

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 8, 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. 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)	1	35	0	0	0	0	215*	5	0
Leesville (Salmon)	1	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	1	>8,000	>7,000	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	17,057	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	7/0	72,375	0	2	107	2	766	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	145	-	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=	9/0	72,411	>25,057	>7,002++	107	2	981	5	0
(last year's totals)	111/11	249,329	>10,000	138++	423	184	27,233	11	14,502

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 past week was once again slow due to the cool, drizzly weather but the warm weather over the weekend got things going again. The flows on the Connecticut River continue to hover around 20,000 cfs and the water temperature at Holyoke is about 54 F (12 C). No more salmon at Holyoke but we picked one up at the Leesville fishway this morning—a bright fish about 9 or 10 pounds, 30". The shad run has continued, with Holyoke lifting about 16,000 yesterday. (Darleen from the USFWS points out that this time last year, we had only passed 174 shad for the entire season.) Holyoke Gas & Electric again reported mechanical problems with the lift on Sunday but had it back in operation 7 hours later. Thanks to them for being so prompt with emergency repairs. This is not the time of year that you want the lift to be out of operation for very long. No further reports from FirstLight about passage at Turners Falls.

As for the tributaries, Darleen just heard from MA about the West Springfield fishway on the Westfield River. Apparently they are having a good shad year and have passed over 1,000 shad but we'll have to wait until next week to get exact numbers. At Rainbow, the shad numbers are actually going down as some of the few shad that entered the fishway are backing down in the cool weather. Alert fishway monitor Vallin saw a shad using the Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eightmile River in Lyme. It was probably a stray from the mainstem but it is fun to replace the dash on that column with a "1". The Moulson Pond Fishway also passed good numbers of blueback herring toward the end of last week. During the previous report, I failed to count the new river herring as blueback herring instead of alewives so I have made that adjustment for this week's report. The Salmon River also got a good wave of blueback herring on Sunday. It built up on Monday when there was evidence of active spawning, but as of this morning the wave was apparently gone—pushed back by the drop in water temperature from 18C (64F) to 14C (57F).

We passed two more sea-run brown trout at the Rainbow Fishway, including the beauty pictured below. Staff had to look twice to make sure it wasn't a salmon. But note how the upper jaw extends way beyond the eye and the caudal fin is more than not forked—it actually bulges out a bit. A few trout were moving on the Salmon River at Leesville, too, including a small but chrome silver sea-run brown trout seen while snorkeling. Other interesting observations from snorkeling include spawning blueback herring, very large schools of spottail shiners, much fewer tessellated darters than expected, and a handful of sea lamprey, mostly hiding under rocks.

At Rainbow, the Atlantic salmon smolt run continues to be slow and has us wondering if the peak passed early this year, before we started monitoring. Fry stocking of salmon is winding down. Today, the E.O. Smith School was helping Bruce Williams stock the Salmon River and got a tour of the Leesville Fishway—timed perfectly to see the first salmon of the season trapped and hauled away to the Cronin National Salmon Station in Massachusetts.

Maine DMR reports the first salmon at Veazie on May 2 and the count is now up to 16, with river herring and sea lamprey showing up today. A number of salmon have been lifted at Lawrence on the Merrimack River but their 2012 data are not yet posted.



Very large sea-run brown trout in the window at Rainbow fishway. The squares are 6" x 6". (Photo by Jeremy Grous, CTDEEP)



Sign seen in Haddam, CT. Interesting use of quotation marks.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. <u>SHAD</u>	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK <u>HERRING</u>	GIZZARD <u>SHAD</u>	STRIPED <u>BASS</u>	SEA <u>LAMPREY</u>	SEA-RUN <u>TROUT</u>	AMER. <u>EEL</u>
Greeneville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	227	762	0	0	0	4	0	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	6	1	0	6	0	16	0	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	a few seen this week						
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		none seen this week						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		20,868						
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		96,014	(FINAL)					
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		275,686	(FINAL)					
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		5 (closed due to low water)						
Lower Guilford Lake (East River, Guilford)		strong run at beginning of week—nothing by weekend						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** 325 (Queach Br., Branford)								
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)		no video yet (blueback herring below dam)						
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		large numbers (thousands)						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		2,231						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		121,433	259	Present	Present below			

**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= 4/29. Taftville= 4/25. Occum= 4/14. Tunnel= 4/25. Kinneytown= 5/14.

