

# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 26, 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
<b>Rainbow</b> (Farmington)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0*	1	0
<b>Leesville</b> (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
<b>Moulson Pond</b> (Eightmile)	0	-	1,000s	0	0	0	0***	0	-
<b>Mary Steube<sup>+</sup></b> (Mill Brook)	-	-	5,323	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>WestSpringfield</b> (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Holyoke</b> (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Turners Falls</b> (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
<b>Vernon</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
<b>Bellows Falls</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
<b>Wilder</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
<b>Other</b> (all sites)	0/0								
<b>TOTALS=</b>	0/0	0	>6,000	0++	0	0	0	1	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:

The Connecticut River has dropped steadily since last week and is now approaching 40,000 cfs. The Holyoke Lift has not yet operated but Rich Murray of Holyoke Gas & Electric reports that lifting will begin once the flows drop below 40,000. Shad are in the river. Netters in Old Saybrook have taken a few—I purchased some at a local fish market and had my fish shad dinner of the spring last night. Bruce Williams reports shad in the Rainbow Dam tailrace on the Farmington River as of Monday (50F/10C) but when Ken Sprankle of the USFWS went out in the lower river last night to catch shad as part of a tagging study, they were unable to catch any and temperatures were 46 F (~8C). Things have been on hold during most of the past week but with the river dropping and warming, all of a sudden in the last 48 hours there is action. While the mainstem Connecticut remains cold, the tributaries are warming up. As of this morning, alewives were back in the Salmon River at Leesville and shooting through breached dams on Pine Brook, a downstream tributary. In the spirit of full disclosure, the fish at Leesville and Pine acted more like blueback herring than alewives but we couldn't get our hands on any to check. The morning trap check at Leesville included 250 white suckers and one 8 - 9 lb. brown trout! As you can see from the table above, the Mary Steube Fishway in Old Lyme is having its best alewife count in many years (passed over 3,000 this past week). It is too early to conclude that it is just a good run. We improved the entrance last summer (see photo in the April 12 report) and it appears that it is very helpful in allowing alewives to enter the fishway. Rainbow Fishway logged its first anadromous fish of the season with a sea-run brown trout this morning.

We have yet to begin salmon smolt sampling at the Rainbow Dam Bypass due to high water and trash issues. The dam just stopped spilling and the Farmington River Power Company is now sluicing the trash. We hope to conduct our first smolt sampling on Thursday night. Our crew at Rainbow reports seeing a few smolts pass down the fishway. Maine DMR will be trapping smolts on the Piscataquis and Narraguagus rivers this spring but they report that no smolts have been collected yet. Salmon fry stocking in Connecticut is in full swing, with Tim Wildman stocking the Jeremy and Blackledge rivers today while Bruce Williams stocked in the Salmon Brook drainage. The schools that participate in the Salmon-in-the-Classroom program with the Connecticut River Salmon Association are stocking their fish, as well. I was on my way to The Viaducts on Dickenson Creek today when I saw a school had arrived at the Salmon River Picnic Area to release their fry into the river. I was not able to stop and identify the school, but they picked a great day, with temperatures into the 70s.



When high flows come, leaves often come with them. This "sorting gate" must be kept down to retain returning adult salmon but it also clogs with leaves, requiring a tedious cleaning.



The Leesville fishway is 4 miles up the Salmon River but the Connecticut River still backs up to the dam. Flows over the dam (Salmon River) have diminished and the level below the dam (Connecticut River) has dropped since this photo was taken a few days ago.

## 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)	2	170	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Versailles Pond (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	less than 50 seen						
Trading Cove Brook** (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		274						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		1,066						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		present (not enumerated, low numbers)						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		152,392						
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		64						
Capello Pond (East River, Guilford)		only a handful this week						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		705 (no report this week)						
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		hundreds again this week						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		1,884						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		27,152	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= 4/20    Taftville= 4/25    Occum= ?    Tunnel= 4/25    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:

Although things may have slowed down a bit with the alewife run along the shoreline this past week, the fish continued to come in. Bride Brook passed another 33,000+ alewives this past week and we have opened up the Beaver Swamp Fishway to let some fish go up to the upper pond. As reported last week, Dave Ellis and his crew have not yet started trucking alewives due to other duties but a good wave came in last night and we expect to start trucking tomorrow morning. Steve McCormick hopes to join us and take some alewives back to the Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center in MA to work on inducing spawning in captivity. Things in western Connecticut seemed to have slowed down this past week. The Mianus Pond Fishway in Greenwich only passed 3,700 alewives and the Wood Dam on the Saugatuck only 252. Fewer numbers were also seen in the Pequabuck in Bridgeport. The mid-coast was also slow with Roy reporting only handfuls from the streams in Guilford (but his friend the osprey seems to be able to support its family) and we only saw low numbers in the Mill (Hamden) and Hammonasset (Madison). In the east, only Latimer Brook (see trap numbers above) and Pattagansett River registered decent numbers of alewives with lower numbers seen at Whitfords and Poquetanuck. The fish counter is operating at Trading Cove Brook and although we're sure we missed the first wave, it is good to see those numbers starting to rise. See the other attachment for a story about alewives by Judy Benson of *The Day* (New London).

On the Shetucket River system, all of the fishways at Greenville, Taftville, Tunnel, and Occum were shut down for high water for several days last week. FirstLight Power had some mechanical problems re-opening the Tunnel Dam Fishlift but those appear to be solved and lifting has resumed. Still only the one alewife at Tunnel so far, but Bob Stira reports seeing a walleye. Lee Cutler from Norwich Public Utilities reported seeing two shad lifted at Greenville over the past three days but we have not been able to review the tapes yet, so these are still preliminary data.

Tim corrected the electronic problems we had at Kinneytown Dam Fishway on the Naugatuck River in Seymour. We are now recording data but this did not happen in time to provide data for this week's report. We should have some fish to report by next week. You can see some the flood-related damages to that fishway in the photo in the lower left corner. He also fixed the computer problems at Fishing Brook and we can report the data above. While 64 fish is not much yet, we are happy to confirm passage at this fishway and trust more are on their way. The fishway at Crystal Lake, upstream from Fishing Brook, is in good condition and ready to pass fish. This fishway is the subject of this week's video. This fishway is a bypass style fishway that circumvents an earthen dam and enters Crystal Lake via an old emergency spillway. It is owned and operated by the Town of Old Saybrook. If you want to take a quick visual tour of the fishway, go to <http://www.ctriversalmon.org/> and click on video. If it is not posted by Tuesday evening, return the next day, which will give Marty time to post it. The count at the Fishing Brook eel pass is up to 885 glass eels.

National Public Radio in Maine did a story about anadromous rainbow smelt. This is a species that used to be abundant in Connecticut (e.g. Saugatuck, Hammonasset, Connecticut, small streams in New London County) but have virtually disappeared. They asked me to comment on the status of smelt in Connecticut and recently the story was also run on WNPR in Connecticut. To hear the story and learn a bit more about smelt, go to: <http://www.yourpublicmedia.org/node/12085>.



*Some of the Denil baffles had floated out of the Kinneytown fishway during high water and lots of gravel washed in. The baffles were retrieved and re-installed and the gravel shoveled out. Sand and silt were flushed out once the fishway was opened. It is now in good operational condition.*



*Rainbow smelt is a relatively small anadromous fish, reaching lengths of only 7 or 8". It used to enter our coastal streams by the (dare I say) millions and were an important part of the ecosystem as well as a source of food for humans. While runs persist in the Gulf of Maine, smelt are uncommon south of Cape Cod and nearly gone from Long Island Sound.*