

# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: June 13 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)	14	273	0	0	0	1	6,526*	5	105
<b>Leesville</b> (Salmon)	8	-	-	0	-	-	1***	6	0
<b>Moulson Pond</b> (Eightmile)	0	-	1,000s	0	0	0	0***	0	-
<b>Mary Steube<sup>+</sup></b> (Mill Brook)	-	-	9,080 (final count)	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>WestSpringfield</b> (Westfield- MA)	7	4,969	0	0	0	0	1,554	0	14
<b>Holyoke</b> (Connecticut- MA)	62/11	238,025	0	138	372	110	19,084	0	0
<b>Turners Falls</b> (Connecticut- MA)	0/5	11,569	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
<b>Vernon</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/6	2	-	0	0	0	231	-	-
<b>Bellows Falls</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/2	1	-	0	0	0	74	-	0
<b>Wilder</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
<b>Other</b> (all sites)	2/0								
<b>TOTALS=</b>	93/0	243,274	>10,000	138++	372	110	24,013	9	14
<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:

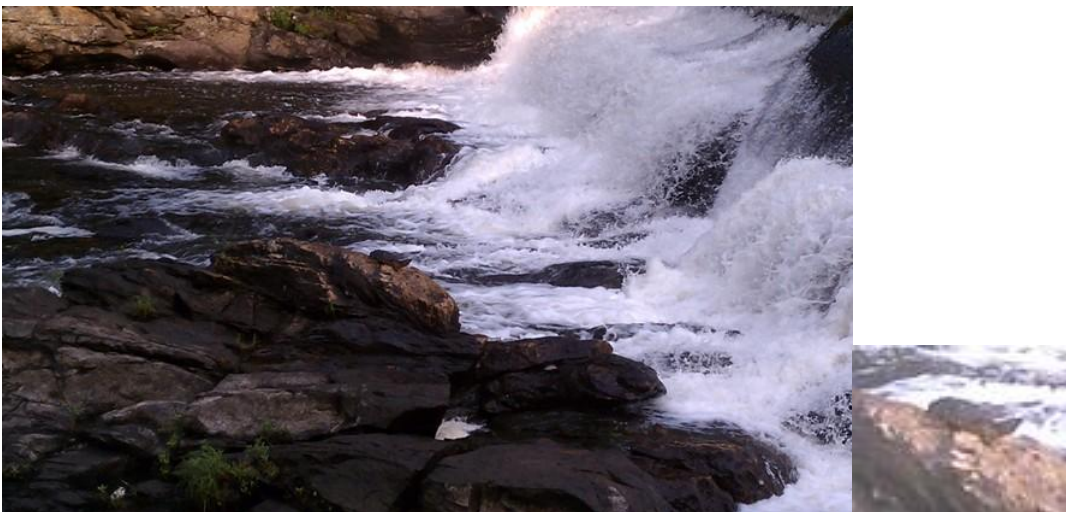
The river herring run appears to be over and the last few shad are being passed at West Springfield and Holyoke. However, salmon continue to come in. On Wednesday and Thursday of last week, we had late afternoon thunderstorms sweep the state and the flows on the Salmon River spiked. The next day, I found five salmon in trap 1 at the Leesville Fishway—the most salmon in one trap check at that fishway in many, many years. Four of the five appeared to be grilse but the fifth was a large multi-season winter fish that may have been 14 – 15 pounds (I haven't checked back with the staff at Cronin Salmon Station to get the exact data.) We also trapped two salmon at Rainbow on the same day and another one at Rainbow yesterday. [To view a very short video of two salmon holding in front of the viewing window at the Rainbow Dam Fishway, visit the CRSA website at [www.ctriverssalmon.org](http://www.ctriverssalmon.org) and click on videos.] We have been getting an unusually high number of grilse this year and don't have any explanation for that to offer. ['Grilse', pronounced grills, are salmon that have spent only one year at sea.] In fact, as I type this, another grilse has been trapped at Rainbow—number 14. Salmon continue to be trapped at West Springfield and Holyoke. All upriver fishways are now open (including the blind fish trap at the Townshend Flood Control Dam on the West River in Vermont—not on the table above) and you can see that one salmon has already made it up through the Bellows Falls Dam Fishway. We thought that all but one of the salmon upstream of Holyoke have been radio-tagged and as the season progresses, Jay McMenemy of VT Fish & Wildlife will be tracking the location of all tagged salmon and we'll report those general locations here. However, on Saturday Jay observed a large salmon passing the Vernon Fishway viewing window with no tag, so that is another untagged fish on the loose. It is possible that salmon slipped past the crew at Holyoke undetected when the river water was so brown last week. They shut down lifting operations at one point but perhaps not soon enough.

Also of interest is the trapping of one shortnose sturgeon at the Holyoke Dam Fishlift. There is no column for sturgeon in the table above, so that is not reported. Shad trucking is done for the season. The shad numbers at Vernon Fishway are disappointing but Jay reports that some damage to lower weirs in the fishway have been discovered and this could account for the poor passage of shad. Fishway owner TransCanada will be de-watering the fishway to fix the weirs. Hopefully, we can report more on this next week.

