

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: June 9, 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	501	0	0	0	0	3,599	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	1	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	0	63	18	28	-	10	0	2
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	2	107	150	0	0	14	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	37,888	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	2,842	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	5,093	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	351,644	0	761	55	270	33,398	1	1,678
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	0	17,360	-	0	0	0	867	-	-
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	357,241	38,058	929	166	270	37,021	1	1,680
(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:

Shad have left the lower river and the netters stopped fishing about two weeks ago. The fish markets are no longer selling shad fillets. Although shad passage at the upstream fishways has slowed, we have strong numbers to report. Holyoke has surpassed last year's totals and the long-term average; the West Springfield (MA) fishway has reached its long-term average; Rainbow has exceeded last year's total and its five-year average. It has clearly been a good shad run. The Turners Falls numbers are only as of May 28 due to video backlog so that number will climb as fish keep pushing upstream. We don't have numbers for the Vernon (VT) fishway probably due to staff limitations in reviewing video records but with over 17,000 through Turners Falls, there must be shad through Vernon. To add to the excitement, we passed our first shad ever at the Leesville Fishway on the Salmon River this past week. It was a male and since we have not passed any females and the upstream habitat is not really shad habitat, I suspect he may be a bit disappointed. We have not passed as many Blueback Herring at Holyoke as I would have predicted and Ken Sprankle (USFWS) just got out sampling for the first time this year (due to COVID precautions) and he said most of the bluebacks that he sampled were spent so the upstream migration is probably over. We did observe Blueback Herring spawning in Wethersfield Cove, Crow Point, and Salmon Cove all week long. Another bright spot is Sea Lamprey. After years of declining numbers, we are experiencing a strong run, with numbers up everywhere. The Rainbow figure has surpassed the five-year average. While snorkeling at Leesville, I've seen unprecedented numbers of nests below the dam. Spawning seems to be early this year, as well. We have a good video of lampreys nesting at Leesville and I'll try to post it for next week. Last week I mentioned that Shannon Dolan got some great underwater video of Blueback Herring at Leesville. She has now posted them to YouTube and you can see them. The first was of her holding the camera underwater: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oM87qAfgp4A> Be patient—the bluebacks come in really close after a couple of minutes. The second one is of her and me snorkeling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKRpejXONUA> It starts out with Smallmouth Bass, then a Brook Trout and some White Suckers and Redbreast Sunfish but after a while we crawl up the rock pools that support our eel pass and you start to see lots of American Eels swarming upstream and trying to use the eel pass (underwater chain). You'll see some Common Shiners mixed in. The eel run is quite strong this year. By next week, I'll see if I can post some videos of more eel rock climbing and Sea Lamprey spawning.

Past research has shown that shad and river herring larvae survive best when the river is warm and stable (not in flood). The critical period is right now and those conditions exist. So with a bit of luck we will have both a large spawning population and good larval survival—a nice combination that could create a strong 2020 year class. It will be interesting to see the data from our Juvenile Index survey this summer and fall—assuming permission is granted to do field work. Also note that Holyoke lifted its first Shortnose Sturgeon of the year. Most sturgeon come up later in the season so we hope this is the first of many.



Anglers fishing for shad at the 'Rock Dam', a ledge on the Connecticut River between the Turners Falls dam and Cabot Station where electricity is generated. Shad can get over this drop but it congregates there and makes for good fishing.



A Sea Lamprey building a nest in a gravelly stream. Upstream is to the right where it is piling the rocks that it removes to create the circular depression. It will be joined by another fish for spawning.

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)	3,083	133	5	36	6	3	0	4	
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Scotland* (Shetucket R. Windham)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	5	0	4	0	0	2	0	26	
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	8	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	FINAL- CAMERA OUT			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	42	13	0	258	0	0	
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		4	0	4	-	162	-	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)		3,561	3,146	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= 6/08 Taftville= 6/01 Occum= na Tunnel= 6/01 Kinneytown= 6/08 Haakonsen= 6/08 Hallville= 6/08 Hanover= 6/03 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:

This is the time of year when the coastal streams shut down and all attention focuses on the Connecticut River (previous section). But the runs are not entirely over—just yet. There are still some fish running up the Shetucket River, which has posted its best numbers in years. The same can be said for shad through Tunnel and Taftville, although those numbers are not particularly good, just better. Jon of Save the Sound has pulled all of his monitoring traps except the one in Whitford Brook, where he trapped a total of 325 Alewife, 18 Blueback Herring, four shad, and two Striped Bass. This is a great testament to the benefit of removing the Hyde Pond Fishway, which Save the Sound did a few years ago.

The other place where river herring keep filtering in is the Mianus Pond Fishway in Greenwich, which added more fish to its count—mostly Blueback Herring. It is interesting that the Mianus River runs have developed into one of the earliest to start and one of the last to end. The reason for the latter is probably a combination between its location in western Long Island Sound and the fact that it has one the strongest Blueback Herring runs in western Connecticut. Sarah Cocco is the Conservation Resource Manager for the Town and runs the fishway with a group of volunteers. She has shared with us some underwater video of river herring in that fishway and passing through the tubes of the electronic fish counter. It is fun to see them fly through in bursts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uvq4nR4jfGY&feature=youtu.be> It's about five minutes long and worth the look. Thanks for sharing.

I received an underwater photo of an Atlantic Salmon stocked broodstock under the Kinneytown Dam from Kevin Zak. It may not be too happy right now since the hydro operator has drawn down the pond to replace the missing flashboards, which is a good thing for the fishway. It's just too bad they couldn't do it prior to the end of the fish runs. You'll note we only pass a few lamprey in that fishway this year. Replacing the flashboards is essential but it has resulted in an unavoidable fish kill that we are investigating now. I'll note that I continue to get reports from many volunteers but I'm not including them because they are not seeing anything. The runs in Fairfield County and the lower Quinnipiac, etc. are all over but we appreciate their diligence and hanging in there to the very end. Their eyes on the streams were particularly helpful this year as our crew was not able to travel as extensively throughout the state.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 12,515 glass/102 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 44,076 glass/775 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 29 glass/4 yellow; Hanover Pond= 508 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= 0 glass/0 yellow. Tunnel= 3,148 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. I'm probably talking about the elver run this week.



This year's young-of-year American Eel elver. Large numbers are now well inland, working their way upstream.



Greenwich Conservation Commission intern Frankie checking the eel trap inside the Mianus Pond Fishway resting pool (photo S. Cocco, Town of Greenwich).