

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 11, 2017



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/r5crc. 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	151	0	0	0	0	494	2	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	SNS**=0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA)	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
Wilder* (Connecticut- VT)	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
TOTALS=	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(last year's totals)	6	391,096	792	3,558	684	619	36,914	6	19,799

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.

*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. ++Shortnose Sturgeon
 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:

With all the rain and some snowmelt up north, the Connecticut River has risen considerably. On Saturday, it reached 70,000, which is higher than we've seen in some time. Today, it is down to 53,000 and is 7 degrees C (45 F). The Holyoke Fishlift cannot operate until the flows go below 40,000 cfs and the shad don't enter until the river reaches 10C (50F), so no counts to report from up north, yet. The river is quite turbid. But the river herring are here! Last week I reported that Ken Sprankle of USFWS sampled a handful of Alewives in the Mattabessett River in Cromwell—the earliest ever for that far upstream. This past week he sampled on Blueback Herring at the same location (see center photo below). That is extremely early for Blueback Herring. He also picked up four striped bass and a gizzard shad. There isn't a lot of data to report from the Connecticut River yet. We've opened all the Connecticut fishways except Rainbow on the Farmington but the only fish counts we have are 50 alewives at Mary Steube Fishway on Mill Brook in Old Lyme near the mouth of the river. I was surprised to see no white suckers in the trap at Leesville this weekend—but there is so much water there, including the back-up of the Connecticut River, that the suckers may have trouble finding the entrance to the fishway. The MDC reports that Colebrook Reservoir has totally refilled and now encroaching into the flood storage zone. The City of Meriden says its reservoirs are 80% full. We're not out of the drought yet, but our streams are doing much better!

Bruce Williams of our program completed the annual Atlantic Salmon fry stocking for the Salmon River watershed this week (see photo, lower left). The fry came from the Tripp Streamside Incubation Facility near the Mary Steube Fishway in Old Lyme. Once again, huge thanks to Sandra Tripp and her team for this important assistance to us. Joe Zaiantz opened the Shad Museum in Haddam last Sunday. For more info, see <http://www.haddamshadmuseum.com/about-us.php>.

Paul Greenberg, author of Four Fish, wrote an online article about the removal of the Norton Dam, which we highlighted last week. To see that, go to <https://www.hakaimagazine.com/article-long/dam-busters>. For an update on law enforcement against glass eel poachers, read this article from the Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/officials-cracking-down-on-poaching-of-a-slippery-squiggly-and-valuable-commodity--baby-eels/2017/04/06/e84d9ab8-1ad7-11e7-9887-1a5314b56a08_story.html?utm_term=.26a2649fb0b8&wpisrc=nl_rainbow-fbia&wpmm=1. Tom Savoy of the Fisheries Division recently co-authored a paper on the genetic origins of the Atlantic Sturgeon found in the Connecticut River. The data suggests that the fish may have originated from southern rivers. Not what we would have expected. WNPR radio interviewed me about the extension of the river herring closure in Connecticut. The story ran this morning and is posted on their website, <http://wnpr.org/>, where it can be read or listened to. Scroll down on the front page. Stu Winquist passed along birder news that Northern Gannets are being seen in fairly large numbers in Long Island Sound and as far west as Stratford Point. These large birds prey on schooling fish and they could be following river herring into the Sound—but more likely chasing menhaden that never left this winter. But it is a thrill to see these northern birds in the Sound and remember that abundant forage fish means food for everyone!

In the summer of 2016, **Save the Sound removed the Carpenters Dam on the Quinnipiac River** in Meriden (see photo below, right). Gwen MacDonald of STS was the manager of the project, which was funded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service from settlement money from a contaminated site upstream on the river. This dam was at the head of the Cheshire Gorge and blocked migratory fish that swim up the river through the Haakonsen and Hanover Pond fishways. The removal of the next dam up, Clark Brothers, was also part of this project—more on that next week. By removing the two dams, this project opened up over five miles of river and let anadromous fish reach both the Ten Mile and the Eight Mile rivers (tributaries) and get practically to I-84 on the mainstem. Removing Carpenters Dam also eliminated a public safety hazard. A kayaker drowned here a few years ago after being caught in a hydraulic below the dam. Good job, Save the Sound!



A bucket of salmon fry being distributed along Dickinson Creek.



A very large, fat Blueback Herring from the Mattabessett River—unusually early!



The demolition of Carpenters Dam on the Quinnipiac River in Meriden.

