

# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 24, 2012



This is a report generated by the Connecticut Department of Energy and 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/r5scr](http://www.fws.gov/r5scr). 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)	1	38	0	0	0	0	199*	0	0
<b>Leesville</b> (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
<b>Moulson Pond</b> (Eightmile)	0	-	>13,000	0	0	0	0***	0	-
<b>Mary Steube<sup>+</sup></b> (Mill Brook)	-	-	13,096	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>WestSpringfield</b> (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Holyoke</b> (Connecticut- MA)	6/0	36,117	0	1	43	0	732	0	0
<b>Turners Falls</b> (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	145	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
<b>Vernon</b> (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	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>	7/0	36,155	>26,000	1++	43	0	931	0	0
(last year's totals)	<b>111/11</b>	<b>249,329</b>	<b>&gt;10,000</b>	<b>138++</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>27,233</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14,502</b>

These figures adjusted after last year's report ended and does not include 3 shortnose sturgeon passed over the summer.

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:

This time last week, the river was running warm and at 11,000 cfs. Now the temperature has dropped (13C or 55 F) and flows have exceeded 40,000 cfs (which is about normal for this time of year)! The long sustained rain is exactly what we needed. Even before rain arrived, the salmon arrived. The first salmon was trapped at Holyoke early in the week and the first at Rainbow was trapped on Friday. This is the earliest we've seen Atlantic salmon in a long time! The shad run is also picking up. The netters report a strong run, so far, and Holyoke and Rainbow are just starting to pass them. The low water conditions had made it easy for them to move upstream fast and find fishway entrances easy but would have ensured a very short migration season. With this rain, it might slow down the run but it will likely prolong it as well. Ken Sprankle (USFWS) just came in off the river and reported tagging over 16 shad for the migration study. Lots out there!

The rain cost us one day in the Atlantic salmon fry stocking schedule—postponed due to high water—but we're back at it today. The smolt run continues to ramp up on the Farmington River, based upon the weekly sampling at the Rainbow Dam Bypass (see photo below). Workers sampled 110 smolts this week.

The blueback herring came into the river last week, with a strong run seen at the Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River and at Leesville. While the run persisted all week on the Eightmile River, it only lasted two days on the Salmon River. Not many have been seen upstream, yet. A few alewives continued to run at Pattaconk Brook (early in the week) and the Mary Steube Fishway in Old Lyme but all the fish sampled in Lyme were blueback herring. Downrunning spent alewives have been observed at the Mary Steube Fishway, Rainbow Fishway and other locations across the state. There have been reports of herring farther upstream on the Eightmile River than in recent years.

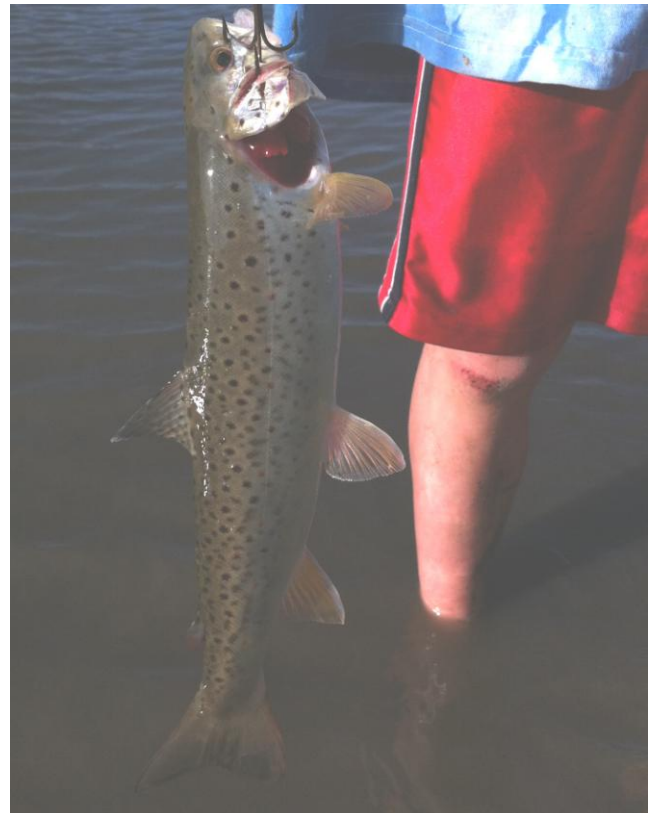
The rain has definitely helped us with low flows in fishways and the problems with beavers that we reported last week.

