

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: July 3, 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	946	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	4,064	0	5	0	0	495	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	2	314,040	0	5,052	320	200	18,344	5	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	22,497	-	1	0	0	3,550	-	-
Vernon* (Connecticut- VT)	0	10,922	-	0	0	0	283	-	0
Bellows Falls* (Connecticut- VT)	0	0	-	0	0	0	5	-	0
Wilder* (Connecticut- VT)	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
TOTALS=	2	318,386	11,308	5,113	366	200	19,802	5/0	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:

The numbers of the downstream tributaries are mostly unchanged and most of those fishways are now closed or will be shortly. The Holyoke numbers are mostly unchanged, too, although they passed two more Shortnose Sturgeon, including a tagged fish that had previously been passed upstream. This fish obviously had passed back down, adding evidence that the new downstream passage facility is working well. Sea Lampreys continue to move upstream and you can see that a few have passed up the Bellows Falls Fishway. We had a late wave of them on the Salmon River with lots of nesting taking place below the Leesville Dam just days ago.

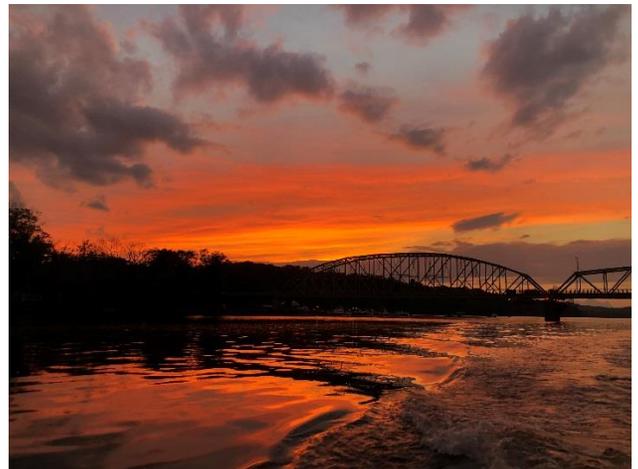
So... how do the 2019 numbers stack up against last year's figures? In many cases, this year's numbers are higher than last year. Exceptions are: Atlantic Salmon (the same as last year= 2), Striped Bass (220 vs 268) and Shortnose Sturgeon—but most sturgeon are lifted throughout the summer and fall so the figure of 5 fish is far from final for 2019. Sea Lamprey numbers are also not final since we need to conduct our annual Sea Lamprey nest survey on the Salmon River next week. The total number of American Shad passed at Holyoke exceeded the long-term mean and was up from last year. Shad netters in Connecticut complained that it was "the worst year ever" and there were no fish in the river. It is clear that conditions for netting in the lower river were poor and the waves of fish were able to get past the nets without much of a catch. But angling at upstream areas was good as was passage at Holyoke when the river finally came down. So a bad year for the nets but not so bad for the fish. We'll be seeing the 'racers' (spent shad) coming down for the next few weeks. Then, it will be interesting to see how the young-of-year did as Jacque conducts our Juvenile Index Seine Survey this summer and fall. It was good to see the Blueback Herring numbers go up—the best year since 2011. Obviously there is a long way to go to get back to the hundreds of thousands that used to be lifted, but at least the numbers are heading in the right direction.

Caleb Slater of MA Wildlife reported that the Counting House at the West Springfield Fishway was broken into and vandalized over the weekend. Nothing critical was damaged or stolen. Over the years, we've been lucky that our facilities have suffered very little of this. The West Springfield Fishway will remain open for a few more days but counting has been terminated and the passage figures are final.

In last week's report, I mentioned that the water temperature in Haddam was 20.5 C (69 F). This past weekend it was 26.1 (79 F). Quite a leap in one week. During my time on the river, I saw two Shortnose Sturgeon leap, both in Lyme. One was a particular showboat—it was about 30 inches long and cleared the water by near three feet! More water chestnut was discovered in a couple of new places and one of our summer jobs will be to help others pull that from local areas. Another summer project in the Connecticut River watershed is the construction of two fishways on the Falls River in Essex. There is a fishway at the first dam (Tiley-Pratt) and this summer The Nature Conservancy (Sally Harold, project manager) will be building two fishways upstream—one at Dolan Pond Dam and one at Millpond Dam. Both of these are in the Centerbrook section of Essex and Millpond Dam is less than a quarter mile upstream of Dolan. The same engineer and contractor will be working on both. Both will be steppass fishways targeting Alewife and Millpond will have a viewing window. We have been transplanting pre-spawned Alewives in Millpond for several years and it will be exciting to see if we get returns in 2020, their first year of operation. The Town of Berlin has started the repair of its Kensington Dam and that project includes a fishway that will be built later in the summer. This is upstream of the StanChem Dam in Berlin and it targets river herring. Also, Canton Hydro will be building a Denil fishway at the Upper Collinsville Dam on the Farmington River this summer. It will not benefit anadromous fish immediately, but soon.



