

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 30, 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 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84* | 0 | 0 |
| Leesville (Salmon) | 0 | - | - | 0 | - | - | 0*** | 0 | 0 |
| StanChem (Mattabesset) | - | 0 | 371 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Moulson Pond (Eightmile) | 0 | 1 | ~550 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0*** | 0 | - |
| Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook) | - | - | 7,151 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Holyoke (Connecticut- MA) | 0/0 | 213 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 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 | 234 | 8,072 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 93 | 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:

Not a lot of progress in getting shad upstream this past week. As you can see, Holyoke has only lifted a few and 124 of them were yesterday. Fish lift operations were suspended on 4/22 and 4/23 due to high flows and turbidity and lifting resumed on 4/25. The water temperature is still only 10 C (50 F). Shad passage counts (above) do not include 27 fish retained for USFWS health study samples, therefore, total number of American shad lifted to date = 116 (89 passed + 27 sampled). Late yesterday I got a call from Moulson Pond Fishway volunteers Linda and Valin to report a shad in that fishway. Sure, enough, a lone male shad was in the middle of a large school of blueback herring slowly working up the portion of the fishway that used to be the tailrace of an old mill. We've seen one in there once before but there really isn't much of a shad run in the Eightmile River. While I cannot be certain that the shad made it to the top of the fishway, I have entered it into the counts above just for the sheer uniqueness of it. The fish markets in Old Saybrook have shad so the netters are getting them in the lower river. On Saturday, *The Hartford Courant* ran an article about Joe Zaiantz and the Shad Museum in Haddam. You can view the article at: <http://soa.li/ODe6SFJ>. This museum is along Rt. 154 in the Higganum section. Yesterday, The Courant ran an editorial about protecting shad (<http://www.courant.com/news/opinion/editorials/hc-ed-shad-return-20130426,0,2510036.story>). It supported sound conservation of American shad and for that it was welcomed but it also stated that "state officials" predicted the number of shad lifted over Holyoke Dam this year will be 750,000. We have no idea where that came from. None of us in the CTDEEP make such predictions. We'd love to see 750,000 passed this year but are not predicting it.

The blueback herring have entered the rivers. They've been in the mainstem for some time—earliest we've ever documented them—but now they are showing up in the tributaries. Last Tuesday, Ken Sprankle of the USFWS electrofished Wethersfield Cove and netted a total of 54 herring-- all were bluebacks except one alewife. When I saw the shad at Moulson Pond yesterday, the fishway was full of bluebacks but there were still some alewives mixed in. So there is a significant overlap but the change-over has begun. More stripers showing up in the river now, too,

So far, the Salmon River at Leesville has been uncharacteristically quiet. No sign of alewives although we have had reports of them spawning in the Cove downstream. We've been passing small numbers of white suckers and that is it. I saw a small school (?) of smallmouth bass cruising around. The water is very low and very clear. Based upon the other observations, perhaps the blueback herring will show up soon. The low flows may be a factor in not attracting fish all the way up to the dam. The Rainbow fishway has been just passing suckers, as well, but as of today we started passing shad—20 so far. Also, we're starting to get good numbers of lampreys. They also have been seeing lots of wild salmon smolts heading downstream. As of now, 472 in the fishway (not counting what is using the bypass, which is typically many times the fishway number.) This dry weather is not good for the smolt migration. Higher flows push the smolts out of the river faster. Maine DMR reports that their smolt runs have begun, especially on the Sheepscot, Narraguagus, and the East Machias rivers.

The dry conditions have been good for fry stocking and our stocking continued this past week on the Farmington River. Staff illness and vehicle problems plagued us but we're back to 100% and getting good volunteer effort. We have two trucks out stocking today. Nevertheless, it would be good to get some rain. I believe that low flows (the Connecticut River at Holyoke is barely over 10,000 cfs!!!!) and cold nights (back in the 30s tonight) are keeping the runs subdued.

