

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 20, 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	11	0	0	0	0	26	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	63	15	28	-	9	0	2
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	99	85	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	37,318		-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)			2,811						
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	55,551	0	69	19	6	384	0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	38	-	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	55,562	37,480	169	47	6	419	0	2
(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:

Finally a week without snow or frost warnings! The water is warming and the runs are accelerating. Runs of both American Shad and Sea Lamprey are building up, with Holyoke passing 7,000-9,000 shad daily. By now, those numbers are probably into five digits. You can see that the run has reached Turners Falls. Angling has really picked up with good reports at both Holyoke, Enfield, and Wilson. We are also seeing shad in tributaries (Farmington River) and presumably the Westfield (no report yet) where we always expect them. We also saw one in the Mattabeset River where we've been trucking (but it turned around and dropped back down the StanChem fishway); and we've seen them in a few places where we don't typically expect them Salmon and Eightmile rivers. It is too early to make conclusions, but it seems like it will be a good year. We've been monitoring river herring runs and have been a bit surprised at what we've seen. We assumed the Alewife run is over and we've been seeing lots of spent adults heading downstream at many locations, including at Rogers Lake and Lower Millpond (Mary Steube) on Mill Brook in Old Lyme. For two quick videos of Alewives passing down a bypass channel at the Lower Millpond Dam, go to: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-2gNRUMOMGI94QPBK_nadMhSL1CzCCov (compliments of Andrew MacDonald of Yale). When fish started showing up at fishways at Mary Steube, Moulson Pond and Millpond, we assumed they were spent fish going downstream. We sampled fish below Mary Steube and found one fresh Blueback (a first) and fresh, pre-spawned Alewives. I snorkeled Falls River in Essex and came to the same conclusion: there are downrunning Alewives, uprunning Alewives, and uprunning Bluebacks, using all three Essex fishways! Bluebacks have been present regularly in the Salmon River from the 14th until the 19th, and in Pine Brook and Moodus River on at least one of those days. They were also in the Eightmile over the weekend but we don't have counts for Moulson Pond yet because of a loss of a video playback station. We will review that video soon. Also, Bluebacks reported spawning in the upper reaches of Lords Cove. And minutes ago, volunteer monitor Denis Walter reports active spawning of Bluebacks in Wethersfield Cove. All of these observations along with those from elsewhere in the state makes us think we are going to have the best Blueback Herring run in many years. There's a good pulse of Striped Bass coming upriver, with many of them quite small. Lots of other fish moving, too, including White Suckers, still a few Yellow Perch, Smallmouth Bass, White Perch and some hatchery trout.

Last week, Bruce Williams stocked a total of 110,500 Kensington Atlantic Salmon fry in the Farmington River. Today he is finishing up with another 36,000. He reports that river conditions for stocking are great and but the number of people fishing on the river is very high—every day is like Opening Day. Our Department is encouraging folks to get outdoors and fish, hike and birdwatch but still practice socially distancing, even when fishing a pool with others.



A recent grilled shad dinner (asparagus provided later). Last week I listed a few places in the Valley to buy shad and Eric Thomas of the DEEP reported that the fish market on Main Street Willimantic sells it in the east and Rob Barbieri reported that New Morning Market in Woodbury sells it in the west.



Seasonal worker Jake Rawlings displays a brown trout taken from the trap at the Leesville Fishway on the Salmon River. It was released along with a bunch of White Suckers. The sucker run is winding down now.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