If you're interested in a newspaper article about sea lamprey, go to this article—it's not a hot link, copy and paste:

[ct.com/news/advocates/latest-news/wtxx-vamires-of-the-sea-lampreys-are-connecticuts-most-disrespected-fish-20120423,0,7238519.story](http://ct.com/news/advocates/latest-news/wtxx-vamires-of-the-sea-lampreys-are-connecticuts-most-disrespected-fish-20120423,0,7238519.story)



Atlantic salmon smolts in the holding tank at the Rainbow Dam Bypass facility. These fish move downstream at night and the run is sampled once a week. Fish will be measured and scale sampled and sent upon their way.



This nice sea-run brown trout was caught at the mouth of a tributary in Portland.

## 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><u>AMER. EEL</u></b>
<b>Greeneville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	110	175	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Taftville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Occum*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	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	3	0	0
<b>Whitfords Brook</b> (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	low numbers seen						
<b>Trading Cove Brook</b> (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		low numbers seen						
<b>Latimers Brook+</b> (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		17,500						
<b>Gorton Pond**</b> (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		78,204						
<b>Brides Brook**</b> (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		183,423						
<b>Fishing Brook**</b> (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		5						
<b>Lower Guilford Lake</b> (East River, Guilford)		no report						
<b>Branford Supply Pond Dam**</b> 181 (Queach Br., Branford)								
<b>Haakonsen Fishway*</b> (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)		no video yet! (see bonus page below)						
<b>Bunnells Pond</b> (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		large numbers!						
<b>Wood Dam**</b> (Saugatuck R., Westport)		1,776						
<b>Mianus River Pond**</b> (Mianus R., Greenwich)		72,909	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= 4/15. Taftville= 4/21. Occum= 4/14. 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 first story is the dedication of the new fishway on the Quinnipiac River. See the bonus page (below) for that story. Even before the rain came we had craziness in Bridgeport. Gregg Dancho and the guys at the Beardsley Zoo reported that a lot of alewives were trapped below the concrete apron at the head-of-tide on the Pequonnock River. This is downstream of the Bunnells Pond Fishway and we have known that this apron blocks fish at low flows. For this reason, we have been working with Save the Sound and other partners to build a fishway through that apron. That project may be completed later this summer but this drought had made the apron almost a complete barrier. See the first photo below as fish go on their side to try to get over it. But if you really want to see the story, go to the Connecticut River Salmon Association website ([www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org)) and click on video and watch the video of those fish going over the apron. It is really amazing. Gregg organized a fish rodeo like Mary and QRWA did for years on the Quinnipiac River and they netted fish over the apron. One volunteer was Mayor Bill Finch!!! The next day our crew joined them and we passed over 1,000. But the rains came and now the fish are over the apron on their own and jamming the fishway as they move upstream. Looks like a good run.

With the rains came a new wave of fish statewide. Not all of our numbers are in but we can report another huge wave at Brides and Mianus. Joe at Mianus had passed 20,000 by noon yesterday and rumor has it that he hit 50,000 by the end of the day! Lots more in Latimer and Gorton Pond. Fish also reported at Mill River (Hamden), the Quinnipiac and the Housatonic rivers. Branford and some of the other smaller streams are still lagging behind but I suspect with this rain, these drought-stricken smaller streams will start to draw in fish. Big thanks to Tom Cleveland and Bengt Kjellberg for their help with David Post at Branford for keeping that fishway up and running. Also- the Town of Greenwich is hosting a volunteer training session for the Byram Eel Passage project Wednesday night at Greenwich Town Hall, in the Cone Room from 6:30 to 8 or so.

