

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: March 31, 2020



This is a report generated by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection/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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	0	3	0	0	-	0	0	0
Linda Bireley* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	8,872	-	-	-	-	-	- -
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)			510						
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	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	8,875	0	0	0	0	0	0
(last year's totals)	3	318,707	11,308	5,113	366	207	20,479	20/0	0

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. The same for Rogers Lake—they first pass through Mary Steube and therefore won't be counted as part of the total.

COMMENTS:

A comment on the previous table. If you compare the row of numbers for “Last Year’s Totals” with the totals offered in the last report (July) from last year, they will not all agree. Data for many of the columns were checked and updated over the summer. Note in particular the numbers of Shortnose Sturgeon lifted at Holyoke. Most sturgeon seem to come up in the summer and fall after these reports end. Sea Lamprey numbers were also updated based on summer lamprey nest surveys. Note that the fishway formerly called Moulson Pond on the Eightmile River has been re-named by the Lyme Land Conservation Trust as the “Linda Bireley Fishway” in memory of Linda, a professional fish biologist, a long-time stalwart of the land trust, and someone who helped operate the land trust’s fishways for years. We all knew and liked Linda, who passed away this past year. The Connecticut River is currently at 45,000 cfs and 5 C (41 F), both which are about normal for this time of year. Alewives are in the lower river but the shad won’t be expected until the temperatures reach 10 C (50F). We’ve opened the lower tributary fishways where we expect Alewives. Rainbow and Holyoke will be opened on April 15. Holyoke has announced it will not support trucking of shad to other locations due to the need to ‘social distance’ because of COVID-19. So far the real action has been on Mill Brook in Old Lyme where an early run has screamed upstream. Not only is this the most fish Mary Steube has passed prior to April 1, it is one of the better years on record (last year= 11,232). Both landowners and our crew have been aggressive about beaver control and dam breaching and the 510 fish through three fishways and into Rogers Lake is exciting. Yale University is sampling fish to use genetics to determine how many originated in Rogers Lake from our stocking. We’ll be reporting more on this as the season progresses. While there is not much to report on from the Connecticut River, we will continue our habit of reporting on fish passage projects that were completed last year after these reports ended.

DOLAN POND FISHWAY- Years ago, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) oversaw the construction of the Tiley-Pratt Fishway at the first barrier dam on the Falls River in Essex, a tidewater tributary of the Connecticut River. The ultimate goal was to get Alewives up to the 50 acre Millpond above the third dam (see next week’s report). But in between was the small 4 ft stone Dolan dam, which was in poor shape. We proposed removal which the owner would not support that but he agreed to a fishway. Sally Harold of TNC (since has left and working independently) managed this project, which was funded by grants from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Tom’s of Maine, and Audubon Connecticut’s In Lieu of Fee Mitigation program in association with US Army Corps of Engineers. The concept of the embedded fishway (entrance flush with the face of the dam) was developed by Steve Gephard (DEEP), designed by Nathan Jacobson Associates (NLJA), and constructed by Schumack Engineered construction. It was intended to be constructed in the summer of 2018 but that summer was so wet, Schumack could not control the water. Instead, it was built in the early summer of 2019. While it only opened up about a quarter of a mile of stream for the fish, it will allow them to reach the next fishway at Millpond, which was also built in the summer of 2019 by the same team: TNC, NLJA, and Schumack. We’ll feature that project next week. The Dolan Pond fishway is on private property and the public is not allowed to visit, although you can catch a glimpse of it if you know what you’re looking for as you drive past on Rt. 154.



Two sections of steppass are attached inside the concrete drop structure that is embedded into the dam’s headpond, upstream of the dam. This photo shows the first test, with low water.



A side view of the fishway with normal flows. The concrete drop structure has a stone fascade to better blend in with the surroundings. You might see the plume of water coming out of the fishway.

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)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland* (Shetucket R. Windham)	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)	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	2,544	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gortons Pond* (Pattaganset R., E.Lyme)		63						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		69,549						
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Brook, OSaybrook)		4,230						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		29	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		0	0	0	-	0	-	0
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-Open and operating but no videography this season due to COVID-19							
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		NA	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= na Taftville= na Occum= na Tunnel= na Kinneytown= na Haakonsen= 3/30 Hallville= 3/30 Hanover= na
Bunnells= na Chapmans= 3/29