<u>FISHWAY</u> (RIVER)	<u>AMER.</u> <u>SHAD</u>	<u>ALEWIFE</u>	<u>BLUEBACK</u> <u>HERRING</u>	<u>GIZZARD</u> <u>SHAD</u>	<u>STRIPED</u> <u>BASS</u>	<u>SEA</u> <u>LAMPREY</u>	<u>SEA-RUN</u> <u>TROUT</u>	<u>AMER.</u> <u>EEL</u>
Greeneville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	839	133	4	16	2	2	0	2
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)	1	0	4	0	0	2	0	5
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	45	0	(plenty of trout)		0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	101	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	17,491	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gortons Pond* (Pattaganset R., E.Lyme)		71		(no additional data expected; had to take counter to Brides)				
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		409,115		FINAL- COUNTER OUT				
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Brook, OSaybrook)		12,468		FINAL- COUNTER OUT				
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		234	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	185		-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		354	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	2	333	11	12	0	153	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		4	0	2	-	73	-	2
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		<i>fish in fishway/no estimate</i> (Operating but no videography this season due to COVID-19)						
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		2,596	155	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= 5/18 Taftville= na Occum= na Tunnel= 5/14 Kinneytown= 5/15 Haakonsen= 5/18 Hallville= 5/18 Hanover= 5/17

Bunnells= na Chapmans= 5/18 **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:

Much of the discussion for river herring in the Connecticut River section pertains to the coastal area as well. We are seeing spent Alewives pour out of Bride Lake and we're seeing Blueback Herring show up at some of the expected spots (e.g. Greenville on the Shetucket, Mianus Pond on the Mianus) and some places where we don't expect them like Whitford Brook, where Jon from Save the Sound has trapped 18 along with 4 American Shad! We saw herring spawning in the Housatonic off Sullivan Island but not sure which species it was. Sarah Coccaro of the Greenwich Conservation Commission and her volunteers dipnet herring out of the Mianus Pond Fishway and identify them to species and then use that Alewife:Blueback ratio in the sample to help estimate the number of each species that go through the electronic fish counter. For this past week, we are using a 70 Blueback to 30 Alewife ratio. Yet, while there's been a moderate action in some areas, other areas like the Clarks Pond Fishway in Milford and the lower Quinnipiac River tributaries remain quiet and other coastal fishways that were hot (like Fishing Brook) are now quiet. Most of these streams are considered predominantly Alewife streams and this may signal those runs are over. The Haakonsen Fishway on the Quinnipiac River started to pass some fish this week and some of the lampreys have moved up through the Hanover Pond Fishway, but so far the river herring runs have been disappointing.

Last week, we reported the grand opening of the Pages Millpond Fishway on the Farm River in North Branford. We installed a rudimentary trap in the long exit raceway by inserted a V gate at the downstream end and a blocking net at the upstream end. After crowding the fish into a smaller area, we can identify and count the fish that come up the fishway. Immediately we started trapping White Suckers and Brown Trout, which are being released upstream. (See photo below, right). Also last week I mentioned that the Connecticut River Conservancy posted a seven-minute YouTube video on the new fishways on the Falls River in Essex. It premiered on May 15th but if you haven't seen it, it is a good opportunity to tour these steep pass fishways without having to go there. The audio is not synched well to the video but you can still understand it easily. Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSZjTfkh8eY>.

Richard Hyman of Future Frogmen in Westport sent us this link to a fun article in the New Yorker about eels:

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/25/where-do-eels-come-from?utm_source=nl&utm_brand=tny&utm_mailing=TNY_Magazine_Daily_052520&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_medium=email&bxid=5bd67a0724c17c1048027380&cid=44041752&hasha=e2e8b7f961e7601a921848482711a0b4&hashb=ccb9fe6157b883585fbd5cdc7a21da66fb3817e9&hashc=b18fcdfdfb48d168ee06e452e7953450c6ecad124837d902ec76e99639491d57&esrc=&utm_term=TNY_Daily

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 9,016 glass/70 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 16,862 glass/326 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 0 glass/0 yellow; Hanover Pond= 29 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= 0 glass/0 yellow. Occum= 0 yellow eels; Kinneytown= 0 yellow.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is 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. **DAVE WILLIAMS OF ICRV REPORTS THAT IN APRIL THIS SHOW HAD 50,000 LISTENERS! THANKS TO ALL!**



The first Blueback Herring to be netted from the Mianus Pond Fishway this year.



The first fish to arrive at the trap at the Pages Mill Fishway.