

# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 8, 2014



This is a report generated by the Connecticut Department of 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/r5cnc](http://www.fws.gov/r5cnc). For more information about Atlantic salmon, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association at [www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org).

## CONNECTICUT RIVER LOCATIONS

FISHWAY (RIVER)	ATLANTIC <u>SALMON*</u>	AMER. <u>SHAD</u>	<u>ALEWIFE</u>	BLUEBACK <u>HERRING</u>	GIZZARD <u>SHAD</u>	STRIPED <u>BASS</u>	SEA <u>LAMPREY</u>	SEA-RUN <u>TROUT</u>	AMER. <u>EEL</u>
Rainbow (Farmington)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem** (Mattabesset)	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Moulson Pond** (Eightmile)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	49	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0/0	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	-	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								
<b>TOTALS=</b>	0/0	0	49	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>(last year's totals)</b>	92/4	397,486	9,597	3,228	824	208	24,939	18	16

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. \*\*There is a video camera that records passage. 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.

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 anadromous fish to be confirmed in the Connecticut River came on Friday when we saw a couple of alewives below the Mary Steube Fishway on the Mill Brook in Old Lyme. Jim and Sandra Tripp (live next door and operate the Tributary Conservancy) reported seeing many alewives pass by their underwater camera that night. We have not received any reports of alewives at Moulson Pond Fishway or seen them up at Leesville (fishway not yet opened) on the Salmon River but Ken Sprankle and his crew (USFWS) were electrofishing the Mattabesset River in Cromwell yesterday and picked up 22 alewives—and said there were more that they missed. Water temperature was 10 C (50 F). So the alewives are definitely running up the river. Holyoke had planned to open at the end of last week but I have not heard confirmation of that. It is possible that high water has kept them from opening. We plan to open Leesville in the next couple of days and Rainbow on the 18<sup>th</sup>. I have not heard plans for West Springfield on the Westfield River. We have a new tributary fishway on the Connecticut River this year—a Denil Fishway at the so-called Advocate Dam on the Manhan River in Easthampton, MA. I will look to get more information on this fishway soon. The three tributary fishways now opened in Connecticut are Mary Steube (a few alewives), Moulson Pond (11 white suckers), and StanChem (no counts yet but white suckers were running through it briskly). The Moulson Pond Fishway (first dam on the Eightmile River in Lyme) finally joins the ranks of fishways with counting capability. For all of its previous existence (since the late 1990s), there was no way to count fish at this fishway and Lyme Land Conservation Trust volunteers visited the fishway daily during the season and estimated the number of fish they saw in the ladder and below just to give some kind of an idea of abundance. They did a pretty good job of that. But last year, the land trust, working closely with the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Partnership and Tim Wildman of our project received a grant from Trout Unlimited to install an underwater camera at this location. (A big thanks to Jim Turek and Kristen Ferry of NOAA for their help on this grant.) A framed aluminum housing box was fabricated at a local metal shop, the camera and associated instruments were purchased, and the team installed the system in the fall for a test. The fall test was a huge success. Not only did it document an adult Atlantic salmon coming up the fishway (the first confirmed salmon back to the non-tidal portion of the Eightmile River) but it also documented about 80 silver eels going down the steep pass during their annual fall seaward spawning migration. This camera has been installed once again for the spring season and the fishway is operating. Land trust volunteers and DEEP staff will work together to review the video images and compile fish passage data. As with other video systems, it is inevitable that there will be a lag time between when a fish passes through and we review the image file and compile the data. Hopefully no more than a week or so. We are very excited to see what kind of numbers (and species diversity) comes up the fishway.



*Eric Belt (volunteer) and Pat Young (Program Director for the Eightmile Wild & Scenic Partnership) confer with a craftsman from SeConn metal shop in Waterford about the design of the box that will hold the Moulson Pond Fishway camera.*



*Tim Wildman (CTDEEP- Inland Fisheries Division) installs the camera box outside the exit of the Moulson Pond Fishway. The camera is housed under his right arm and the lid folds down and locks. Images are sent to an instrument box about 50 feet away. There is a removable backdrop that must be cleaned regularly.*

## OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

<b>FISHWAY (RIVER)</b>	<b>AMER. <u>SHAD</u></b>	<b><u>ALEWIFE</u></b>	<b><u>BLUEBACK HERRING</u></b>	<b><u>GIZZARD SHAD</u></b>	<b><u>STRIPED BASS</u></b>	<b><u>SEA LAMPREY</u></b>	<b><u>SEA-RUN TROUT</u></b>	<b>AMER. <u>EEL</u></b>
<b>Greeneville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Taftville*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Occum*</b> (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Tunnel*</b> (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Kinneytown*</b> (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hallville Pond*</b> (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
<b>Latimers Brook**</b> (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	0	0					
<b>Gorton Pond</b> (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	-	0	0					
<b>Brides Brook**</b> (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		19,154	0					
<b>Clarks Pond</b> (Indian River, Milford)		0	0					
<b>Branford Supply Pond Dam**</b> (Queach Br., Branford)		400	0					
<b>Landon Dam**</b> (West River, Guilford)								
<b>Haakonsen Fishway*</b> (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Bunnells Pond*</b> (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		0	0	0	0			
<b>Wood Dam**</b> (Saugatuck R., Westport)		~100?	0	0				
<b>Mianus River Pond* **</b> (Mianus R., Greenwich)		120	0	0	0	0	0	-

*\*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= n.a. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= 4/6 Haakonsen= 4/5 Hallville= n.a.*

**\*\***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 installed the fish counter at Bride Brook several weeks ago as the alewives were trickling in under the ice at Bride Lake. But as the winter lingered, the counts stayed low. We had our first report of an osprey in East Lyme on St. Patrick's Day and by last week they were everywhere, catching fish. We had a few fish show up early at Mianus and, surprisingly, the Branford Water Supply Ponds Fishway. But the cold nights kept things subdued. The rain and the warmer weather conspired to provide great conditions and things really picked up over the weekend, at least at Brides where the count is now approaching 20,000. The count at Mianus is lower than we would expect by now but Joe Cassone of the Town of Greenwich reports more fish below the fishway and the alewives that have passed have been very large. That is consistent with what Ben Gahagan of MA Marine Fisheries reports from the North Shore. We have seen a few fish in the Pattaganset, had a report of a lot of fish (chased by stripers) in the Blackhall, and Sally Harold of The Nature Conservancy reported quite a few clicks on their fish counter at the Wood Dam Fishway on the Saugatuck River but the data were lost due to an unfortunate push of a button. We've passed a couple of trout at Latimer Brook but no alewives yet. We have no doubt that the Sound is full of alewives now but they're just waiting for the right conditions to run up the streams. Some good numbers of alewives have been reported from Long Island and in Massachusetts. We assume there are fish running in Rhode Island but no reports yet. Ben Gahagan reported seeing lampreys in the Parker River (MA) in March, which is quite unusual. The Greenville Fishlift on the Shetucket River has not yet begun lifting due to high water. This last rain was not too bad so hopefully water levels will drop and lifting will begin soon. Nothing seen yet at Kinneytown or Hallville but Haakonsen (Quinnipiac River) is passing lots of white suckers—the count was 473 as of today.

There are a couple of new fishways along the shoreline for this year. First, the Southcentral Regional Water Authority built a small steep pass fishway at it East Haven Diversion Dam in East Haven on the Farm River. This dam diverts water to their Lake Saltonstall reservoir. The small dam was blocking river herring runs from several miles of good habitat, which now can be re-colonized. Hopefully, the fun won't stop there. Trout Unlimited (Hammonasset Chapter) has been designing and fund- raising for a steep pass fishway for the next dam on the Farm River—Pages Millpond Dam in North Branford—and if the grants come in, will be building that next year. This would open up the entire ~25 miles of historic habitat for river herring on this stream. TU and the Regional Water Authority teamed up on these projects so that the expenditures at one dam can be used as non-federal match for a grant for the other dam. Great local cooperation on a watershed! Second, we have a new fishway at the dreaded Pequonnock Apron in Bridgeport, just below the Bunnells Pond Dam Fishway. Those of you who have been reading these reports for a while will remember the YouTube footage by the Mayor of alewives going on their sides to get over this apron in shallow water. Problem solved—more on this project and the related Save-the-Sound project of bringing a camera to the Bunnells Pond fishway next week! Yes, we'll have good data for Bunnells this year!

Here is a link to a story WNPR did about eel passage in Greenwich. <http://wnpr.org/post/how-does-four-inch-eel-hurdle-40-foot-dam>, courtesy of Joe Cassone. Here is a news item on smelt declining in Maine, courtesy of John Waldman: <http://bangordailynews.com/2014/03/11/outdoors/maine-shuts-down-smelt-fishing-from-stonington-to-kittery/?ref=search>

And finally—UConn men's basketball team are the national champions! Tonight the UConn women seek to duplicate that feat! ☺



**East Haven Diversion Dam Fishway:** Even a small dam like this can block runs of river herring. Instead the concrete 'box' is one section of steep pass fishway. To the right is a brick gatehouse.



**Pequonnock River Apron Fishway:** The five-pool pool-and-weir fishway is mostly underwater during high tide but there are drops at each weir during low tide. More photos of this fishway later.