

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 8, 2013



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/r5src. For more information about Atlantic salmon, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association at www.ctiversalmon.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) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0* | 0 | 0 |
| Leesville (Salmon) | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | - | 0*** | 0 | 0 |
| StanChem (Mattabeset) | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Moulson Pond (Eightmile) | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0*** | 0 | - |
| Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook) | - | - | 9 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Holyoke (Connecticut- MA) | 0/0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA) | 0/0 | 0 | - | 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= | 0/0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (last year's totals) | 47/10 | 499,935 | >25,057 | >7,039 | 504 | 303 | 15,193 | 11 | 0 |

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:

The Holyoke Fishlift opened April 1 but the temperature has been 3 - 4 C (37 - 39 F) so not much is moving. They lifted 2 smallmouth bass. We've seen alewives quite a ways up the Connecticut River although they have been slow to enter fishways. (Alewives don't migrate as far upstream as Holyoke.) Our crew saw a small school below the Mary Steube Fishway in Old Lyme as we were opening the fishway and a handful have already passed. The low water (for springtime) is causing the beaver to build a dam in the fishway, so this is going to be another headache this year. Alewives have starting coming up the Moulson Pond Fishway, still in low numbers. White suckers and trout have also been seen (51 degrees F/11 degrees C). We have never had a way to count fish at this fishway but the Lyme Land Conservation Trust was just awarded a grant by Trout Unlimited's NOAA Partnership Grant to install a camera at this location so Tim Wildman of our program will be working quickly with the LLCT to get a system installed before the end of the spring season—so hopefully soon we'll have actual numbers to report here. (Special thanks to Pat Young and the Eight Mile River Wild and Scenic Steering Committee.) I have not had a chance yet to snorkel Leesville but suspect the alewives are in there, too.

Last week I reported that we had begun trucking salmon smolts from the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Fish Hatchery in Pittsford, VT to the Farmington River. Like last year, we had a truck break down on I-91 and had to do an emergency stocking of smolts in the Connecticut River in Hadley, MA. The truck is being repaired and should be available for alewife and shad trucking later in the season. Thankfully, no one was hurt in the mishap.

This week we opened the brand-new StanChem Dam Fishway, which is at the first dam on the Mattabesset River in Berlin, CT. This Connecticut River tributary supports runs of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, striped bass, American eels, and other species and the fishway opens up more than 50 miles of upstream habitat! It is a Denil fishway with a camera and a viewing window, so we will be generating fish counts at this fishway. It was designed by Fuss & O'Neill through a grant administered by the Connecticut River Watershed Council. It was built this winter by Machnik Construction through a grant administered by The Nature Conservancy (project leader- Sally Harold). There will be a dedication ceremony later this spring so we will pass along more news and photos of this fishway later. For a local article about the fishway, go to http://www.myrecordjournal.com/berlincitizen/article_fba8fbe2-9c8d-11e2-a112-0019bb2963f4.html but pardon the reporter's error in reversing TNC Director Frogard Ryan's name and gender.



To the left- the lower ramp of the StanChem fishway, with the spillway in the background.



Above: the entrance of the StanChem fishway, showing good attraction water conditions for migrant fish. The entrance to the eel pass is seen in the background (the green pipe in the wall). The entrance net has not yet been installed in the eel pass but will be installed soon.

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) | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton) | 0 | | | | | | | |
| Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville) | | | | | | | | |
| Hallville Pond* ** (Poquetanuck Br. Preston) | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E. Lyme) | | 46 | | | | | | |
| Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., E. Lyme) | | 6 | | | | | | |
| Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E. Lyme) | | 117,484 | | | | | | |
| Fishing Brook** (Fishing Br., O. Saybrook) | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Lower Guilford Lake (East River, Guilford) | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford) | 0 | | | | | | | |
| Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport) | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport) | | 22 | | | | | | |
| Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich) | | 501 | | | | | | |