***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 alewife run continues in some places, but at a much slower pace. Good numbers still seen on the Poquonnock in Bridgeport, on the Quinnipiac in Wallingford, Sasco, Branford, and the Housatonic. Joe is picking up blueback herring in the Mianus along with downrunning (spent) alewives, so you have to wonder if some of the fish on the Housatonic as well as the Hammonasset are blueback herring. Not much is happening in the East where we have had all the alewife action previously. A few fish in Poquetanuck, Whitfords, and Latimers, but not much. We're seeing more spent alewives. Ray only reports a couple of fish in the Clarks Pond Fishway in Milford, but also saw a 15" striper in the fishway—a first. The folks in Guilford did not report fish on the East River this week but Ted saw a bald eagle over Upper Guilford Lake, no doubt feasting on some of those alewives that passed up earlier. Just in—Matt came back from the rounds and reported sampling blueback herring from the Quinnipiac River below the Haakonsen Fishway in Wallingford. We assume more fish have already gone up the fishway but we'll have to wait until next week for data. We forgot to disable the function that allows the computer to go asleep so we don't have images from the past few days. We have now corrected that problem.

In past reports, we mentioned seeing parasites on river herring—mostly blueback herring. These appear as small white filaments trailing from behind the fish's back. The parasite is usually embedded into the dorsal surface just behind the dorsal fin. Sometimes, the filament is long, sometimes it is broken off. When I was snorkeling at Leesville yesterday, I saw many bluebacks with this parasite. Former seasonal employee and UConn grad student Ben Gahagan has just taken a job with Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries working with diadromous fish and sent along a photo of this same parasite on an alewife. See the photo below to the left. This is not a problem—just an interesting observation of these wild fish.

Lee from Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) is not seeing anadromous fish in the Occum Fishway in Norwich but is seeing lots of other species, including 483 white suckers, 87 smallmouth bass, 25 largemouth bass, 49 *Lepomis spp.*, 11 carp, 15 broodstock salmon, 2 brown trout and 26 rainbow trout, including the giant shown in the photo below to the right. Dave Ellis and crew from our program worked with NPU and Bob Stira from FirstLight to tag 19 shad from the Greeneville fish lift with radiotags as part of the ongoing evaluation of the Taftville and Tunnel fishways. (No report from FirstLight this week on passage at those fishways.) Last week, I inadvertently transposed the data for alewives and shad for Greeneville. This error has been corrected. NPU has live streaming video of the Greeneville fish lift on its web site (norwichpublicutilities.com) and its Facebook page, with posted lift times.

The Town of Greenwich had great attendance at its Open House at its Mianus Pond Fishway on May 5th, including a family from Arkansas. We will be hosting our annual Open House at the Rainbow Dam Fishway on June 2—more on that later. If you're traveling north and want to visit Connecticut River fishways, the Barrett Fishway (Holyoke Fishlift) on the CT River (http://www.hged.com/html/hadley_falls_fish_lift.html) and the Turners Falls Fishway also on the CT River in MA (<http://www.firstlightpower.com/stewardship/fish.asp>) are open to visitors from May 9, 2012, through June 17, 2012. They are open Wednesday through Sunday, 9AM - 5PM. Both will be open on Memorial Day. Our agency, the CT DEEP has designated this Saturday, May 12, as a "Free Fishing Day" (no license required to fish in CT waters).

The only eel report I'll offer this week is from the Occum Eel pass, where NPU has passed 149 eels this week. I hope to have a bit more to report on eels and eel passes next week.



A parasitic copepod from an alewife. Note the long white strand to the left of the red section (which is probably the copepod's naughty bits). (photo Ben Gahagan, MADMF).



Monster rainbow trout passing the window at the Occum Fishway. Each square is 6" x 6". (Photo from Norwich Public Utilities, courtesy Lee Cutler)