

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 3, 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/r5cnc. 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	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Rainbow (Farmington)	0	203	0	0	0	0	96*	1	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	1,000s	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube ⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	9,009	-	-	-	-	-	-
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								
TOTALS=	0/0	202	>10,000	0++	0	0	96	1	0
(last year's totals)	51/10	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 flows have gone back up again, surpassing 70,000 cfs. As of now, they are slowly dropping below 55,000 but this is still too high to begin operating the Holyoke Fishlift. Without actually looking back at past records, it seems to me that this year will likely have one of the latest starts for fish passage at Holyoke ever. Shad are well distributed in the river and netters and catching them pretty well at least in the lower river. As you can see from above, Rainbow has already passed over 200. I have not heard from Mass Wildlife about the West Springfield fishway--- I need to call them up for next week. Since the New England Shad Association website went down, I haven't been able to collect angling reports. If there are any shad anglers who wish to report on catches in the Windsor-Enfield-Chicopee-Holyoke areas, get in touch.

Last week we reported alewives in the Salmon River system acting more like blueback herring. Soon thereafter, Tim Wildman and Dave Ellis went back to capture fish and verify their identity—they were alewives. While we had access to a number of alewives, we took non-lethal tissue samples to support some genetic research being done by a team with which we've partnered. This week's featured video is a short clip of Tim and Dave electrofishing alewives and taking a small fin clip from each. To see the video, go to the Connecticut River Salmon Association's website at www.ctriversalmon.org. On Saturday, I snorkeled Leesville with fish groupie Nick and we saw a handful of river herring that we did not sample but I am convinced were blueback herring. Not much else going at Leesville yet except lots of suckers and LOTS of tessellated darters. The Mary Steube Fishway in Old Lyme continues to have a great year with another 3,600 alewives passed this week. The total is now 9,000. Fish are showing up in the next upstream tributary (Eightmile River in Lyme) but the numbers reported by the land trust have been relatively low to date. The Moulson Pond Fishway has yet to log the big numbers that it typically sees each year. Lampreys are running—you can see we've counted close to 100 at Rainbow, which is the only place right now where we can get good counts due to the window and the overnight video. I'm sure they're moving through other locations but mostly unseen at night. I've seen one swimming around at Leesville.

We sampled salmon smolt at the Rainbow Dam Bypass but collected less than 10 (Thursday) and 67 (Monday). Eleven percent were hatchery-raised smolts. Salmon fry stocking continues. On Monday, Bruce had to get a load of unfed fry out into the Farmington River but the flows were too high so Tim Anthony of the MDC was able to reduce the flows coming out of the Hogback Dam for a couple of hours to give Bruce time to tuck these young salmon in. Speaking of salmon—the Connecticut River Salmon Association just received a 2010-2011 Conservation Achievement Award (in the Education category) from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) for its great work with its Salmon-in-the-Classroom program. To learn more and see the press release, go to http://www.ctriversalmon.org/pdfs/NWFAward_CRSA.pdf.



During Monday night sampling, this pretty brown trout came down the pipe along with the salmon smolts seen holding in the sampling tank. All fish were release after collecting data. (We collected the data, not the fish.)



In the Pacific Northwest, they have been moving salmon smolts downstream using barges. In France, they are using new techniques in moving salmon and shad upstream: taxi service! This photo was taken by me of the Loire River in Orleans, France in February. Okay, so maybe this is not the latest in upstream fish migration... But it raises the question- how did this car get THAT far out into a big river like the Loire????

