

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: June 2, 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	484	0	0	0	0	2,774	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	63	18	28	-	9	0	2
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	2	107	149	0	0	6	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	37,888	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	2,842	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	3,780	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	328,523	0	751	44	105	27,032	0	900
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	8,130	-	0	0	0	153	-	-
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	352,787	38,058	918	72	105	29,821	0	902
(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 shad run in the river is still strong and the numbers lifted at the Holyoke Dam Fishlift have surpassed the long-term average. Conditions remain good for passage and we hope it will last. These cool nights have helped keep the river from “over-heating”. Fish are moving up past the Turners Falls dam now and hopefully we’ll see that number take a big jump in next week’s report and we can start logging some numbers at the next upstream fishway at the Vernon Dam. Ken Sprankle (USFWS) reports good angling for shad at the ‘rock dam’ below the Turners Falls dam. Although we didn’t see much for shad at Rainbow this past week, Caleb Slater of MassWildlife reports a good wave of shad (and lamprey) moving up the West Springfield Fishway on the Westfield River. We continue to see more Blueback Herring than we have in years, although we had hoped to have lifted more at Holyoke by now. Another long wave came in at Leesville and we had spawning in both Crow Point and Wethersfield Cove.

In addition to a strong shad run, it appears we are having a strong Sea Lamprey run, perhaps the best in recent years. The lift numbers at Holyoke Dam has already surpassed the long-term average. They seem to be spawning early this year and we’re seeing nests in many tributaries. Joe Ravita of the Burlington Hatchery reports active spawning right now in the Farmington River in Unionville (upstream of Rainbow) and you can easily see the nests and the fish spawning off the Rt. 177 bridge. You can also see them below the falls on Higganum Creek and at Leesville on the Salmon River, although those are more difficult to see from the river bank. But, apparently not from the sky. See the photo of a Bald Eagle carrying away a lamprey in its talons below. I often see empty nests at Leesville before the time I would expect empty nests. This photos makes me wonder if the eagles sit up in the trees and wait for the lampreys to appear on the nests in the shallow and very clear water. Many anadromous wait until nighttime to move up through shallow water but by the time lampreys are spawning, they are blind and may not be able to tell (or care) if it is day or night. (Great photo by our former seasonal worker and now NC State student Shannon Dolan.)

Shannon and I snorkeled and she got some great underwater video of Blueback Herring but the files are too large to share. But we saw a large surge of American Eels coming upstream and using our eel pass to get around the Leesville Dam. Typically we see mostly the young-of-the-year elvers climbing up the rocks but we also saw a large number of what appeared to be last year’s elvers coming up as well. You may recall that we had a record number of glass eels last year at our coastal monitoring stations so maybe we are seeing that bumper crop move up through the watershed.



A mature Bald Eagle flying away from the camera at Leesville (Salmon River) with an adult Sea Lamprey (photo by Shannon Dolan).



A dead Blueback Herring on the beach at Wethersfield Cove, where the fish have been in spawning on several occasions. There is an active eagle nest close to this site as well. (Photo Jake Rawlings)

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)	2,905	133	5	35	3	3	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	12
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	2	0	4	0	0	2	0	24
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	51	0	(plenty of trout)		0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	203	FINAL COUNTER OUT -					
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	17,569	FINAL COUNTER OUT -					
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** 187 (Queach Br., Branford)			FINAL- COUNTER OUT -					
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		373	FINAL- COUNTER OUT -					
Haakonsen Fishway* 4 (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)		333	40	12	0	258	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		4	0	4	-	15	-	7
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	<i>fish in fishway/no estimate (Operating but no videography this season due to COVID-19)</i>							
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		3,204	1,699	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= 6/01 Taftville= 5/26 Occum= na Tunnel= 5/26 Kinneytown= 6/01 Haakonsen= 6/01 Hallville= 6/01 Hanover= 5/25 Bunnells= na Chapmans= 6/01 **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:

We're closing down fishways now for lack of water, in addition to lack of fish. Latimers was closed down today and Chapmans Pond will be closed tomorrow. Other fishways not on the table are being closed as well. What that leaves us with in this section are:

Bunnells- we have no video this year so we don't know the status of the Alewife run but since a few are still trickling in further west, maybe a few are still running in the Pequonnock. Our guy Brendan is still seeing a lot of bird activity at Bunnells so that adds to the possibility. He also saw a Sea Lamprey nesting in one of the lower pools of the Pequonnock Apron Fishway (downstream of Bunnells at Glenwood Park) so we want to keep the fishway open for them. He is seeing both fish and birds in the Mill River in Fairfield and below the Bulkley Pond Dam in Fairfield/Westport.

Mianus Pond Fishway- During this past week, passage has been slow but yesterday they had one of their biggest days this season with over 1,000 fish going through (80% Blueback Herring according to their sample, see photo below). Those numbers will be reported next week but it shows that while the runs are over in the east, they are still going on in the west.

Haakonsen Fishway- The Quinnipiac remains very slow; not much added this week except lamprey, and they are continuing to move upstream through the Hanover Pond Fishway. Dennis Bennett reports nothing happening in the tidewater tributaries of the Quinnipiac. He did document lamprey getting over the ledge drop off Velvet Road on the Muddy River, which is a first report for us.

Kinneytown- We're only seeing Lamprey here.

Shetucket River- The best shad run there in many years. It looks like we'll break 3,000 at Greenville. Sadly, it looks not almost none of them are getting up the next two fishways.

Jon of Save the Sound has been monitoring traps in a handful of smaller streams and the only action this past week was two Alewives in Whitford Brook—and a small striper (see photo below).

So, in summary, the runs in the small coastal streams are over in the east but still going in the west but larger streams that support multiple species are plugging along. We need rain. The showers we've been having has been great for flowers but has not refreshed the streams. A day-long soak could bring the flows back up again and help draw in the last of the spring fish runs.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 10,782 glass/84 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 23,849 glass/590 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 10 glass/27 yellow; Hanover Pond= 349 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. **NO NEW SHOW THIS WEEK—I'M BUSY WITH THE NASCO ANNUAL MEETING—VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE.**



Volunteers with the Greenwich Conservation Commission netting out fish from a resting pool to determine the ratio of Alewives to Blueback Herring. We showed a photo of this activity last week but here we actually show them getting fish this week.



Jon VanderWerff of Save the Sound has been monitoring fish runs in Whitford Brook with a trap. In addition to Alewife, he captured this young Striped Bass.