The Manhan River Fishway in Easthampton, MA set a record for the number of Sea Lamprey passed. The number may rise as the video backlog is reviewed during the summer.



The storms that moved through Connecticut last weekend spared the lower Connecticut River valley but set up some spectacular thunderhead clouds to the west provided a wonderful sunset, seen above at the East Haddam Bridge. This is the sunset report for 2019!

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)	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	40
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	1
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		5	0	0	-	432	-	3
Clarks Pond Fishway*** (Indian River, Milford)		541	Final	-	-	-	-	-
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	12,340	Final	1	0	61	0	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		6,030	21,916	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= 6/24 Taftville= 6/21 Occum= 6/17 Tunnel= 6/21 Scotland= 6/21 Kinneytown= 6/24 Haakonsen= 6/246 Hallville= 6/2 Hanover= 6/7 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:

The only fishways still operating are Kinneytown and the two Quinnipiac River fishways. They are not passing any more fish and we'll be shutting them down shortly. Pat at New England Hydro will still has three weeks of Hanover Pond video to go through so those numbers may increase a bit. After a slow start due to a lot of spill, the Sea Lamprey numbers at Hanover Pond have really shot up and it looks like that second fishway is passing a majority of the Sea Lampreys that pass the Haakonsen Fishway. Clarks Pond fishway never closes but the run is over and Ray is not monitoring it anymore. We will be doing some repair work there this summer as well as checking the headpond for water chestnut.

So...how did we do this year? Not great. We had a good Alewife run at Latimers Brook (up from 16,210 last year) and Mary Steube (reported under the Connecticut section) almost doubled last year's run, but all other runs were down. Brides Brook was down 100,000 fish from last year. Greenville's run was less than half of last year; Haakonsen was about two-thirds of last year, and Bunnells dropped almost 28,000! All of the smaller runs (e.g. Lower Guilford Lake, Jordan, Hallville, etc.) decreased. And Moulson Pond (reported under the Connecticut River) was a disaster for both Alewife and Blueback Herring. We don't get a lot of data on Blueback Herring from coastal streams but we saw ZERO at Greenville and the number at Haakonsen went down. The number at Mianus Pond went way up but the Town was unable to sample the run often for the purposes of species identification so the assignment of fish-counter ticks between Alewife and Blueback Herring was based largely on calendar date, so we are not real confident on how many of those Bluebacks reported above were actually Bluebacks and not Alewives. We had a great Sea Lamprey run on the Quinnipiac and Sea Lamprey numbers increased at Kinneytown and Bunnells Pond. Bunnells had zero last year and a record 61 this year. This was due to our transplanting Sea Lamprey from the Rainbow Fishway in the Pequonnock River upstream of Bunnells for the last two years. Speaking of that, in a previous report, I mentioned that we began transplanting Sea Lamprey in tributaries of the Shetucket River (and elsewhere) to start that run restoration. Kevin took the crew out for training on nest surveys and found nests in two of the three targeted tributaries. Below is photo of a classic Sea Lamprey nest on Beaver Brook, upstream of Baltic. In the world of eels, we had a great glass eel run this year with record numbers at the Fishing Brook and Chapmans Pond traps. The other sites listed below target mostly older yellow eels and those numbers should climb throughout the summer.

We will be busy with fishway maintenance this summer but we have several construction projects on tap. Fricks Dam in Killingworth is coming out now (no real benefit to anadromous fish) but the Pages Mill Pond Dam on the Farm River in North Branford will target river herring. This is upstream of the East Haven Diversion Dam Fishway. Save the Sound (project manager Gwen MacDonald) will be building this steep pass fishway later in the summer. You may remember that when we removed the Ed Bills Pond Dam on the East Branch Eightmile River in Lyme, we also removed a steep pass fishway. Some of those units from Ed Bills Pond will be re-used at the Pages Mill Pond Dam Fishway.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 55,503 glass/192 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 85,717 glass/1,001 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 4,066 glass/352 yellow; Hanover Pond= 938 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= 37 glass/136 yellow; Occum= 9 yellow eel; Tunnel= 930 yellow; Kinneytown= 2 yellow, Lower Millpond= 18 glass/0 yellow.



A Sea Lamprey nest can be recognized by a cleared pit and a pile of rocks downstream of the pit.



This Black-crowned Night Heron reminds us that restoring fish runs is not all about fish. Many wildlife species benefit. Photo taken on June 14 at the Mianus River by B.Stanton.