebacks well upriver at the same time the first of the Alewives arrived. Our ability to distinguish species by season is disappearing and in areas where we are unable to sample, we may fall back on the use of the term "river herring" because we just don't know which species they are. This is likely due to Climate Change but severe population bottlenecks and hybridization could be a factor—although I have no data to support that.

Farther upstream, Melissa Grader of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service reports the video system for the Manhan River Fishway in Easthampton, MA (trib of the Connecticut between Holyoke and Turners Falls dams) is ready to go. They'll be opening the fishway any day.

The Nature Conservancy will be planting native riparian vegetation around the former headpond of the Norton Millpond Dam on Monday, April 24 from 9 am until noon. We'll also be having a ceremonial stocking of Atlantic Salmon fry at the site to celebrate the newly recovered stream habitat. This is the dam TNC removed last summer and the habitat looks great! (See first report of this year.) If you want to come by and see the site, help plant some shrubs, and watch the salmon get released, contact Sally Harold at 203/568-6270 so she can anticipate numbers. (Leave a message if no one answers.) Attendance is free and tools will be provided for those who wish to help plant.

In the summer of 2016, **Save the Sound removed the Clarks Brothers Dam on the Quinnipiac River** in Southington (see photo below, right). Gwen MacDonald of STS was the manager of the project, which was funded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service from settlement money from a contaminated site upstream on the river. This dam was a couple of miles upstream of the Carpenters Dam in Meriden, which was highlighted in last week's report. In fact, this project was part of the larger project that removed the Carpenters Dam (a two for one). The removal of this dam took one day. Another example of how planning, designing, and permitting these projects take a lot more time and money than the actual removal. By removing the two dams, this project opened up over five miles of river and let anadromous fish reach both the Ten Mile and the Eight Mile rivers (tributaries) and get practically to I-84 on the mainstem.



The Tiley-Pratt Fishway on the Falls River in Essex- a Connecticut River tributary important for river herring.



The demolition of Clark Bros. Dam on the Quinnipiac River in Southington.

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)	0	34	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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	78	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	2,510	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., East Lyme)		126	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		193,258						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		1,893	0	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		0	0	0	-	0	-	0
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		12,590	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:*

Greenville= 4/13 Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= n.a. Haakonsen= n.a. Hallville= n.a. Hanover= n.a. Bunnells= n.a.

******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.

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:

Just as you see the daffodils and the forsythia coming up strong in response to the warm weather, likewise the Alewives. Lots of action this past week, as you can see from the numbers above. Many of the video counts are already behind (Greeneville is from the 13th) and actual numbers are likely much higher. I just received word from Jeff at Norwich Public Utilities that yesterday they lifted a dozen or more shad. More detailed counts will be included in next week's report after we have reviewed the video record. Taftville is up and running but First Light Power reports some serious problem with the Tunnel Fishlift on the Quinebaug River. At this time, they have no date for when it will begin operation. Occum was opened today and the video system will be up and running soon—no data to report yet. Kinneytown is operational but the high water knocked out the flashboards and Enel has not indicated when they will be able to put those back up. Until they do, excess water comes over the spillway and attracts migrating fish away from the fishway and toward the spillway.

We are very excited about passing our first alewives at the new fishway at Chapmans Pond on the Menunketesuck River in Clinton. This fishway was completed last year and I planned to introduce readers to in next week (this week is Clarks Bros. Dam Removal—see other section). You'll learn more about this fishway next week but it is always great to pass the first fish upstream in a new fishway. Speaking of that, long-time readers will recall that we have helped the New York City Parks and Recreation and other partners in the Bronx River Alliance with fish passage and alewife re-introduction at the first dam at 182nd Street in the Bronx. It's not in Connecticut but it is in Long Island Sound. Past transplants of alewives from Connecticut resulted in a few fish coming back but there was no fishway. Last year the fishway operated but no alewives were seen. I just received the image below/right from Marit Larson of the NYC Parks and Rec—an image of their first alewife going up the fishway! There is spawning habitat upstream along the Bronx Zoo. Congratulations to all of our friends over there.

A strong start to the run at Bride Brook. We're trucking alewives from there this week. A load to Conte Lab today to support fishway research. Also, today we have a load heading to Graniss Pond in Southington to support restoration to above the now removed Clark Bros Dam on the Quinnipiac River (see project summary in other section). Later in the week, we'll provide a couple of loads to Rhode Island.

Tony Lapinski from The Fisherman Magazine took this video of alewives approaching the Latimer Brook Fishway in East Lyme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGFN5P8RXJY&t=5s>. We don't have a counting in at Fishing Brook Fishway (Fishing Brook, Old Saybrook) yet but I was sloshing around in the swamps upstream of that fishway and watched alewives spawning in the swamp and into Lake Rockview. Many ospreys patrolling the area.

Our sampling below the Harry Haakonsen Fishway at Wallace Dam on the Quinnipiac River in Wallingford brought up one Sea Lamprey—the first of the season. Tim is at Bunnells Pond Fishway right now and the fishway is full of Alewives and they're actively passing the window. We should have counts for next week. Hopefully, the streaming video is online—I'll try to confirm that for next week.

More arrests coming out of that big multi-state investigation of illegal trafficking in glass eels in the Northeast: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/brooklyn-seafood-dealer-pleads-guilty-illegally-trafficking-american-eels> <http://www.military-technologies.net/2017/04/14/maine-fisherman-pleads-guilty-for-illegally-trafficking-american-eels/>

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 2,230 glass eels/68 yellow eels; Mill River Eel Trap= not operational yet; Greeneville Eel Lift= not operational yet; Lower Millpond (Old Lyme)= not operational yet.

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 8 am on Saturday. iCRV now archives shows so if you miss one, you can go online and click on "Outdoors" and the "Fishing" and find past shows to listen to.



A tagged white sucker, part of the Hanover Pond Fishway Utilization Study. A video camera captures images of fish passing up the fishway and the orange yarn will be easily visible on the image.



The first alewife documented going through the Bronx River Fishway in New York City! Photo courtesy of the NYC Parks and Recreation.