

# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: June 7 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](http://www.fws.gov/r5cnc). 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)	9	280	0	0	0	0	3,374*	3	0
<b>Leesville</b> (Salmon)	3	-	-	0	-	-	1***	6	0
<b>Moulson Pond</b> (Eightmile)	0	-	1,000s	0	0	0	0***	0	-
<b>Mary Steube</b> <sup>+</sup> (Mill Brook)	-	-	9,080 (final count)	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>WestSpringfield</b> (Westfield- MA)	2	4,351	0	0	0	0	1,446	0	0
<b>Holyoke</b> (Connecticut- MA)	52/11	220,867	0	138	342	57	15,991	0	0
<b>Turners Falls</b> (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	10,319	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
<b>Vernon</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	46	-	-
<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)	2/0								
<b>TOTALS=</b>	68/0	235717	>10,000	138++	342	57	20,812	9	0
<b>(last year's totals)</b>	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:

Last week I predicted that conditions should be great over the weekend and into next week for passing fish and trapping salmon and that proved to be true. Over 24 salmon were collected at Holyoke along with thousands of American shad. Many of the shad were a bit beat up, perhaps due to fluctuating water levels below the dam, but they're still heading upstream and several agencies including our own continue to truck shad to other watersheds. Ten of the eleven salmon that have gone beyond Holyoke have been radio-tagged and that tagging has been suspended until we see how many more salmon we get. This year's run has already surpassed last year's and this is true for the shad run as well. Casual observations indicate that the salmon run usually peak the end of May or beginning of June when the mountain laurel is blooming. The peak may have been a few days late this year, maybe due to the river conditions, but it still corresponded to the mountain laurel. Last week we reported on a busy day of salmon captures on the Salmon River. To view a short video of these activities, visit the CRSA website at [www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org) and click on videos.

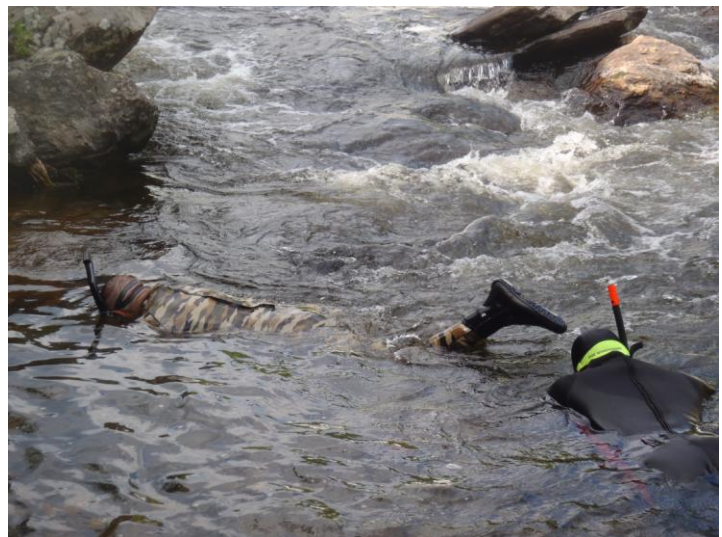
The conditions on the river have been odd this past week. First we had the Springfield, MA tornado that sucked up the river and had it flowing upstream momentarily. If you haven't seen that spectacular video footage, you should go on YouTube and try to find it. You can see the funnel passing over the river between the railroad bridge and Memorial Bridge and turning the river into a cauldron that reminds one of the special effects in a Steven Spielberg movie. Fish were found on the streets of Springfield. The river then turned chocolate brown in CT but it wasn't the tornado since Jay reported muddy water at Bellows Falls, VT, too. It was so bad, the crew at the Holyoke Dam had to stop lifting for a while because they couldn't see fish in the window. It turns out that there was a violent storm in the Northeast Kingdom in VT that washed out a lot of stream banks (see photo below). Then it got very hot, next it got unseasonably cold, now it is getting hot again. So far the fish seem to have taken it in stride but we'll see what happens if the temperatures reach the high 90s on Thursday.

Joe Zientz of the Shad Museum in Haddam reports that only one commercial shad netter is still fishing. The run in the lower river is clearly dropping off but I can report that the fish markets are still selling shad and it is good! It seems to me that the hot weather coming later this week will likely end the migration and get the fish spawning. I expect we won't report a lot of additional shad lifted at Holyoke by this time next week.

The salmon smolt run is over in Connecticut (it appears that it is almost done in Maine, too). The elver run on the Salmon River below the Leesville Dam appears to be winding down. Alex Haro of the Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center (USGS) needed some actively migrating elvers to bring back to the lab to test a new eel pass destined for Horseshoe Falls in Rhode Island. Last week, the elvers were thick as fleas below the dam and we promised him easy pickings. Yesterday, we arrived and found most of them were gone, presumably upstream through our eel pass. We were able to collect the number that he needed by hand using aquarium nets. Tim had the hot hand and out-netted the rest of us. The adult salmon count at the Veazie Dam on the Penobscot River in Maine stands at 699 and counting. The count at the Essex Dam on the Merrimack River is 143 along with 7,491 American shad. The Open House at Rainbow Fishway was a success with beautiful weather and 263 visitors. Unfortunately, there were very few fish. We trapped a salmon there the following day!



