

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 28, 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/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)	2	78	0	19	0	1	1,920*	3	0
Leesville (Salmon)	3	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem (Mattabesset)	-	0	460	28	7	0	13	10	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	1	~550	~2,150	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	9,137 (FINAL)-		-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	6	4,467	0	0	0	0	474	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	35/0	309,780	0	966	196	44	20,031	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	21,955	-	0	0	0	2,416	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	10,671	-	0	0	0	658	-	3
Bellows Falls (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	101	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0/0								
TOTALS=	46/0	312,398	~9,376	~3,163	203	45	22,219	13	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:

Ken and Darleen at the Connecticut River Coordinator's Office are up to their eyeballs in FOIA stuff and will not be able to update fish counts this week. I have tried to piece together the best available information but admit that some numbers may be out of date, particularly the upriver fishways. I guess I don't have to tell you that the weather and river conditions have been just plain weird. The cold spell culminated with a substantial snow in the upper part of the watershed over the weekend. Apparently they were skiing at Killington (and other places I suppose) and Memorial Day golf matches were scratched due to 8 inches of snow. This sent water temperatures plummeting and this morning the temperature at Leesville was back down to 13 C (55 F), comparable to early April. Heavy rains also pushed the streams up to the highest levels we've seen this season with flows at Holyoke exceeding 50,000 cfs on Sunday—enough to merit suspending lifting operations. Holyoke Gas & Electric also suspended operations at the fishlift on Thursday and Friday due to reduced water visibility. So the last couple of days, things have been quiet. We captured one salmon at Rainbow on Saturday and that was about it. However, a heat wave is heading our way with air temperatures forecasted to reach 90 F by Thursday. That and the turbid water should send water temperatures up fast and if the river begins to drop by then, conditions could be ripe for lots of fish passage, including the peak of the salmon run. It seems to me that the peak of salmon returns in Connecticut typically corresponds to the blooming of mountain laurel and judging by the buds on the bushes around here, that could happen late this week. Earlier in the week before the rain, we trapped 3 salmon at Leesville (see photos below).

The cool water temperatures may delay the spawning of American shad, giving them more time to work up the river. We've already logged higher numbers through Vernon Fishway this year than last (and for many past years) and with a little bit of luck, that number will continue to rise. The shad count at West Springfield (Westfield River) is lagging behind 2012. Blueback herring numbers at Holyoke already are the highest in 10 years and we've seen more (but not necessarily passed more) in the lower Rainbow Dam Fishway than we've seen in years. This is not to imply that the blueback herring run is doing okay or even increasing. It is too early to make such a conclusion. After all, the Holyoke count is only 966 (as compared to ~630,000 28 years ago). Plus we are not seeing blueback herring in many places along the river (including the Salmon River where we have not seen one!). I believe the drought has played a role in this. The lack of flow coming out of the tributaries has likely reduced the attraction to tributaries and kept the fish in the mainstem. It will be interesting to see if this big spike in river flow brings in more blueback herring to all sites during the next week.

There was a nice one-page article on shad netter Dan Russell in *The Hartford Courant* on Sunday. It included color photos of him boning shad. Unfortunately it does not appear to have made it to their online edition so I don't have a link to share.

As of May 26, the counts for the Essex Fishlift (Merrimack River, MA) were 14 salmon, ~23,000 shad, 17,000 river herring, and 413 sea lamprey. As of May 23, Maine DMR had trapped 35 salmon at Veazie Dam on the Penobscot River (and passed ~9,194 river herring).



Salmon L-002-13 from the Leesville fishway. It is a relatively small bright male. L-001-13 may be seen sitting on the bottom of the tank to the left.



One of the Leesville salmon sitting in the holding tank, partially obscured by glare. You can barely see the red Floy tag affixed to the fish's dorsal fin to help track it through the system.

