

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 15, 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)	2	58	0	0	0	0	385*	7	0
Leesville (Salmon)	5	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	1	>8,000	>7,000	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube ⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	17,057 (FINAL)	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	4,134	0	0	177	0	176	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	8/0	107,255	0	6	141	5	944	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=	15/0	111,448	>25,057	>7,006++	318	5	1,478	7	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:

With the nice warm weather, I expected good passage at all of our fishways this past weekend as the water warmed up and got the shad and salmon moving. That didn't happen. A major factor for the Holyoke Fishlift has been the need to shutdown due to turbidity. They are to count shad and all fish plus observe and retain salmon for broodstock. However, every time it rains, the river turns very turbid and the visibility in the viewing window is reduced to inches and they stop lifted for fear of missing fish. This has not been a problem in past years but on-site staff report that this year any rise in water level prompts this turbidity. It seems that this is a likely result of the extensive flood damage done last summer by Tropical Storm Irene to many western slope tributaries in the upstream basin such as the Deerfield, Black, Ottauquechee, and White rivers. You may recall that large riverbanks and roadways were washed out followed by the repair activities of huge earthmoving equipment driving around in the streambeds. Some of these areas still have not stabilized or "healed" and every time it rains, a fine sediment gets mobilized. Jay McMenemy reports that the Black River is still running grayish-green all the time, even when it is not raining. Shutting down the lift for turbidity could create huge problems for getting shad upstream in a timely manner. Right now, a line of heavy rain is approaching the basin and is likely to dump significant rain upstream of Holyoke. I expect Holyoke will shutdown tomorrow. The forecast is for dry and warm weather from Thursday to the middle of next week. That is when we'll need to pass a lot of fish to make something of this season. Hopefully the northern basin doesn't get any rain.

The salmon action has been in Connecticut this past week with Leesville picking up four fish in one day—quite unusual for that location this early in the spring. Rainbow Fishway got its second salmon of the season late yesterday. We hadn't seen much more for blueback herring since the previous report. I snorkeled Leesville on Sunday and there were none but yesterday, another large spawning wave came in—along with what appears to be a fresh crop of striped bass. There's a lot of fishing going on in Connecticut—there are folks fishing for shad with willow leaves along the river and up the Farmington but it sounds like a lot of them get frustrated and switch over to striper tackle. The lamprey run is picking up and nesting is starting to occur on the Salmon River. Also a few white perch have been showing up. Rainbow continues to log sea-run brown trout passing upstream and while I have not seen any at Leesville yet, I've passed some nice trout including one of the prettiest rainbow trout I've seen in Connecticut this last week—about 18" with textbook coloration.

At Rainbow, Bruce reported a strong smolt run past the window on Thursday but last night at the bypass, we only counted 19 smolts. Fry stocking is mostly over—we have one final "clean out the hatchery" trip scheduled for later this week. Dave has started trucking shad this week with a trip to the Naugatuck yesterday and perhaps a double haul to New Hampshire and the Farmington today. The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization has updated its information on U.S. salmon rivers on its website. If you want to see a list of all rivers in the U.S. that once supported wild runs of Atlantic salmon, go to the website, click on 'river database', then "view river details by map" and then in the dropdown box, click on "USA". <http://www.nasco.int/>



The holding tank at Holyoke Dam receiving the contents of a hopper lift. Most lifts discharge at the next level up where the fish swim out to continue their migration. When we want to truck shad, we discharge into this lower tank where fish can be diverted into transport trucks.



A salmon resting in the holding tank after capture at the Leesville Fishway. The orange dots are numbered tags in the dorsal and adipose fins to keep track of the fish in captivity.

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)	1,429	233	0	24	0	42	1	1
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)	2	1	0	26	0	26	2	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	(FINAL)					
Lower Guilford Lake (East River, Guilford)		no report this week						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		525						
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)		291	14	2		6	1	
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		large numbers (thousands) again						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		3,063						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		119,335	1,974	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= 5/07. Taftville= 4/25. Occum= 5/14. Tunnel= 4/25. Kinneytown= 5/10. Haakonsen= 5/13

***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 to ramp down. We're still seeing significant numbers in the Pequonnock River Bridgeport at the Bunnells Pond Fishway, Sasco Brook and the Quinnipiac River but other than that it has been spotty—a few in the Hammonasset, Indian River (Milford), Pattagansett, and Whitfords. Alewives continue to 'trickle' into the Wood Dam fishway on the Saugatuck (although some observers think that number is an undercount, perhaps due to battery problems) and Branford Water Supply Pond fishway (what happened to that run this year?). Blueback herring have shown up in the Mianus and Quinnipiac but mixed in with the alewives (we're sampling).

In the past reports, I've managed to botch the Greeneville shad and alewife data, even after reporting that I fixed it. I believe that they are actually correct this week, as of May 7. We still have a backlog of records to work through to get up to data. Another interesting observation is a big uptick in the number of sea lamprey at Greeneville (see table). We will look forward to data from Taftville, Tunnel, and Occum to see if they're passing through upstream fishways as well. We're also starting to see some fish show up at the Kinneytown Fishway, although we're still a bit behind on reviewing those images, as well. That is showing a strong run of sea lamprey, too, as well as a couple of nice sea-run trout and the season's first American shad on the Naugatuck River.

This week we are perhaps the most excited about the data we're starting to collect at the Haakonsen Fishway on the Quinnipiac River. You'll recall we were late getting the camera set up and then we had a minor computer glitch. We finally have it going and just started to compile data—and we're seeing fish go through this new fishway! See photo below to the left and the table above. In addition to the anadromous fish listed in the table, we've passed white perch, smallmouth bass, and white suckers. We have sampled the river herring below and determined the ratio of alewives to blueback herring and that is how we are allocating numbers between the two species for river herring seen in the window. Clearly, all of this is an undercount. Many fish migrated upstream uncounted, but hopefully this number will continue to grow in the next month. There is some indication of illegal fishing there and we need to keep an eye out for that.

Eels- We caught another 1,000 glass eels this past week at Fishing Brook. Our seasonal total is 29,138. The count for the new Greeneville Eel Lift introduced in a couple of reports ago is now 151. The Mill River eel pass was recently rehabilitated (new climbing substrate, etc.) by the SouthCentral Regional Water Authority and is logs in this week with 25 eels (see photo below, right). We hope to continue to bring more eel passes on line later this season when the yellow eels start moving.



A school of alewives pass the viewing window at the Haakonsen Fishway on the Quinnipiac River. Many fish have used this fishway during its first weeks of operation. The grid is 6" squares.



The Mill River Eel Pass was recently rehabilitated by its owner, the Southcentral Regional Water Authority. This is a blind eel pass in which eels are collected in the blue tank and carried over the dam.