The thunderstorm Saturday night brought the Salmon River way up and rendered the fishtrap non-functional. With a lot of work in the rain, we got it all cleaned out and operational this morning. The trap contained two brown trout, one of which was 5 or 6 pounds. The river is rising again after a line of heavy rain came down the lower Connecticut River valley. Hopefully the rain will bring up more salmon!

The adult salmon count at the Veazie Dam on the Penobscot River in Maine as of last week was 783, which is much higher for this date than in past years. If this rate can be sustained, it could be a banner year. The count at the Essex Dam on the Merrimack River is 315, which is also a very good year.

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If you look closely at the center of this photo of the bedrock below the Leesville Dam, you'll see a fairly large snapping turtle perched up on the top of the outcrop. It is fairly unusual to see them up there. Lampreys and other fish often get stranded on that bedrock as they try to negotiate the rapids so maybe the turtle is on the outlook for dinner. Snappers have been on the move lately and laying eggs. We have passed some down the fishway already this season.

## OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

<b>FISHWAY (RIVER)</b>	<b>AMER. SHAD</b>	<b>ALEWIFE</b>	<b>BLUEBACK HERRING</b>	<b>GIZZARD SHAD</b>	<b>STRIPED BASS</b>	<b>SEA LAMPREY</b>	<b>SEA-RUN TROUT</b>	<b>AMER. EEL</b>
<b>Greeneville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	990	248	0	103	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	669
<b>Versailles Pond</b> (Little R., Sprague)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Tunnel*</b> (Quinebaug R., Preston)	7	6	0	19	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)		1,208						
<b>Latimers Brook+</b> (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		2,679 (FINAL)						
<b>Gorton Pond</b> (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		a few this week						
<b>Brides Brook**</b> (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		196,996	(FINAL)					
<b>Fishing Brook**</b> (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		164	(FINAL)					
<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	202					
<b>Mianus River Pond**</b> (Mianus R., Greenwich)		67,325	25,752		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= 6/9    Taftville= 5/22    Occum= 4/28    Tunnel=5/29    Kinneytown= 6/7*

*\*\*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 only river herring seen east of New Haven were a few fish in the Pattagansett River in East Lyme and 166 additional clicks on the fish counter at Trading Cove Brook in Montville. Other than that, we recorded moderate numbers in the Mill (Hamden) and the Housatonic (Shelton)—which we confirmed as blueback herring. There were also low numbers of fish at the Pequabuck below Bunnells Pond Dam (Bridgeport), Sasco (Fairfield/Westport), and at Mianus Pond Fishway where about 3,000 bluebacks and 1,000 alewives were tallied. The Wood Dam counter logged 98 more fish, which we are assuming are blueback herring. One gizzard shad was observed in the Mill River in Fairfield. At this time, we expect to see down-running river herring—fish that have already spawned and are now heading back out to sea. In fact, our crew observed down-running alewives at the Crystal Lake Fishway on Fishing Brook in Old Saybrook. We find this a particularly encouraging sign because we never saw the alewives go up the fishway, which is relatively new. We counted 164 alewives ascending the first fishway on the system, Fishing Brook Fishway, during this first season in which we had counting capability. This observation means that at least some of them made it all the way up through the second fishway and into Crystal Lake, which is good spawning and nursery habitat. This is not a big stream with large ponds but it is good habitat and should be capable of supporting a moderate-sized sustained run of alewives. We expect numbers will start building in the coming years based on this early success.

Speaking of Fishing Brook: our glass eel index station is a blind eel pass alongside the Fishing Brook Fishway and another 1,420 eels were trapped this past week, bringing the total up to 21,182. This is getting late for glass eels to be still coming. However, we continue to get a few glass eels (44 to be precise) at the trap on the Mill River in Hamden (total eels to date= 756). The eel catch at the eel pass at Tunnel Dam (Quinebaug River, Preston) started slowly this year but now is really picking up. This past week, FirstLight Power reported one trap check with 2,000 eels (see photo below) for a season total of 6,316. Norwich Public Utilities reports that another 169 eels were passed at the Occum eel pass this past week. These are not glass eels or even young-of-year but eels in the 6" – 10" range (aka "pencil eels") that have been in freshwater for a couple of years. Occum is the third dam on the Shetucket River so it takes a while for the eels to make it that far upstream.



*These are the eels from just one trap check at the Tunnel Dam Eel pass on the Quinebaug River—estimated at 2,000 eels. (photo by FirstLight Power).*



*A team has been working on a project to build a fishway at the Pages Millpond Dam on the Farm River in North Branford. It has been stalled for years but we hope to un-stall it very soon. The dam owners' son Fenn Suter drew this picture of his idea of the future fishway. The notation says "Fish ladder, tall, for fish, complexed (sic) and cool."*