Greeneville Fishlift- we have a SNAFU there. There was some error of the clock between when the lift was being made and when we were reviewing the recorded images and it appears that they lifted a lot more fish than we counted. We are still trying to sort that out but we know the run is a lot larger than reported above. It should be OK from here out. We are behind on viewing Kinneytown images—we know there have been fish passing but we haven't compiled the numbers. We will have data for the new Haakonsen fishway on the Quinnipiac but we had a glitch with the new camera and the system is not recording yet—hopefully we'll have data for next week. Still no operation at Tunnel. FirstLight has some mechanical problems.

The eel run: Fishing Brook stands at 26,421, Lower Millpond (Mill Brook, Old Lyme) has 574 glass eels and 140 elvers, and the new eel pass at Greeneville logs in for its first week with 1 glass eel and 78 elvers. More on this eel pass next week.

I'm sure I'm leaving good things out—it has been a crazy week. For a report on the new fishway, see next page.



*Water is only an inch or so deep over this sloped concrete apron on the Pequonnock River and alewives have to go on their side to get over it. Check out the video!*



*Latimer Brook fishway has experienced at record run of alewives this year. The rain pushed them back a bit so we'll see if they return.*



### ***Dedication of the Harry O. Haakonsen Fishway at Wallace Dam, Quinnipiac River, Wallingford***

The Wallace Dam in Wallingford is the first barrier to migratory fish on the Quinnipiac River and we have long wanted to get fish passed it. Space does not allow a telling of the whole story—which goes back nearly 10 years. We began working with Mary Mushinsky and the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association, finally found the owner of the dam, discovered that we could not remove the dam due to water rights to a downstream factory, and then changed plans when the Town took ownership of the dam. Curt Orvis of the USFWS developed a conceptual plan for a Denil fishway and QRWA worked with Milone and MacBroom (engineers) to produce an engineered set of plans. Connecticut Fund for the Environment (Save the Sound) took over the project and got funds to build the fishway. And there are a lot of grants involved, including substantial grants from the CT DEEP and NOAA. All along, Mary and her volunteers were holding annual fish rodeos, netting fish below the dam and passing them over the dam by hand. Also, Meriden built a fishway at the next dam upstream when they repaired the dam.

Finally, Save the Sound hired Schumack Construction from Clinton, who finished the fishway earlier this month. It looks great and is passing alewives and suckers already, although the camera is not set up yet so we have not been able to count. Hopefully, soon. Fish have access to 17 miles!

This past Saturday—Connecticut's Opening Day of fishing season and the day before Earth Day—Save the Sound held a dedication ceremony. Not only did we celebrate the completion, plant trees, and turn it over to the Town of Wallingford, but we dedicated it in the memory of Harry Haakonsen. Harry was a professor at Southern Connecticut State University and was a mentor for many environmental science related students. Many now work in the field—including many with the DEEP. Harry lived in Wallingford, was active with the QRWA and the land trust, and was keenly interested in migratory fish. I worked with him on salmon migration studies and toured salmon facilities with him in Norway. I am proud to have had him as a friend. Sadly, Harry died of cancer at age 54 and we are pleased to dedicate this fishway in his honor.



*The lower fishway with some of the assembled crowd.*



CFE president Don Strait with Mayor Bill Dickinson.



Commissioner Dan Esty.



Project Manager Gwen MacDonald, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, and Mary Mushinsky. Where is Jim Turek (NOAA)?



Son Erik Haakonsen and sister Kristen. Some of Harry's grandchildren were present.



some of the crowd.