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)	0	2	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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	52	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., East Lyme)		3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		22,441						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	95	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		0	0	0	-	0	-	0
Bunnells Pond* (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		2,470	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:*

Greenville= n.a. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= n.a. Haakonsen= n.a. Hallville= n.a. Hanover= n.a. Bunnells= 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.

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:

As you can see, we have most of the fishways in the coastal systems open now. Bob Stira of First Light expects to have both Tunnel and Taftville operational by tomorrow with the video systems running. If the Occum fishway is not operating yet, it will be in a day or two. A former seasonal employee of ours, Nate Rocha, is working for Norwich Public Utilities at the Occum fishway. We have yet to formally review video from Greeneville but Jeff Lortie of NPU reported seeing two alewives in the first lift after being shut down for a few days due to high water. More fish are likely being lifted. The only other fishway not opened yet is the Harry Haakonsen Fishway at the Wallace Dam in Wallingford. We deliberately kept that closed because we needed to collect about 200 white suckers from below the dam for a tagging study we are working on with New England Hydro up at the next upstream dam at Hanover Pond in Meriden. By keeping the fishway closed, we let the suckers pile up below the dam where it is easier for us to capture. Our crew just reported back and has finished tagging and releasing the fish below the Hanover Dam Fishway. They reported seeing plenty of river herring, Gizzard Shad, and a few Sea Lamprey below Wallace Dam when they captured the suckers. Tim is opening the Haakonsen Fishway now.

Last Tuesday, the crew was down on the Saugatuck River opening those fishways, along with Sally and Mark from The Nature Conservancy. The Wood Dam Fishway is opened but there was a glitch with the electronic fish counter, which is now being addressed. We also visited the Mianus Pond Fishway to check on its counter. The Town Conservation Commission has hired a new Conservation Resource Manager, Sarah Nahabedian, who will be taking the lead on the fishway operation. That fishway has seen a steady flow of low numbers of alewives and we expect those numbers to climb in the coming days. Other coastal Connecticut fishways not listed on the table above are now opened, including Rings End and Upper Pond (Goodwives River, Darien), Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford), Landon and Capello Pond on the West and East rivers in Guilford, and Hummers Pond (Fence Creek, Madison). The crew was opening Fishing Brook Fishway on Fishing Brook in Old Saybrook and saw a handful of alewives swim right past them in the fishway as they pulled the boards out. We hope to install a fish counter in that fishway soon, as part of a cooperative project between us and The Nature Conservancy. As I was entering this week's data, I noticed I left a "5" in the Kinneytown line for Alewife. This was left over data from 2016 and should be disregarded. I deleted it this week. No fish have been counted at Kinneytown yet this year. Leading the pack with alewife counts, of course, is Bride Brook. We passed 14,000 on Friday night but the last couple of nights have been slow. For the most part, fish have been trickling in across the state but with temperatures reaching 80 degrees inland today and stream flows dropping, the fish should start getting motivated real soon. I suspect by this time next week, we'll have entries in many more locations.

It seems only appropriate that we should mention that this past Saturday was opening day for fishing season. Although our Division had to reduce the number of trout it stocked this year due to several factors including hatchery maintenance, there still were lots of trout to be caught and fun to be had. We received reports of silvery trout being caught in the lower part of some of our sea-run trout streams. Remember—our experimental strain of Finnish trout have ventral (pelvic) fin clips. If you catch a sea-run trout, check it for clips and report the catch to us.

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 81 glass eels/23 yellow eels; Mill River Eel Trap= not operational yet; Greeneville Eel Lift= not operational yet; Lower Millpond (Old Lyme)= not operational yet.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is live on iCRV (www.iCRVradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesday and re-played at 3:00 and 7:00 pm that day 8 am on Saturday. iCRV now archives shows so if you miss one, you can go online and click on "Outdoors" and the "Fishing" and find past shows to listen to. **This week, Chris Martin, DEEP State Forester, will be in this slot talking about gypsy moths and Connecticut forests. I'll be back next week.**



Dave Ellis checking the Mianus Pond Fishway electronic fish counter—with a plastic alligator tail taken from the screen. Any alligators missing a tail should contact our office.



The exit of the Bunnells Pond Fishway on the Pequonnock River in Bridgeport. This is the top end of what may be the tallest steepass fishway in the region. The spillway is to the right. The lighter silver box at the end of the fishway is the housing for our video camera. Images are analyzed by our partners at the Beardsley Zoo and streamed on-line. We'll share that link with you in a future report.