

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 14, 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	31	0	0	-	0	0	1
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	17,854	-	-	-	-	-	- -
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)			~1,200						
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	17,885	0	0	0	0	0	1
(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:

The Connecticut River remains at seasonal levels (40,000 – 50,000 cfs) with water temperatures of 8 - 9 C (46-49 F). Fishways at Rainbow, Holyoke (MA), and West Springfield (MA) should open tomorrow although if yesterday's rains raised the river level too much, Holyoke may not be able to operate. Here's a surprise: Dave K., an angler who provides river information to Ken Sprinkle, reports that there are already shad in the river. Fishing in the lower Farmington River, he has caught 77 shad, 3 juvenile stripers, and 1 herring (Alewife?) and says this is the earliest he's caught this number of shad in 14 years. Alewife numbers continue to build on Mill Brook in Old Lyme, where record numbers have passed fishway #1 (Mary Steube) and #3 (Rogers Lake). Alewives were seen in the lower Moulson Pond Fishway but so far none have been recorded exiting the fishway (past the video camera). A few more have passed the StanChem fishway but overall it remains slow with not a lot of fish sightings in the lower tributaries. The White Sucker run is in full force and we've counted 192 at StanChem along with 2 Brown Trout, 2 Common Carp, 4 Smallmouth Bass, and 3 Largemouth Bass. Moulson Pond monitor Valinn Ranelli has counted 59 White Suckers passing the Moulson Pond Fishway and while we have no counting capability at Leesville, there is no doubt that fishway on the Salmon River is passing boatloads of suckers. In an effort to reduce the number of necessary fishway checks at Leesville, we have removed the sorting gate, which means everything can pass upstream, unconstrained. We plan on re-installing the sorting gate in May when the sucker run subsides and the chance of an incoming salmon increases. Many active eagle nests in the lower Connecticut River, including ones near Dart Island, Clarkhurst, Goodspeed Airport, Ely Ferry's, Selden Island, and Hamburg Cove in Lyme. Lots of ospreys around the streams, including one checking out the new Wiederhold (Millpond) Fishway in Essex, featured in last week's report. When I was listing the funding for that project, I omitted the Essex Land Trust, which contributed \$15,000 toward the Dolan and Millpond projects. The land trust has and continues to be an important partner with these fishways.

KENSINGTON POND FISHWAY- This week's featured fishway is located on the Mattabeset River in the Kensington section of Berlin, several miles upstream of the StanChem Fishway. The pond is also known as Railroad Pond due to its proximity to the rail line. The dam was built in 1904 to supply water to the steam engines and the nearby railroad power house and now is owned by the Town of Berlin. The surrounding land is a town-owned nature preserve. When the Town realized that it needed to repair the dam, it applied for a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to build a fishway at the same time. The grant was awarded and the fishway was completed in December. The steepass fishway was designed by Macchi Engineering and constructed by D'Amato construction, which also repaired the dam. The dam is 18.5 feet tall and that makes this fishway second in height only to the Bunnells Pond Fishway in Bridgeport for steepass fishways in Connecticut. The Mattabeset River, which flows into the Connecticut River at Middletown, is targeted for restoration of river herring, American Shad, and Sea Lamprey, all of which pass through the downstream StanChem Fishway. However, there is not suitable habitat for American Shad above this dam, therefore the steepass design (which is not recommended for shad) was chosen. There is a natural waterfall that has historically blocked all fish migrations a short distance upstream of the pond behind this dam but the pond will be good spawning and nursery habitat for Alewife. We have been releasing pre-spawned Alewives upstream of the dam to jump-start the restoration. This facility also includes an adjacent pipe that serves as both attraction water to the fishway and a bypass route for downstream migrating fish. A feed line for an eel pass was also included and our program is beginning the installation of that today and we'll show photos of the operational eel pass later in the season.



This is a construction photo of the steepass fishway. There is a grating locked down on the top of the fishway for safety and the sides were being backfilled with rip rap when this photo was taken. The dam's spillway can be seen to the left. The attraction water pipe is buried alongside the steepass.



This is a construction photo of the entrance of the steepass fishway. The attraction water/downstream bypass pipe is to the right and the slab to the left is where the eel pass will be installed.

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)	14	18	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	
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	3	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	47	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	8,582	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gortons Pond* (Pattaganset R., E.Lyme)		71		(no additional data expected; had to take counter to Brides)				
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		272,066						
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Brook, OSaybrook)		7,987						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		30	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	17		-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		124	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	38	0	1	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)		1,122	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= 4/8 Taftville= na Occum= na Tunnel= na Kinneytown= na Haakonsen= 4/6 Hallville= 4/8 Hanover= 4/5

Bunnells= na Chapmans= 4/8** 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:

Yesterday's storm dumped 1-3" of rain in parts of our state and the high flows are affecting fishways. Jeff at Norwich Public Utilities reports they had to shut down the Greenville Fishlift due to high water and Patrick of New England Hydro reports that the Hanover Pond Fishway was overtopped and with so much spill, not operating very effectively. Our crew scrambled to get data from most of the coastal fishways yesterday before the rain came and is back out today removing debris from fishways. We have had occasional warm days but the weather remains cool with cool nights (frost is forecasted for parts of the state for the next few nights!) and we assume that the low water temperatures are holding back runs. Some fishways doubled their numbers this past week but numbers remain low, especially west of the Connecticut River. Last week, I overlooked the data from Mianus Pond Fishway, which already had its counter re-installed. The number in the table is an undercount from when the counter was out, but they probably didn't miss too many. Also from western Connecticut, Gregg from Beardsley Zoo reports good activity at the Bunnells Pond Fishway, around 500 fish in the area from last week. Jon with Save the Sound has increased his monitoring activity this year and reports 177 Alewives from Whitfords Brook (upstream of former Hyde Pond Dam), 8 at Konolds Pond on the West River, and 3 from Haley's Brook in Mystic. Our crews have been checking many other streams and have not seen much else. We are hearing that runs have really picked up in Rhode Island. We don't have a lot of details but have heard the Saugatucket River was "solid" with fish. Reports from FirstLight fishways upstream of Greenville will likely be late due to COVID-19 issues. Other than supporting Yale University research at Rogers Lake, we have finished our trucking of Alewives for the year, having moved a record 28,152 fish. Last week I credited the Mary Steube Fishway window photo to Denise Savageau, who did submit some photos of the fishway. However, that particular photo was provided by local resident Markley Boyer.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 4,355 glass/27 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 1,735 glass/16 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.



We've noticed that there are a lot of large Alewives in the run this year. Here is a nice one netted from the Mianus Pond Fishway (photo courtesy of B. Stanton). I hope that Alewife doesn't have COVID-19 ☺



The folks at the Mianus Pond Fishway are reporting lots of glass eels in their eel pass nets. Numbers at our two index sites are still modest. Some eel passes are not operational yet. In this photo, you can see the transparent body with the black eyes and the dark spinal cord. Once this fish starts feeding in freshwater, it will take on the greenish pigment characteristic of American Eels. (photo courtesy of B. Stanton)