

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: June 12, 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)	4	174	0	0	0	1	707*	11	0
Leesville (Salmon)	9	-	-	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)	5	10,003	0	0	176	0	378	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	27/9	482,693	0	39	316	255	14,081	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	2/2	25,136	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	3/3	9,295	-	0	0	0	566		
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=	45/9	492,870	>25,057	>7,035++	492	256	15,166	11	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:

Holyoke was shut-down due to turbidity a few days last week, but is once again lifting fish. The Holyoke American shad numbers continue to inch their way towards a half million fish – it is going to be close. I happen to know that there are at least a few beers riding on the outcome! We have taken a lot of calls from the general public this past week reporting dead fish in the river. It has been some time since we have had these calls, and while you never want to hear about dead fish floating down the river, in this case the reason is real positive. We sent some people out yesterday to confirm our suspicion and thankfully that's what happened. A small percentage of American shad die each year after spawning. These are generally older fish that have spawned in previous years and the stress of making a migratory run up a river is a bit too much and they have nothing left. Since the shad run has been so strong this year we are seeing more of this post-spawn mortality. The shad carcasses will sink and quickly provide marine-derived nutrients to freshwater organisms. Interesting to note that most American shad die after only one spawning run in their southern range (Georgia, Florida, etc...).

Yesterday was an important day for diadromous fish restoration on the Penobscot River-- they start dismantling the Great Works Dam, the second dam on the river. This is part of a multi-million dollar project to improve access to key habitat by migratory fish. After this dam is removed, the first dam-- the Veazie Dam-- will be removed. That will result in the current dam #3 becoming the first dam and the hydro company will upgrade the fish passage facilities there to support improved passage of all species and trapping of returning Atlantic salmon. See following links for more on this exciting story: Great Works Dam removal today, Bangor news link:

<http://bangordailynews.com/2012/06/11/opinion/editorials/great-collaboration-work-behind-great-works-dam-removal/>

Boston Globe link: <http://bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/health-wellness/2012/06/11/maine-dam-removal-aims-rescue-fish-species/GFRDvDyFTtqQN2c7nWlY4L/story.html>



Great works dam on the Penobscot River prior to removal. Photo by The Boston Globe.

Anglers in the Salmon River should know that our agency began phase II in the Lyman Viaducts project on Dickinson Creek, which will fill in a large scour hole below the twin culverts and restore fish passage after 50+ years. But in dumping stone in the brook, some turbidity is inevitable and anglers are asked to be patient as a turbidity plume may extend all the way down to Comstock Covered Bridge. When completed, this will be a huge benefit for Dickinson Creek, diadromous fish, trout, and the Salmon River.

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)	3,118	267	0	120	1	42	7	97
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	45	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	51	28	0	36	4	35	18	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	none seen this week						
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		none seen this week						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		22,154	(FINAL)					
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)		none seen this week						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		610						
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	4	510	129	6		15	2	
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		none seen this week						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		3,063	464					
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		119,335	13,212		Present below feeding on downrunners			

**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= 6/5. Taftville= 4/25. Occum= 6/12. Tunnel= 5/08 Kinneytown= 6/5. Haakonsen=6/5

******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:

There are a few bluebacks still kicking-around in western Connecticut, but even there the runs are really winding down. The only rivers we are still seeing them are the Quinnipiac, Mianus, and Saugatuck. Some of these may be spent down-runners.

We passed a few more shad at Kinneytown and Haakonsen fishways, but haven't seen any shad on any in the most recent video files; so I suspect that they are pretty much done for the year as well.

Eels- The eel run was down a bit this past week due to the higher flows of last week, but they are picking-up again as the flows have dropped to more seasonable level. I do not have the current data for the Fishing Brook Trap, though I know that we saw only a handful. So for now, I'm going to keep the season total at 30,171; Greeneville Eel Lift = 823; no new report from Tunnel, Occum, or Mill River. The Byram River Eel Pass is up to 63.

Two years ago, we reported a new eel pass built at the Lake Forest Dam in Bridgeport. We used a new design which transformed the entire gently sloped spillway into an eel pass (see photos below). We are not able to check this eel pass that often during the primary migratory season and had not documented eels using it-- until recently. During a recent visit we saw an eel just a short distance from the top, working its way up. This is a great observation.



The Lake Forest Eel Pass will provide safe egress to and from the lake for juvenile and adult eels for years to come. This design was inexpensive and will require very little-to-no long-term maintenance. While an eel pass of this design cannot be used at all sites, its success ensures that we will consider copying it whenever possible.

On the following page you will find resident fish passage numbers for some familiar fishways in and around Connecticut. While this is a diadromous fish report (and will continue to be so), we thought that it would make a good addition. You will probably only see this once a year around this time when we experience the tail-off in diadromous fish utilizing these fishways. It is clearly obvious that while our fishways target diadromous fish species, they also benefit the locals! As with diadromous species, some of the residents are stronger swimmers than others (white suckers and trout vs. largemouth bass and *lepomis* spp., for example), so one can infer how difficult or easy a fishway is to ascend based on the species passing. Not all of the species listed are present below the fishway, so a zero may not mean that species cannot climb the fishway, it's just that they aren't there to climb it.

Counts of resident fish species passed a selection of larger fishways in and around Connecticut.

	Holyoke	Rainbow	Leesville	Kinneytown	Haakonsen	Greeneville	Occum	Total
White Sucker	511	129	840	572	6	24	494	2,576
Brown trout	13	14	5	90	16	26	12	176
Rainbow trout	0	4	3	1	3	2	36	49
Brook trout	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	5
Tiger trout	14	2	2	0	0	0	0	18
Smallmouth bass	396	113	15	100	3	22	133	782
Largemouth bass	4	15	0	0	10	11	26	66
Common carp	21	34	0	30	2	15	15	117
Yellow perch	19	0	0	0	1	0	3	23
Walleye	170	0	0	0	0	0	0	170
Northern pike	24	0	0	0	0	3	0	27
Channel catfish	2	0	0	1	0	1	2	6
Brown bullhead	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bluegill	16	24	0	0	0	0	0	40
Pumpkinseed	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Unk. Lepomis**	0	0	0	0	7	79	84	170
Rock bass	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Common shiner	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fallfish	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total	1,199	340	865	794	48	186	805	4,237

**Unknown leporis – because of poor visibility or the distance of the video camera to the viewing window, we cannot always distinguish between a bluegill, pumpkinseed, or redbreast sunfish and therefore are forced to lump them together as unknown leporis spp.