**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= x/x Taftville=x/x Occum= x/x Tunnel= x/x Kinneytown= x/x Haakonsen=x/x Hallville= x/x

***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:

Not a lot of action by alewives this week, compared to a typical year. We were busy finishing opening the fishways east of the Connecticut River and some to the west and getting the counters/cameras up and running at the key mid-sized fishways. We are now working westerly, opening other fishways. Partners have already opened many, e.g. Lower Guilford Lakes, Branford Water Supply, Clarks Pond, Wood Dam, and Mianus Pond. No fish have been counted at the first three but fish have made it to the western end of the Sound—the count edged up on Mianus and this week Wood Dam checks in for the first time with a few fish. Ray Baldwin also saw an osprey eating an alewife around the Mill River in Fairfield. Workers with the Town of Old Saybrook saw an alewife in the Crystal Lake fishway, which means some have passed the Fishing Brook fishway. We are not operating the counter on loan to us from the Bronx River project due to the problems we had with beaver last season. However, so far the beaver have not bothered us.

We have not yet reviewed any video from the Greenville fishlift on the Shetucket River but Wayne McLaughlin of Norwich Public Utilities reports lifting about 100 alewives in one early lift this past week—which may be more than last year. NPU made some substantial repairs/upgrades to the lift over the winter and we expect more effective passage this spring. As usual, the run really starts at Bride Brook and we've been passing >1,000 a night there. We just started passing alewives at Latimers Brook this past week but on Saturday lots of fish were observed in the trap and backed up down the fishway—so a good run is on. Dave and the crew removed a downed tree below the Gorton Pond fishway (thanks for the tip, Jack Vestali!), so we expect better numbers there this coming week. Tim and Dave were over on the Quinnipiac River opening the Harry Haakonsen Fishway (Wallingford) and the Hanover Pond Fishway (Meriden) and noticed schools of both white suckers and alewives below—so we expect to have numbers to report from Haakonsen next week. Still no alewives passed at the new Hallville Fishway in Preston but it has passed fish, including a white perch and a chain pickerel. No one expects a chain pickerel to be able to climb a steep pass fishway but we are convinced that it went up, not down! The glass eel run is on but we've only picked up 4 so far at our index station at Fishing Brook in Old Saybrook.

As you may know, the prohibition on the taking of river herring in Connecticut is an annual declaration. This past week, our Commissioner signed a new declaration closing the fishery from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. This was due to the fact that we could not document any significant recovery of our runs last year. The work we do this spring will help determine if the closure should be extended again this time next year. Out of state news- alewives are running on Long Island and in the Hudson; runs starting to gear up in Massachusetts. Big news in Maine for those of you who have been following the St. Croix River debacle: The Maine Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources voted **unanimously** to support legislation that will allow alewives unimpeded access to the St. Croix River above the Grand Falls Dam for the first time in several decades! (This instructs the dam owner to open up a fishway the Legislature told them to close many years ago supposedly to protect (non-native) smallmouth bass. This is a huge step for river herring conservation and we hope the full legislature approves this bill and the Governor signs it into law. <http://www.pressherald.com/news/maine-alewives-st-croix-river-legislature-dam-watershed.html>).

A new paper in the journal *Estuaries and Coast* co-authored by Tom Savoy (CTDEEP/Marine Fisheries), John Waldman, and others identified the river of origin of the Atlantic sturgeon found off the mouth of the Connecticut River each summer. While most were from the Hudson as speculated, they found sturgeon from as far away as southeastern states and Virginia and Delaware. (Thanks, John). Also see an article in the *NY Times* on citizen science monitoring of glass eels: <http://nyti.ms/10sjo5R>.



To the left: Seasonal employee Kevin Job counts alewives out of the Latimer Brook trap in East Lyme. The site has no electricity so we use a unique hand-cranked trap to bring the fish near the surface and net them out and ladle them into the headpond as we count.