

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 23, 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.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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem (Mattabesset)	-	0	144	0	0	0	4	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	0	~550	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	6,296	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	10	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	10	6,990	0	0	0	4	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 first shad have been lifted at Holyoke—ten this past week. Rich Murray of HGE reports that “high flows and turbidity throughout the week resulted in marginal operational and monitoring conditions. The tailrace lift was out of service on 4/15 for crowder controller reinstallation after recession of flood waters on 4/15. River flows resulted in suspension of fish lift operations on 4/20 - 4/21.” Water temperatures had been as low as 3.3 C (38 F) but rose to 7.5 C (45 F) by week’s end. Flows got up to 42,000 cfs, which caused them to shut down. The water temperature at Leesville (Salmon River) is hovering around 13 C (55 F).

Rainbow and Leesville fishways are both opened but passing only white suckers at this point. I snorkeled Leesville over the weekend and was surprised to see only white suckers (lots of them) and largemouth bass (which was a surprise). No alewife, yellow perch or tessellated darters. Bruce Williams and the crew at Rainbow have sore shoulders after the motor that lifts the very large headgate malfunctioned and they had to crank the gate up by hand! The run at Mary Steube slowed down but we saw fish below the fishway on three consecutive days and the fish counter logged 832 hits this week. We don’t have precise counts at Moulson Pond Fishway but they had a couple of strong days and Linda Bireley saw “hundreds” of alewives in the fishway last Friday.

Ken Sprinkle with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service continues electrofishing the lower river for river herring. Late last week they sampled the Mattabesett River and captured 35 river herring (32 alewife, 3 suspected blueback herring) and 3 American shad. They also saw 7 stripers (16-26 inches). In addition, they saw a few small white perch, lots of carp, a few yellow perch, and a few white suckers.

We’ve had reports of anglers catching a few shad in the lower Farmington River (Bart’s) but have not seen any up at Rainbow yet. I think the bottom line is that there is a bunch of fish in the river but we’re not seeing a lot push strongly upstream yet due to cold, high water. Tomorrow is supposed to be 70 degrees and then in the 60s the rest of the week. This could warm the water (especially if the flows subside a bit) and we could be seeing a lot more fish by week’s end. I have not seen any shad in the fish markets yet but that seems like a matter of time.

Since we don’t have a lot of photos from this season to share, I’ll show off a project we completed in Connecticut last year after this reports ended. Dickinson Creek is a high quality ‘trout stream’ in the Salmon River State Forest and is a tributary to the Salmon River upstream of the Leesville Dam Fishway. It has wild trout and we stock it with both trout and Atlantic salmon fry. A historic railroad viaduct (Lyman Viaducts) was filled in with earth in the early 1910s and the stream was routed through a culvert that soon became perched and blocked fish runs. Even eels had a hard time getting upstream to some of the best and most remote habitat in the watershed. The concrete culvert was on the verge of collapse so our Department implemented an emergency repair and the Inland Fisheries Division helped design a rocky ramp fishway to restore connectivity to over 5 miles of upstream habitat for trout, salmon, sea lamprey, eel, and lots of native riverine species like white suckers and various minnows.



BEFORE: The Lyman Viaduct culvert at Dickinson Creek was a barrier to the migration of fish for over 50 years.



AFTER: The repair of the culvert included a rock ramp fishway on the west side, through which all low flows are diverted.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. <u>SHAD</u>	<u>ALEWIFE</u>	<u>BLUEBACK HERRING</u>	<u>GIZZARD SHAD</u>	<u>STRIPED BASS</u>	<u>SEA LAMPREY</u>	<u>SEA-RUN TROUT</u>	AMER. <u>EEL</u>
Greeneville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2	244	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	26	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)	-	4	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E. Lyme)		17,799						
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., E. Lyme)		6,604						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E. Lyme)		263,056						
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)		155						
Lower Guilford Lake (East River, Guilford)		0						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		354						
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	91	0	0		11	0	0
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		0						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		2,867						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		53,931						

**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= 4/10 Taftville=x/x Occum= x/x Tunnel= 4/18 Kinneytown= x/x. Haakonsen=4/18 Hallville= 4/21

***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:

We saw fish all around the state but for the most part in was a slower week due to cool temperatures. Counts picked up at the Mianus and Wood dams and Bride Brook keeps chugging along (134,000 this week) but most of the other numbers were moderate, especially for this time of year. Keep in mind most of our video review is behind, particularly Greenville, Occum (none viewed to date), and Kinneytown (none viewed to date). Taftville fishway is operational but the video has not yet been installed (maybe Thursday) so we don't have counts for that. Latimer Brook is again hosting a strong run and we got tired of dipping and counting them out of the trap so we installed the fish counter on loan from The Nature Conservancy (thanks, Sally). We're still having some problems with the brand new fish counter at Hallville Fishway so we have to rely on the video and that takes time to review. Staff reports that we have also passed at Hallville 2 brook trout (no surprise) and 3 chain pickerel (BIG surprise!). In addition to the anadromous fish these fishways are passing, most are passing quite a few white suckers (e.g. Haakonsen= 278, Tunnel= 115).

Other random notes: Ray Baldwin reports a good week at Clarks Pond (Milford), with alewives seen in the fishway 5 of the 7 days last week. Those numbers reported above are not a census but like Moulson Pond represent an index of what is seen during the day (presumably most alewives are ascending during the nights). Activity at the Branford fishway is picking up and David Post reports seeing 50-60 fish downstream of the fishway a couple of days ago. Most of the alewife sighting our staff have made while conducting stream monitoring has been in the west this past week- Goodwives River (Darien), Bunnells Pond (Bridgeport), Landon Dam (Guilford), Hammonasset River (Madison) but we also saw fish on the Pattagansett River and Poquetanuck Brook. Lots of ospreys working all over, many with alewives in their talons.

Stripers have shown up below the Mianus Pond Fishway. The Town of Greenwich is hosting another Open House at the Mianus Fishway this Saturday from 10 am to noon. For more information visit the Town of Greenwich website.

Eel Counts: Fishing Brook= 683 (mostly glass), Greenville= 228 (58= glass), Lower Millpond= 2,212 (all but 25 were glass), many seen at Mianus, a lot climbing a concrete wall at a low dam in eastern Connecticut, a location we prefer not to reveal.



Above, a bright, fresh American shad zips past the window at the Greenville Dam Fishlift on the Shetucket River. Below, three alewives pass the same window. The squares in the background are 6" x 6".



We typically focus on the ecological value of river herring but don't underestimate the ability of these runs to captivate and inspire us. These children are watching alewives pass through the pool directly below the Latimer Brook Fishway in East Lyme. The spectacle of a strong river herring run can hold the attention of young people and expose them to the fun of the natural world.