

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 26, 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	496	0	0	0	0	1,748	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	0	63	15	28	-	9	0	2
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	1	10	90	0	0	1	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	37,888	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	2,842	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	274,370	0	493	33	13	384	0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	375	-	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	274,867	37,961	598	61	13	2,142	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:

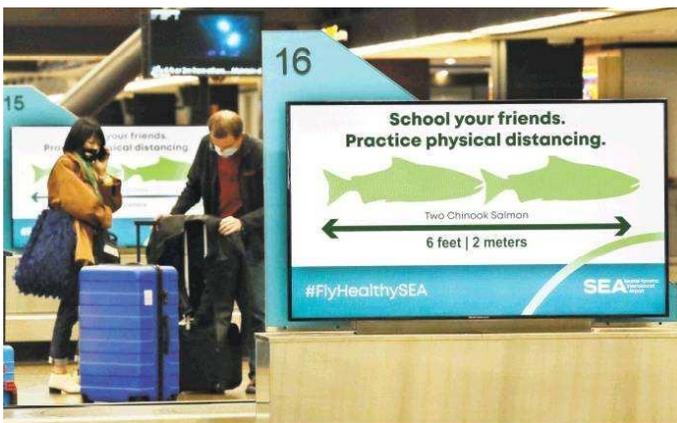
We're starting to put up some serious numbers of shad at the Holyoke Dam Fishlift now. Last Thursday they lifted over 54,000 shad in one day and another 30,000+ the next day. Conditions are good for passage. The water temperature is still pretty cool at 17C (63F) and low river flows. We're just getting caught up with the video at Rainbow and so far we had our best day on the 17th when we had 318 shad and 973 lamprey passing the window. Bruce reports the shad seem a bit small but highly motivated. Some shoot past the window so quickly they are barely captured on video. Sea Lamprey are showing up in many places and the Rainbow count has already surpassed the 2019 final count. You can see the Blueback Herring numbers are inching up at Holyoke. We did not see them in large numbers elsewhere this week but there was one day when a good sized school was spawning in Wethersfield Cove. We seem to be between waves in the Salmon River but that could turn around quickly.

We should be trucking shad out of Holyoke now but due to the pandemic precautions, no trucking will occur this year.

Due to the large amount of video to review for Rainbow Fishway, we were not able to review and update StanChem numbers.

Atlantic Salmon fry stocking was just completed for the 2020 season on 5/20 with a total of 150,354 fry stocked out of the Kensington Hatchery (Farmington River and selected tributaries) and 72,000 stocked out the Tripp's incubators at the Tributary Mill Conservancy (Salmon River and selected tributaries). An additional 1,008 1-year parr were also stocked out of Kensington this spring (Farmington River). The smolt run, as monitored at the Rainbow Fishway, has not seemed to have increased in number over the last week and may be over.

Here is some unsettling news from the Susquehanna River: Fish passage operations commenced on the afternoon of May 12 at Conowingo Dam's east fish lift. It was started late due to concerns over the pandemic. Over the course of four days, lift operators observed 35 Northern Snakeheads within the east fish lift; 14 of the invasive fish were able to be netted and removed, while another 21 entered the Conowingo Pool. Due to the concern over increased invasive species passage and the lateness of the season for successful American Shad passage (their run is a lot earlier than ours), the Susquehanna River Anadromous Fish Restoration Cooperative (SRAFRC) recommended that fish passage operations be immediately ceased to prevent further passage of snakeheads. Fish passage operations at the Holtwood and Safe Harbor dams upriver were also ceased immediately, although no snakeheads were observed at either location. So far, we have not observed any snakeheads in the Connecticut River and we're all working to keep it that way. A photo of a snakehead is shown below, right. They resemble Bowfins, which are quite common in the river now, but Bowfins have a big black spot at the base of their tail (which snakeheads don't have) don't have the long, snake-like head (which snakeheads have). Snakeheads have been common in other Chesapeake River tributaries and that's probably how they got to the Susquehanna. People imported them for food and for the aquarium trade. They have been released when they get too big. Once in streams, they have been decimating native fish populations. **NEVER RELEASE PET FISH INTO THE WILD!!!!**



Salmon are important to Seattle and its airport. Perhaps we can get Bradley International Airport (Hartford-Springfield) to put up a similar sign using American Shad. (Thanks to Ernie Pizzuto for both of these photos)



A Northern Snakehead from the Susquehanna River.

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)	1,605	133	4	22	2	2	0	3
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)	-	46	0	(plenty of trout)		0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	203	FINAL COUNTER OUT -			-	-	-
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	17,569	-	-	-	-	-	-
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)		12,084	FINAL- COUNTER OUT					
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		234	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	187		FINAL- COUNTER OUT -			-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		373	FINAL- COUNTER OUT -			-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	2	333	13	12	0	154	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		4	0	3	-	119	-	6
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)		3,126	1,379	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= 5/20 Taftville= na Occum= na Tunnel= 5/14 Kinneytown= 5/20 Haakonsen= 5/20 Hallville= 5/20 Hanover= 5/25 Bunnells= na Chapmans= 5/20 **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:

Let's start out with Alewives, which are pretty much done in the east but still hanging out in the west. You can see from the table that we have shut down many of the fish counters. No more up-running fish and a lot of downrunning fish. Sometimes those downrunning fish get confused and turn around and go back up a fishway. We don't want to over-count the run so once we're sure the run is over, we pull the counter to make sure we don't count spent fish. We'll compare all the numbers later but for right now it is easy to call out the good numbers at Brides, Latimers, and Fishing brooks as well as Mary Steube and Rogers Lake over on the Connecticut River section. Runs are picking up in the Mianus River, Mill River, and Sasco Brook but all of them can have Blueback Herring and without sampling we don't know whether this is a late strong push of Alewives or a good showing of Blueback Herring. And we have no idea what is going on at Bunnells Pond in Bridgeport other than a lot of fish have been moving through there. The Quinnipiac River also has a run of both species and so far both have been disappointing. Very little going on in the lower river tributaries where Dennis Bennett and his assistant are monitoring and numbers at the Haakonsen and Hanover Pond fishways are still anemic. But conditions remain good, so we'll see what happens next week. Due to time off and the holidays, many of our video counts are still behind by close to a week so maybe there are some good counts waiting for us in saved video files.

Hey, look at those shad numbers at Greenville—and that increase reflects only two additional days of passage since last week. A strong wave of shad moving up the Shetucket River, unfortunately not bringing many river herring up with them. We did not get a report from FirstLight this week so we'll look to next week's data to see if any of those shad pass the next fishways. In the Connecticut River section, I reported a big uptick in Sea Lamprey numbers. We don't have many Sea Lamprey runs in other rivers in Connecticut but that's the one species that seems to have picked up on the Quinnipiac River, with over 75% of the lampreys passing Haakonsen Fishway in Wallingford are also passing up the Hanover Pond Fishway in Meriden.

We are working on getting more of our seasonally-installed eel passes up and running and hope to start providing data from some more of the eel passes listed below in the next couple of weeks.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 10,116 glass/75 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 18,475 glass/410 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 0 glass/0 yellow; Hanover Pond= 89 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.



Interns with the Greenwich Conservation Commission netting out fish from a resting pool to determine the ratio of Alewives to Blueback Herring.



A Black-crowned Night Heron grabbing a river herring (photo by B.Stanton).