Article in today's edition of The Hartford Courant on the new fishway at the StanChem Dam on the Mattabesset River:

<http://www.courant.com/community/berlin/hc-berlin-fishway-0427-20130426,0,1677440.story>

x

No photos this week.

x

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

| FISHWAY (RIVER) | AMER. SHAD | ALEWIFE | BLUEBACK HERRING | GIZZARD SHAD | STRIPED BASS | SEA LAMPREY | SEA-RUN TROUT | AMER. EEL |
|---|---------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Greenville* (Shetucket R., Norwich) | 171 | 557 | 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 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour) | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton) | 0 | | | | | | | |
| Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville) | | | | | | | | |
| Hallville Pond* ** (Poquetanuck Br. Preston) | - | 5 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme) | | 26,603 | | | | | | |
| Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme) | | 6,604 | | | | | | |
| Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme) | | 328,859 | | | | | | |
| Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford) | | 155 | | | | | | |
| Lower Guilford Lake (East River, Guilford) | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford) | | 438 | | | | | | |
| Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford) | 0 | 341 | 0 | 0 | | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport) | | lots seen | | | | | | |
| Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport) | | 14,161 | | | | | | |
| Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich) | | 57,757 | | | | | | |

*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:

Greenville= 4/22 Taftville=x/x Occum= x/x Tunnel= 4/29 Kinneytown= 4/21 Haakonsen=4/22 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:

Alewife runs are declining but still strong in most locations for which we report numbers but we did not see any fish at other locations this past week in the East or the Connecticut River. We saw good numbers on the Pequonnock River in Bridgeport but the low water is limiting what can get over that apron. We hope to collaborate with the Beardsley Zoo folks to net some fish and push them over the apron tomorrow. Besides the Mianus and Saugatuck rivers (reported above), we only saw fish in the West River in Guilford. Traps in the Saugatuck River confirmed a strong run of alewives to the base of the dam this week but the eels got to the trap first and left Sally and her volunteers with only heads! We're starting to see some post-spawned fish in New London County. The number of shad shown for the Greenville Dam is low due to us being behind in our video reviews. Pete Barber of Norwich Public Utilities estimates that over 1,000 shad have been lifted already. In addition, 7 broodstock salmon and 18 white perch have been lifted. Lots of white suckers at many fishways, including Greenville, Tunnel, Haakonsen, and Kinneytown (some smallmouth bass at Kinneytown, too).

The Open House at the Mianus Pond Fishway last weekend was successful with the stripers really putting on a show for the public. Some bass in the 40-inch range were terrorizing alewives near the entrance. The glass eels have been present in the eel pass all week; there were thousands yesterday. Our friend George Jackman, a fisheries student who is working on eel passage on the Bronx River will be visiting Joe at Mianus this week to learn more about eel passage at that dam. It appears that the Bronx River fishway at the 182nd Street Dam will be built this summer and we're all very excited about this project.

While we're on the subject of out-of- state news, the BIG news of this past week is that the Maine Legislature passed the bill authorizing the fishways on the St. Croix River (international boundary between Maine and New Brunswick) to be opened again for the passage of alewives. As many of you know, the State ordered the fishways to be closed years ago because of the perception that the native alewife was harming the non-native smallmouth bass. The run had been over 1,000,000 fish and of course crashed to only handfuls as all of that upstream habitat was cut off from the run. This enlightened action reverses that closure and once again anadromous alewives will be heading upstream. It may take several years for the run to regain its former magnitude, but this is a great start. We tip our hats (and glasses?) to all of the people in Maine who have worked hard on this for many years. State and federal agency folks, NGOs like the ASF and Maine Rivers, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and special individuals (like Bill Townsend!) all worked hard on this issue.

Also in Maine, Andy Goode of the Atlantic Salmon Federation reports: "As of today (late last week) we have alewives showing up from southern Maine all the way to the Narraguagus. Mark your calendars for the Veazie Dam removal on July 15th!" And finally, for those of you interested in alewives in Maine, see this about a new book- <http://kennebecreborn.blogspot.com/2012/08/alewife-by-douglas-watts.html> . Ben Gahagan of Mass Marine Fisheries posted a fun video of alewives and glass eels on YouTube. Check it out: <http://youtu.be/TKFT7v2N7qM>

Eel Counts: Fishing Brook= 1,430 (mostly glass), Greenville= 344 (116= glass), Lower Millpond= 3,159 (most were glass), many seen in eel passes at Mianus. TNC and volunteers seeing glass eels on Saugatuck River.



Biological samples are taken from alewives caught in the Bride Brook trap to monitor changes in the population structure.



An alewife on the measuring board at Bride Brook. In addition to length and weight data, scales are collected for aging the fish and sometimes tissues samples are taken for genetic analysis.