

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 9, 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	310	0	5	0	0	520	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	80	0	41	1	12	0	13
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	6	19	0	0	8	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	8,158	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	236	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	1	10,730	0	16	15	0	21 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=	1	11,276	8,244	35	56	1	561	0	13
(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 is back hovering around 40,000 cfs. The Holyoke Fishlift hasn't operated since Friday but will try to do a lift around noon today if the water falls a bit. The water temperature remains remarkably low for this time of year, but then consider this cool, wet weather we have been having. It has been around 10.5 C (50 F) at Holyoke and 12 C (54 F) at Rainbow. That is comparable to what it normally is in late March or early April. Regular readers are probably getting tired of me saying "wait until next week when it warms up". But it never warms up. (I'm a Chicago Cubs fan and last year, "wait until next year" actually happened). Even though the number of shad passed at the fishways is not that high, there seems to be plenty of shad in the river. They're just not moving up quickly. Dan Russell is a shad netter from the Middletown – Cromwell area and he tells me he is seeing lots of fish and they're big this year. Much better than last year. These fish are cold-blooded animals and once they get beyond the head-of-tide near the mouth of the Farmington River, the river's velocity increases and it takes more energy to proceed upstream. Fishways can be especially challenging. So the cold weather inhibits their movement. The upside to years like this is that the runs tend to be more protracted and allows fish to get farther upstream before they spawn. That will get them into more habitat and we will likely see more shad pass through the Vernon and even the Bellows Falls fishways. The river herring run continues to be unclear. We had some good reports in the lower river but nothing in many mid-state streams like the Coginchaug. However, a young angler who has been fishing Keeney Cove in East Hartford all his life reported this past week that large numbers of river herring were swimming over the flooded causeway and going up into the upper cove. He's never seen river herring in there before. In fact, Keeney Cove used to be a hot spot for river herring but was the first place in Connecticut that we noticed the decline back in the 1980s. Ken Sprankle (USFWS) electrofished the lower Farmington River Monday to assess the river herring run and collected good numbers of exclusively Blueback Herring. He also caught two salmon smolts (see photo below) and a wide range of sizes of Striped Bass. We're seeing a salmon smolts coming down the Rainbow Dam Fishway on the Farmington River. The count is up to 15. Most smolts go down the downstream bypass pipe, which is not monitored.

Speaking of the Rainbow Dam Fishway, we will host our annual Open House there on May 20 (Saturday) from 10 am until 3 pm. At this time, the gates will be open and you can come in and inspect the fishway, go downstairs and see the underground viewing window and watch fish swim past. That date is usually good for American Shad, Sea Lamprey, and maybe even an Atlantic Salmon. Plenty of other species like trout, bass, and sunfish drop by to say hi, too. This is a great family event. Mike Beauchene of the Fisheries Division plans to do a Facebook Live event with Bruce Williams soon to promote this Open House.

I was checking the trap at Leesville this past week when the Encon officers pinched an angler for fishing below the fishway. It is well-posted but this fellow thought he could get away with it. Neighbors work well with our DEEP law enforcement officers to crack down on people who fish too close to fishways. Don't think no one is looking. We post red signs to tell you where you cannot fish but in some areas we also paint boulders red and you cannot fish between the red rock and the dam.



A wild Atlantic Salmon smolt captured by the USFWS during its weekly electrofishing survey for river herring in the lower Farmington River.



Seasonal Worker Sam Nunes with a Brown Trout from the trap at the Leesville Fishway, Salmon River.

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)	935	622	0	14	0	0	0	4
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)	-	5	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	329	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	5,621	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., East Lyme)		1,916	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		386,325	FINAL- counter pulled due to downrunners					
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		2,714	0	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		2,380	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	5,124	0	81	0	145	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		0	2	0	-	2	-	3
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	10,336	0	0	0	0	0	-
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		5,293	0	-	-	-	-	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		18,149	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:*

*Greeneville= 5/8 Taftville= 4/21 Occum= 5/1 Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= n.a. Haakonsen= 5/7 Hallville= 5/2 Hanover= 4/29
Bunnells= 5/3*

******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:

The Alewife run in eastern Connecticut seems to be winding down while it seems to be picking up steam in western Connecticut. Brides Brook had a great year but adjacent Latimers Brook and Gorton Pond, not so great. We were concerned that upstream off-channel ponds along Latimer Brook that normally gets fish might not this year so we trucked some from the Latimer Brook fishway and released them upstream (see photo below). Central coast counts are moderate and Fairfield County counts are uneven but still growing. A new record was set for Alewives through the Bunnells Pond Fishway (Pequonnock River, Bridgeport) and Tim worries that there were times the window was so full of passing fish that our video counts may be underestimating the run. Runs on the Saugatuck (Wood Dam) and Mianus (Mianus Pond) have already surpassed last year's numbers but Mianus is still way behind the levels seen a few years ago. Both fishways passed about the same number (5,000+) this past week. Keep in mind that the Wood Dam Fish counter was not installed until the end of April so that number is an undercount of what actually went upstream.

The shad run on the Shetucket River is still slow in developing at Greenville Dam. No further reports on upriver fishways. We have no reports of shad passing over a second dam.

We worked with New England Hydro to develop a new (and innovative) eel pass at Hanover Pond Dam below the new Archimedes Screw Generator. No eels were captured during the first week or so of operation. Then NEH's Pat Wendt plumbed the trap's drain back into the eel pass, which sent 'eel scent' down the pass. Almost immediately he trapped nearly 200 eels. We continue to watch those numbers but are encouraged by the initial success. Photos to follow.

In addition to the diadromous fish we report passing, these fishways are passing a lot of other fish including trout, bass, white suckers, a few white and yellow perch, a few carp here and there and on the Shetucket River, some Atlantic Salmon broodstock, stocked for the upstream fishery.

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 6,105 glass eels/148 yellow eels; Mill River Eel Trap= 23 glass eel/140 yellow eels; Greenville Eel Lift= 1 glass eels/83 yellow eels; Hanover Pond= 194 yellow eels.

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. **Tomorrow Tim Wildman will be on the show talking about sea run trout, eels, partnerships and whatever else he comes up with.**



Moving Alewives from the Latimer Brook fishway to upriver habitat to seed more habitat. Dave Ellis nets out of the truck while Tim Wildman releases over the bridge.



Welcoming committee above a MA fishway (photo courtesy of Ben Gahagan, MA DMF).