

# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 6, 2011



This is a report generated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection/ Inland Fisheries Division- Diadromous Program. For more information, contact Steve Gephard, 860/447-4316. For more information about fish runs on the Connecticut River call the USFWS Hotline at 413/548-9628 or visit the USFWS website at [www.fws.gov/r5crc](http://www.fws.gov/r5crc). For more information about Atlantic salmon, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association at [www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org).

## CONNECTICUT RIVER LOCATIONS

FISHWAY (RIVER)	ATLANTIC SALMON	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Rainbow (Farmington)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	0	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube <sup>+</sup> (Mill Brook)	-	-	480	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	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	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0/0								
<b>TOTALS=</b>	0/0	0	9	0++	0	0	0	0	0
<b>(last year's totals)</b>	50/10	168,430	10000s	92++	370	297	44,711	5	542

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.

\* The number before the slash indicates the total number of salmon seen at the fishway that were not counted at downstream fishways. The number after the slash is the number of those fish that were allowed to continue upstream of the dam. The others were captured for breeding.

\*\*Many of these species move at night. There is a video camera that records overnight passage when staff is not present. So this count is a combination of real-time counts and video counts. 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.

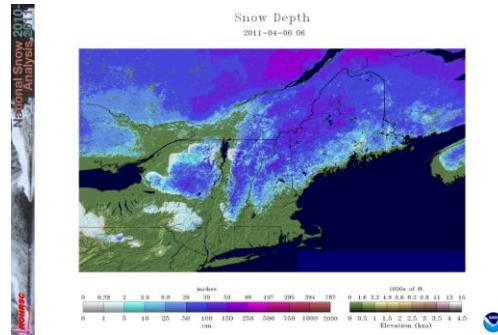
\*\*\* Population estimates based on end-of-the-season nest surveys.

+There is an electronic fish counter at this fishway. ++This total does not include the imprecise estimates at Moulson Pond Fishway.

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.

## COMMENTS:

Not much has begun on the Connecticut River. We had an early freshet in March that put the typical places underwater (like Rt. 17A in Portland) but the prolonged cold weather has delayed further melt. While most of the snow is gone from CT and MA, plenty remains in VT and NH. See this map from NOAA:



Clearly there is a lot more run-off coming. Currently, the flow is at 32,600 cfs, which is below the long-term average for this date. The water remains cold—Rich Murray of Holyoke Gas and Electric reported last week that the water temperature was still 1 C (32.6 F). Water in the tributaries in Connecticut is much warmer. While anglers are catching a few striped bass in Hamburg Cove, they appear to be fish that over-wintered and a new wave of spring fish has not yet arrived. During the warm spell in mid-March, alewives entered the river and came up the first tributary to the Mary Steube Fishway in Old Lyme. However, they dropped back down after the cold snap and never reached the next tributary—the Eightmile River—and Moulson Pond Fishway. The run has now resumed at Mary Steube and large numbers are currently below the dam. It won't be long before they show up at Moulson Pond and Leesville. It also won't be long before the first shad are reported in the lower river.

The Holyoke Fishlift is not yet operational. We plan to open the Rainbow Fishway for the season next week. Rainbow lost its boards during the high water in March but they are completely replaced and conditions are looking okay for the start of the fish passage season. The Farmington River Power Company is in the process of re-calibrating its computer program that manages the gate to the downstream fish passage system but it sounds like that will be ready in time. Just like last year, the floods overtopped the Leesville Dam Fishway and left a big pile of debris on top of it. We have removed most of it but a second trip tomorrow will be needed to finish the job and prepare the fishway for opening, which should occur sometime before next Monday. Hopefully by next week's report, we can provide some actual fish observations.

We have stocked hatchery-reared Atlantic salmon smolts into the Farmington River (see photos below). These are night stockings to minimize predation and to better acclimate the fish for night-time migration, which is the norm for wild salmon smolts. We hope to have a short video of the stocking ready for next week's report. You may have heard: **WE HAVE DISCOVERED DIDYMO ("ROCK SNOT") IN THE FARMINGTON RIVER.** PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?Q=476204&A=4013> TO LEARN MORE. If you fish the Farmington River, the information on this webpage is important to you.



Releasing smolts into the Rainbow Dam tailrace. Note ramps to tilt truck toward the river to help drain the last of the water.



Once the hose is connected, Tim Wildman raises the knife gate to release the water and fish for a 20 ft descent to the river.

## OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

<b>FISHWAY (RIVER)</b>	<b>AMER. <u>SHAD</u></b>	<b><u>ALEWIFE</u></b>	<b><u>BLUEBACK HERRING</u></b>	<b><u>GIZZARD SHAD</u></b>	<b><u>STRIPED BASS</u></b>	<b><u>SEA LAMPREY</u></b>	<b><u>SEA-RUN TROUT</u></b>	<b>AMER. <u>EEL</u></b>
<b>Greeneville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Taftville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Occum*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Versailles Pond</b> (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Tunnel*</b> (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Kinneytown*</b> (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Whitfords Brook</b> (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	none seen						
<b>Trading Cove Brook</b> (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		none seen (counter not yet in)						
<b>Latimers Brook+</b> (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		3						
<b>Gorton Pond</b> (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		present (not enumerated, low numbers)						
<b>Brides Brook**</b> (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		41,427						
<b>Fishing Brook</b> (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		12						
<b>Capello Pond**</b> (East River, Guilford)		none seen						
<b>Branford Supply Pond Dam**</b> (Queach Br., Branford)		0						
<b>Bunnells Pond</b> (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		none seen						
<b>Wood Dam**</b> (Saugatuck R., Westport)		29						
<b>Mianus River Pond**</b> (Mianus R., Greenwich)		4,963	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= n.a. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a.. Kinneytown= n.a.*

**\*\***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.

**+***This location has a fish trap and fish are enumerated prior to release.*

*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:

The alewives showed up at Bride Brook on schedule in early March during that warm spell. Numbers have been low due to cold weather until this past weekend when over 30,000 came in. This pace is ahead of most past years. The fish started coming in soon thereafter at the Mianus Fishway but Joe Cassone from the Town of Greenwich explains that the counts were a bit confounded by a slug of downrunning gizzard shad. Mianus had a good day over the weekend, too, (742) and the numbers should continue to rise with more typical spring-like weather on its way. You can see from the table above that fish have nosed into a few other places, but we expect larger numbers to be on the board by next week. Water temperatures along the shoreline have ranged from 5 – 9 C (41 – 48 F). Luckily, all of the coastal fishways seem to have come through the March floods without a problem. You'll recall that during the March 31 floods of 2010, the lower portion of the Trading Cove Brook Fishway was washed away. After these reports ended at the end of June, the Department received a FEMA grant to fund the repairs and we developed a cooperative project between the Inland Fisheries Division, the Agency Support Services Division, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Steward B. McKinney Wildlife Refuge. The lower section of steep pass fishway was re-attached with a new entrance and intermediate support. Most of the work was done during one long day in October. The fishway is now open and working great (see photo below from last fall). This year we will put our "roving fish counter" (thanks to Save the Sound) at Trading Cove Brook to enumerate the alewives using that fishway for the first time. Last year, the roving counter was employed at Capello Pond and we counted over 30,000 alewives using that fishway. This year, we have enlisted the aid of SCSU student intern Roy Slate to keep an eye on the fishways in Guilford (including Capello Pond) and report fish activity. We won't have exact numbers at Capello like last year, but Roy's observations will be helpful.

Another new fish counting project this year is at Fishing Brook in Old Saybrook. The fishway on the Bronx River in NYC won't be built until this summer but their fish counting equipment is already purchased. So we have agreed to set it up at Fishing Brook to test it and work out the bugs—and we get one year's worth of data out of the deal. Thanks to Marit Larson and the gang at NYC Parks and Rec, Alex Haro of the Conte Lab, and the Ottersons, owners of the dam. Another fish counting project will occur at Lees Pond Fishway later this year. We'll talk more about that in a future report.

Our crew and Sally, Cynthia, and Mark from TNC had a good day on Monday setting up stuff on the Saugatuck River. The Wood Dam guidance boom was installed (see below) and at Lees Pond Dam the fishway was cleaned and opened and a new trash boom installed along with prep work for the temporary fish counter to be installed near the end of the month. There is still work to do at Dorr's Mill Fishway, the Coleytown Fish Diversion boom, and perhaps some clean-up at the Low's and Grossman fishways. For the most part, all first dam fishways across the state are up and running. (Branford folks—what about you? We haven't heard anything.) The Greeneville Dam Fishlift operated for the first time yesterday and the Norwich Public Utilities crew saw a black crappie (going down?). The other Shetucket/Quinebaug fishways will open as soon as anadromous fish show up at Greeneville. Tim expects to open the Kinneytown Fishway tomorrow. Sally Harold reported glass eels from Wood Dam on Monday and our crew saw the first glass eels at Fishing Brook yesterday, so that run is ramping up.



*CTDEP and TNC crews work to install the fish guidance boom below the Wood Dam Fishway (out of the photo, to the left). The boom is connected to the fishway to the left and a big boulder to the right to help guide fish to the fishway, particularly during high tide.*



*The repaired Trading Cove Brook Fishway with a new entrance to the left of Dave and a new intermediate support to the right of me. L to R: Dave Ellis, Tim Wildman, Jessica Bell(s), Jeremy Grous(s), Ryan Mowrey(s), Aaron Grade(s), Bruce Williams, Steve Gephard. [s= 2010 seasonal employees]*