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)	5	182	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	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	nothing this week						
Trading Cove Brook** (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		856						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		2,171						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		present (not enumerated, low numbers)						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		176,284						
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		81						
Capello Pond (East River, Guilford)		only a handful this week						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		1,590						
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		low numbers this week						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		1,928						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		43,740	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= 4/21 Taftville= 5/1 Occum= 4/28 Tunnel=5/1 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:

Bride Brook and the Mianus River continue to pass good numbers of alewives. Bride has surpassed the 2010 figure and set a new modern-day record (since we have had the fish counter installed). Mianus passed over 16,000 alewives this past week. Runs elsewhere continue to add fish but at a moderate pace (e.g. Branford, Latimer, Wood). Counts at Fishing and Trading Cove brooks are much less than other places but both were set up late and we likely missed the first wave. Also, these runs have never been enumerated before so we're learning about the size of these runs for the first time. It is great to confirm passage at Fishing Brook. Speaking of confirming—volunteer Roy Slate reports watching five alewives use the Landon Dam Fishway in Guilford the other night. Five alewives don't sound like much but it is the first time we've actually witnessed fish using the fishway. Past volunteers have made daytime checks but Roy staked the place out and caught them in the act. There were more below that probably used the fishway later in the night. Roy also reports good numbers on the East River in Guilford at the Capello Pond and Lower Guilford Lake fishways. Lots of birds hanging out at these fishways. Elsewhere, low numbers of alewives were reported from the Mill River (Hamden), Sasco Brook (Westport/Fairfield), Hammonasset River (Madison/Clinton), and Poquetanuck Brook (Preston). Mary Mushinsky of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association reports their first Fish Rodeo at Wallace Dam for the year—788 river herring (suspected blueback herring) were lifted over the Wallace Dam by volunteers during the weekend! Great work—this should be the last year this is needed since a fishway is due to be built at this dam later this year. More on that later. Stripers and lamprey were also sighted but not passed.

On the Shetucket River system: we are behind on viewing the Greeneville Fishlift tapes. Norwich Public Utility staff report seeing more fish in the hopper on subsequent days than we report above. Not much action at the other fishways yet. FirstLight Power reports a couple more alewives at the Tunnel Fishlift but that continues to have some mechanical problems and there are looking into that. A new device has been installed at the entrance in hopes of better attracting fish. Bob from FirstLight reports that trout are using the Taftville fishway and Lee Cutler from Norwich Public Utilities reports resident fish species using the Occum Dam Fishway but flows are still pretty high.

We have data for the Kinneytown Fishway on the Naugatuck River but have not had chance to view and compile it yet. Hopefully, next week. The count at the Fishing Brook eel pass is up to 5,147 glass eels. Speaking of glass eels—alert Branford Land Trust member (and TNC staff) Martha Rice noticed glass eels trying to get over the spillway at the Branford Water Supply Pond Dam (where the fishway is located). The lower part of the spillway is eroded and allows them to climb up but the upper part is smooth concrete and they cannot hang on. Today, we installed a couple of temporary eel passes to help—two bundles of fish netting that hang over the spillway. Once the nets were installed, the eels began using them right away, climbing in among the wet strands of twine. This climbing migration of glass eels typically occurs at night and I was surprised to see so many of them taking the challenge in broad daylight. See photos below.

Joe from the Town of Greenwich announced that the Town will host **an open house at the Mianus Pond Fishway in Greenwich this Saturday** the 7th from noon until 2 pm. This is a great opportunity to see a good fishway that supports a strong run of alewives. Go to where Boston Post Road crosses the Mianus River in the Cos Cob area of town—you'll find the fishway. As a follow up to last week's story about smelt, Jim Turek of NOAA passes along to us this link to a Boston Globe article about smelt in MA, NH, and ME: http://www.boston.com/news/science/articles/2011/04/28/massachusetts_biotologists_study_declining_rainbow_smelt_runs_in_coastal_rivers/?s_campaign=8315



Small glass eels climbing up the face of the Branford Water Supply Ponds Dam (see the lower, center of photo). Some have managed to wiggle into the upper dark area around that horizontally oriented leaf bit. Strong water flow pushes them back down.



The spillway of the Branford Water Supply Pond Dam showing two temporary eel passes (gathered fish nets). Note that most of the spill is at the other end of the spillway. Eels target the part that is wet but without lots of flowing water.