

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 7, 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	41	0	0	0	0	545*	1	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem (Mattabesset)	-	0	427	0	0	0	10	3	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	1	~550	~500	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	8,164	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	255	0	0	0	0	124	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	9/0	56,304	0	5	21	1	3,031	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=	9/0	56,601	~9,049	~505	21	1	3,710	4	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:

Lots of things going on in the Connecticut River this past week, but the river is REALLY low for this time of year, with flows at Holyoke approximately 4,670 CFS. Flows are typically five times that amount this time of year. The river temperature at Holyoke yesterday was 15.5 degrees C (about 60 F). You can see that the shad numbers have really picked up. Yesterday, Holyoke lifted 16,295 American shad and 1 Atlantic salmon. Shad numbers are also picking up at the West Springfield fishway on the Westfield River and the Rainbow Fishway on the Farmington River. Rainbow also passed a large sea-run brown trout. The StanChem fishway passed three sea-run trout but I don't have any details on those fish yet. The salmon run has begun with 9 salmon captured at Holyoke so far. Four salmon were captured there on Sunday—an early date for a multiple salmon day. Perhaps the most unusual salmon story comes from the Bronx where an angler in a kayak caught a salmon. NYDEC biologist Chart Guthrie contacted me about it and it sure looks like a wild salmon to me (see photo below) but perhaps one that spawned in the Connecticut last year, dropped down to Long Island Sound in late winter and has been feeding and slowly reconditioning since. When we receive the scale samples, we'll see if we can shed some light onto the origin of this fish. For more on the story, see the NY Times: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/05/nyregion/on-his-stand-up-paddleboard-pierre-champion-reels-them-in.html?_r=0

The switchover from alewives to blueback herring in the river seems complete. On Friday, Ken Sprankle of the USFWS electrofished Wethersfield Cove and captured 375 blueback herring and transplanted them up into the Oxbow above Holyoke in Massachusetts. He and Dave Ellis are there now trying to get some more—both for the Oxbow and for the Farmington River above Rainbow. Wait—this just in from Dave. Our shad truck broke down yet again!!!! Groan. (This is the year of vehicles from hell.) Luckily no fish on board. Herring are still not very numerous in the tributaries and it is likely due to low water coming out of the tributaries, failing to attract fish. The Eightmile River (Moulson Pond) had one good wave of bluebacks and Mill Brook (Mary Steube Fishway) had one last wave of alewives going up, but not much elsewhere. Post-spawned fish are starting to come down Mill Brook and the low water is a challenge to them.

NEW SHAD FISHING REGULATIONS were put into effect by our Marine Fisheries Division by declaration. Similar regulations from the Inland Fisheries Division will follow. They state that the only watershed in CT in which you can keep shad is the Connecticut River system. Harvest is now prohibited in all other river systems (e.g. Shetucket, Housatonic, Naugatuck, Quinnipiac). The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has required Sustainability Plans for all waters in which the harvest of shad will take place. Our agency has an approved plan for the Connecticut River but not for other river systems, yet. For now, eliminating harvest in restoration streams like the Quinnipiac and Quinebaug will also aid the restoration in those areas.



This Atlantic salmon was caught by a New York angler in a kayak near New York City. The fish is now in the possession of the NYDEC who will send us scales to analyze. The fish looks pretty skinny for a fresh sea-run.



The shadblow at Leesville is in full bloom.

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)	371	569	0	0	0	0	1	0
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)	2	28	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	19	0	0	0	47	1	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	evidence of alewives moving through this past week.							
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)	alewives actively spawning in this brook this last week.							
Hallville Pond* ** (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	6	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E. Lyme)	33,007							
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., E. Lyme)	11,049							
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E. Lyme)	363,224 final							
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)	167							
Lower Guilford Lake (East River, Guilford)	0							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	498							
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	694	0	0		50	0	0
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	lots seen							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	14,161 (problems with counter)							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	61,654							

**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= 4/28 Taftville=5/1 Occum= x/x Tunnel= 5/1 Kinneytown= 5/1 Haakonsen=5/1 Hallville= 5/1

***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 this past week was spotty, probably heavily influenced by the dry weather. The number for Bride Brook, above, is the unofficial total for the season. We have large numbers of post-spawned fish coming back out and we had to pull the counter. Fish are still straggling in at some streams although in places like Mianus and Haakonsen and the larger streams like the Housatonic, we need to check for the presence of blueback herring. Most of our stream checks failed to document river herring. Last Thursday, the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District hosted a dedication/open house at its new Hallville Pond Dam Fishway on Poquetanuck Brook in Preston. Unfortunately no alewives showed up but plenty of enthusiastic humans. Deputy Commissioner McCleary addressed a cheerful crowd that included the First Selectman, land owners, local conservationists, and project partners. Fox News ran a story on its May 2 broadcasts at 5:30 and 10 pm. Other press coverage included: the New London Day (see other attachment) and photos and text were also posted online:

<http://www.theday.com/article/20130503/NWS01/305039943/1017>; and the Norwich Bulletin this 3 minute video of the Hallville fishway, <http://www.norwichbulletin.com/photos/video/x2062760834/VIDEO-Hallville-Fishway-dedication-in-Preston> and an accompanying article:

<http://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/x2062761524/Fish-ladder-makes-debut-in-Preston#axzz2SFimrV8s>. A hearty congratulations and thank you to ECCD's Scott Gravatt, who ran a good project and has a good fishway to show for it! Yesterday, the 6th, The Nature Conservancy and Bill and Linda Rutan hosted a celebration at the Rutan's property where the partnership removed a dam last summer. This project also included a fishway at the downstream Wequetequock Pond Dam, using rocks from the Rutan dam. We were pleased to announce at the event that we have documented alewives using that fishway this spring, headed upstream toward the former Rutan Dam site! Other partners included the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Avalonia Land Conservancy. The Westerly Sun covered the event:

http://www.thewesterlysun.com/news/conservancies-property-owners-celebrate-return-of-migrant-fish/article_8e385276-b720-11e2-8053-0019bb2963f4.html

Another event of the past week was trying to get alewives over the cursed Pequonnock River Apron below the Bunnells Pond Fishway. Due to the drought, the amount of water passing down the full width of the apron was too shallow to let fish move up and we estimated about 15,000 alewives were stuck below the apron. Dave Ellis and seasonal workers from our program organized a strike force with Greg Dancho and his guys from Beardsley Zoo and some Trout Unlimited guys and they built a sandbag diversion weir to force all the water over to one side to make it deep enough to allow the fish to move up—which they did! They are now struggling with high water velocities and Dave will go back tomorrow to see if he can do something about that, but it remains much improved (see photos below). Thanks to all involved. Save the Sound will have its contractor move in as soon as the runs are over to build a fishway at this site so that this will never happen again.

Suckers are still passing most fishways, Greeneville is passing white perch and Atlantic salmon broodstock; John Waldman reports Atlantic salmon broodstock being caught below the Derby Dam on the Housatonic. Glass eels still being seen in many locations.

BONUS PHOTO SECTION THIS WEEK

Eel Counts: Fishing Brook= 5,294 (mostly glass), Greeneville= 336 (111= glass), Lower Millpond= 4,481 (most were glass). Spill at the Mianus Pond Dam has stopped due to low water and the eel nets are dry—so no more passage until we get rain.



RUTAN DAM CELEBRATION: S.Gephard in the brook where the dam used to be (with boots not the leash), with many onlookers including Suzanne Paton (USFWS), Cheryl Chase (DEEP/IWRD), and Sally Harold (TNC). (Photo by Grace White of Westerly Sun)



Property owners Linda (in green) and Bill (dark blue) present project partners with commemorative rocks from the dam that was removed: Sally Harold (TNC), Steve Gephard (DEEP) and Rick Newton (ALC), hiding behind the shadblow that Sally presented to the Rutans (Photo by Laura Shail, The Nature Conservancy)



The dedication/open house at Hallville was well-attended. DEEP's Dave Kozak (in red) next to Tim Wildman who demonstrated the video recording system for this fishway. (Photo by Judy Rondeau, ECCD) See photo below next:



This is the top of the apron where the velocity is the highest. If you enlarge this photo on your screen, you may see one alewife in the middle (casting a shadow) approaching the top and another two or three toward the back also struggling to get up. After the sandbags were placed, this water was about 6 inches deep. A properly designed fishway (ready to be built at this site this coming summer) will manage the flows properly to keep them at suitable depths and velocities that will allow alewives to pass easily. (Photo by Gwen MacDonald, Save the Sound)



PEQUONNOCK APRON- The water down the sloped concrete apron was too shallow so the team built this sandbag diverter to send all the water to one side where it would be deep enough to allow alewives to swim up. The Bunnells Pond Fishway is about a quarter mile upstream from here, in Bridgeport. (Photo by Gwen MacDonald, Save the Sound)



PEQUONNOCK APRON- The fish responded. Once the side channel was created, this school of alewives moved toward it. (Photo by Gwen MacDonald, STS)