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)	3,083	713	17	61	3	0	2	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	111	56	0	7	0	0	0	7,581
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	11	70	0	66	0	129	2	0
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)		.						
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)								
Hallville Pond* ** (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	6	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		33,065 final						
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		16,992						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		363,224 final						
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)		179						
Lower Guilford Lake (East River, Guilford)		0						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		563						
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	1	4,371	73	35	0	177	1	0
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		~20,000 estimated						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		31,753	10					
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		69,074	23,342					

**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= 5/16 Taftville=5/?? Occum= x/x Tunnel= 5/28 Kinneytown= 5/21 Haakonsen=5/22 Hallville= 5/20

***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.

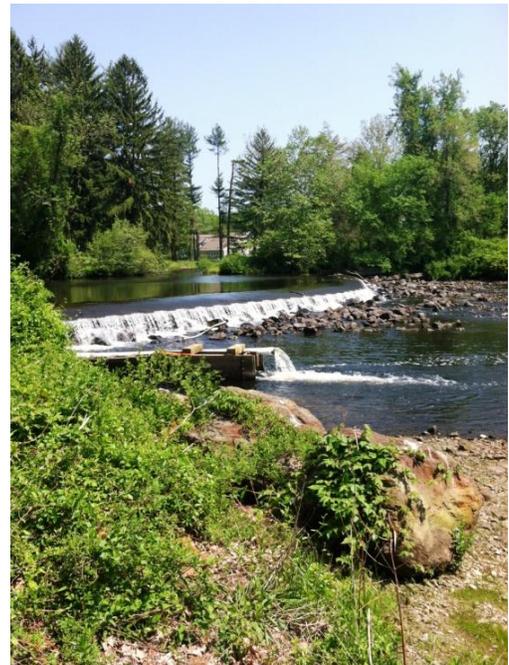
COMMENTS:

Just like last week, the only alewife action we have seen in the east has been in the Pattagansett River. However, it amounted to one fish! There were lots of fish in the west but only in a few key places. On Friday, the Housatonic was full of river herring (we are assuming alewife) from the Derby Dam all the way down to the railroad crossing. Yet none were seen in the Naugatuck River! I think this is a case similar to what is discussed in the Connecticut River section of this report—the fish are going to the streams where there is water. With little flow coming down the Naugatuck, the fish are staying in the mainstem and continuing up to the Derby Dam. Last week we had a report of lots of fish in the West River in New Haven. By the time we got over there, they were gone but we saw about 5,000 on the other side of town in the Mill River. Other than that, we saw a few fish in Sasco Brook (Westport/Fairfield) and a few in West River (Guilford). The rest of the fish apparently headed west to Greenwich. Joe Cassone of the Town of Greenwich Conservation Commission reported passing between 1,100 and 5,800 bluebacks per day up the Mianus Pond Fishway, Monday through Thursday (prior to the rain). More than 10,000 passed up during the week. According to Joe; “Last Monday afternoon a big school started passing at the very earliest part of the incoming tide, they were in only a couple inches of water, it was amazing to see. The fish had been hanging around below the bridge and picked a strange time to start passing. The shallow water let me get some nice videos of the fish getting ready to pass.” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p831ACwY9Yw> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UP-yA1pDOIA>. “The second video where the fish are bouncing around the first leg of steep pass is interesting, you can see the water line on the side of the concrete from where tide had dropped, at higher the tides the water cushions the outflow from the steep pass and makes it easier for fish to pass, these fish showed up so early in the tide they had a hard time passing until the tide came up a bit, it was amazing to see their resolve as they tried to swim up.” The Conservation Commission also had 6 groups of students from the Soundwaters program visit the fishway to learn about fish passage. One lucky group was there the afternoon all the bluebacks were in shallow water; they had a blast. Sarah Tobing, Robin Kreisberg, and Katie Conrad of NYC Parks (Bronx River Fishway project) also visited and a few hundred herring passed while we were there. It is very exciting to see the shad numbers increasing at the Taftville and Tunnel fishways on the Shetucket River system. The modifications made in the off-season by FirstLight Power have apparently paid off. We need to see those numbers grow more but this is a great trend.

Eel Counts: Fishing Brook= 6,499 (mostly glass), Greeneville= 809 (283= glass), Lower Millpond= 5,607 (no new data this week), Byram River= 14 (elvers)—just deployed.



Seasonal employees Kevin Job and Lynette Gardner (with nets) assist Tim Wildman (with yellow electrodes) electrofish under the Wallace Dam in Wallingford to collect river herring. The ratio of alewife to blueback herring in the catch helps us interpret the images of herring going through the Haakonsen Fishway.



This is the Wood Dam Fishway on the Saugatuck River in Westport. A white pipe can be seen on top of the fishway adding more water by the entrance. This attraction water pipe was added in an effort to draw more fish toward the fishway. It was a cooperative project between the Aquarion Water Company and the DEEP with help from The Nature Conservancy.