*Serious flooding in the St. Johnsbury, VT area washed out roads and stream banks and turned the Connecticut River very muddy last week.*



*Dave Ellis and Tim Wildman snorkel in the Salmon River below the Leesville Dam, collecting juvenile eels for eel pass testing at the Conte Lab in Turners Falls. Eels were hiding in pockets of loose gravel in calmer areas of the stream.*

## OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

<b>FISHWAY</b> (RIVER)	<b>AMER.</b> <b>SHAD</b>	<b>ALEWIFE</b>	<b>BLUEBACK</b> <b>HERRING</b>	<b>GIZZARD</b> <b>SHAD</b>	<b>STRIPED</b> <b>BASS</b>	<b>SEA</b> <b>LAMPREY</b>	<b>SEA-RUN</b> <b>TROUT</b>	<b>AMER.</b> <b>EEL</b>
<b>Greeneville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	844	248	0	97	0	0	0	1
<b>Taftville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Occum*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	265
<b>Versailles Pond</b> (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Tunnel*</b> (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	6	0	9	0	0	0	0
<b>Kinneytown*</b> (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	56	0	0
<b>Whitfords Brook</b> (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	none this week						
<b>Trading Cove Brook**</b> (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		1,055						
<b>Latimers Brook+</b> (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		2,679 (FINAL)						
<b>Gorton Pond</b> (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		none this week						
<b>Brides Brook**</b> (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		196,996	(FINAL)					
<b>Fishing Brook**</b> (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		164						
<b>Capello Pond</b> (East River, Guilford)		none this week						
<b>Branford Supply Pond Dam**</b> (Queach Br., Branford)		4,476 (FINAL)						
<b>Bunnells Pond</b> (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		low numbers this week						
<b>Wood Dam**</b> (Saugatuck R., Westport)		2,103	104					
<b>Mianus River Pond**</b> (Mianus R., Greenwich)		66,352	22,834	0	0	0	1	-

*\*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= 6/2    Taftville= 5/22    Occum= 4/28    Tunnel=5/26    Kinneytown= 5/26.*

*\*\*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:

Most of the action with river herring continues to be in the western end of the state. Fish counters at Trading Cove Brook and Fishing Brook picked up a handful over the past week but all other reports of fish came from the Housatonic (likely blueback herring), Sasco, Mill, and Pequonnock. The fishways at Mianus Pond (Greenwich) and Wood Dam (Westport) had another wave of fish counted this past week. Sally Harold sampled an alewife at Wood Dam but based on Joe Cassone's sampling at Mianus, we assume that most of these late-running fish are blueback herring. Both Sally and Joe are seeing eels coming up those dams and eel passes.

Glass eels continue to be trapped at Fishing Brook where the season total stands at 21,182. Catches are increasing at the trap on the Mill River in Hamden (total to date= 570), and Tunnel Dam (total to date= 4,316).

The Norwich Public Utilities continued its shad trucking from the Greeneville trap to above upstream dams. They had a media event last Friday and got press coverage from *The Day* (New London) and *The Norwich Bulletin*. I don't have links to those articles but you can probably find them on line. The new tank rig of NPU is working well. However, it appears that the shad run on the Shetucket is winding down and it is unlikely any more trucking will be conducted.

We received an inquiry about sea lamprey from Alain on the Hammonasset River, who is seeing more nests than usual in that river. He was asking what we have seen elsewhere. We don't have counts yet for other streams that we monitor because the spawning is just now beginning and we hold off on our nest counts until we are sure all spawning has been completed. We observed lamprey spawning for the first time on the Salmon River this past week. (See photo from yesterday's snorkeling below to the right.) Lampreys have been running since April but the migration is mostly at night and you don't see them during the day as they tend to hide under rocks. By the time they begin to spawn in early June, they go blind and have no aversion to daylight. We will probably do our nest surveys late in the month. The Hammonasset is an interesting river because the lower portion that is accessible to anadromous fish has no dams on it and it has a diversity of habitat. There is not a lot of opportunity to make diadromous fish observations and most come from anglers and observers like Alain.



A couple of alewives entering a pool in the **Damariscotta Fishway** in Maine. This may be one of the oldest fishways in New England. Apparently TNC had a meeting there this past week. (photo by Sally Harold, TNC).



*Lampreys spawning in the Salmon River this past week. The male is on the right with the ridge down its back. Both fish help clear the nest, which is the light colored area. They often leave one large rock, like the one by the female's head, to clasp (photo by Matt Shirley, CT DEP).*