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. *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 Alewife run at Bride Brook started exceptionally early this year—February 20! They’ve been coming in ever since, with slow downs after cold nights. The water temperatures are still cool. Kevin has already trucked over 18,000 Alewives to other watersheds and it isn’t even April! The early run has spread throughout New London County and the lower Connecticut River tributaries and slowly spreading west. The fish are running in NYC area and in Greenwich but so far no fish have been reported east of Greenwich and west of Wallingford, although we expect that gap to fill in over the coming days as the water warms up. Sarah with the Town of Greenwich reports the resting pools at the Mianus Pond Fishway full of Alewives but her fish counter is not back from the repair shop until next week so she has no data to report. She also reports a strong run in Greenwich Creek by Bruce Park—which is where we’re working with the Town and its engineering firm to design a fishway at the first dam, hopefully for construction in 2021. Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) announced that it would not operate its hydro projects or the Greenville and Occum fishways during the COVID isolation period, and that closes off the entire watershed above. It was disappointing because Alewives were reported running in that small brook that enters just below the Greenville Dam. They have now reassessed and plan on opening Greenville tomorrow and we’ll activate the videography. We’ll report on other fishways in that watershed next week. Jon of Save the Sound is monitoring the fish trap above the ex-dam at Hyde Pond on Whitford Brook and reports a current catch of 37. Lower Guilford Lake Fishway doesn’t open until April 1 when they drop extra stoplogs into the dam and we expect New England Hydro to open the Hanover Pond Fishway in Meriden as soon as they see the Harry Haakonsen fishway in Wallingford is now passing Alewives. The previous table looks a bit different this year and will continue to change as new fishways with data collecting capabilities come on line. We will continue to report on other fishways where qualitative observations or number estimates are provided but will save space in this table for places where real numbers can be reported. Who knows, we may need to expand the table to two pages soon.

Tim has stocked this year’s sea-run Brown Trout smolts (Finnish strain) into the Menunketesuck River and Latimers Brook and anglers have reported catching them in those estuaries. Anglers! Please release all sea trout you catch. Bruce has stocked the Salmon River with Atlantic Salmon fry will be stocking the Farmington River soon. We just started seeing glass eels- see the section below. I had numerous presentations scheduled for this spring including Earth Day (April 25) and World Fish Migration Day (May 16) but all of them have been cancelled due to COVID. We’ve added bonus photos (fifth page) for this first report of the season. Happy isolation days.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 1,115 glass/12 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 7 glass/0 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 0 glass/0 yellow; Hanover Pond= 0 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= 0 glass/0 yellow. Occum= 0 yellow eels; Kinneytown= 0 yellow.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is back live on iCRV (www.icrvradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesdays. **Due to the COVID situation, I call in rather than sit in the studio.** If you can’t tune in at 8:00 am, listen to it at any time: www.icrvradio.com/programs/program/50. They archive the shows. Fishing Brook Eels:



Kevin Job sets up the electronic fish counter at the Fishing Brook fishway in Old Saybrook. This privately-owned fishway passed a lot of Alewives last year so we are eager to see how it does this year. The flagship of the watershed seems to be a deep borrow pit (now a lake) created when I-95 was built.



The Delaware-style eel pass (fish nets bundled through holes in wooden flashboards and draped down spillways) seem to work well. This photo of the 2020 glass eel run at the Mianus Pond Dam in Greenwich is just a few days old.



Kevin Job releasing Alewives into Amos Lake as part of the program to rebuild the run into Poquetanuck Cove and restore what may have been one of the largest runs of sea-run Alewives into Amos Lake, which is natural in origin.



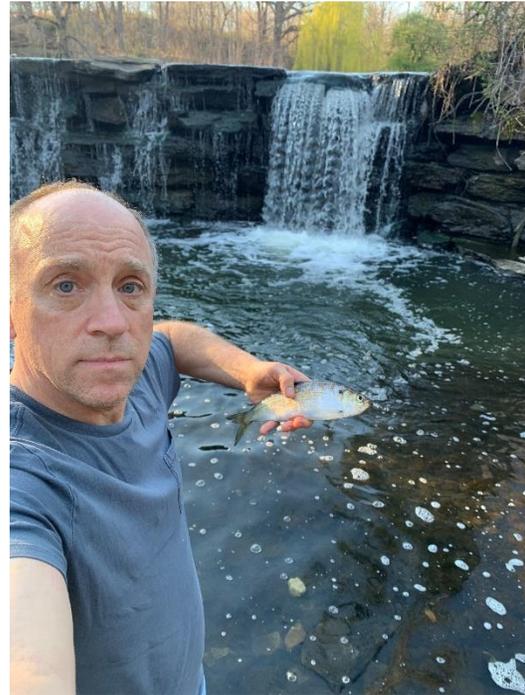
Beaver dams can block the migration of Alewife in smaller streams. Landowners work cooperatively to trap and remove beavers and we help to breach the dams to let Alewives pass. Here, Kevin Job is breaching a dam below the Hallville Fishway on Poquetanuck Brook in Preston.



Many fishways have their entrances a bit downstream of the dam. We like to build up rock diversion 'dams' to discourage fish from overshooting the fishway and guide them to the entrance. Here seasonal resource assistant Jake Rawlings is finishing tuning up such a diversion dam at the Upper Millpond fishway (in between Mary Steube and Rogers Lake fishways) on Mill Brook in Old Lyme. The entrance to the fishway (not opened when this photo was taken) is seen to the left.



Opening the Chapmans Pond Eel pass, prior to social distancing was implemented in mid-March. Charlie, Kevin, Marris, and Jake.



Gareth Hougham, a volunteer advocate for the Hutchinson River in New York takes a selfie with the first Alewife to be confirmed below the river's first dam in Pelham. Gareth and others hope to remove this dam and restore a run of Alewives to this urban river. Our annual stocking trip to the Bronx River in the Bronx was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and while the Alliance has opened the fishway on the Bronx River, they will not be counting fish this year because they need to stay away due to COVID-19. Too bad. We wish that run well this year.