

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 30, 2018



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	STURGEON/ TROUT++	AMER. EEL
Rainbow* (Farmington)	0	161	4	0	0	0	277	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	1	325	11	29	-	23	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	1	8	2	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	(6,989)	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	FINAL -	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield-MA)	0	4,560	0	4	0	0	94	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut-MA)	1	230,787	0	993	46	31	4,028	4/0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan-MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut-MA)	0	1,971	-	0	0	0	16	-	-
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=	1	235,510	7,326	1,010	75	31	4,422	4/0	0
(last year's totals)	20	541,637	922	800	230	452	23,955	85	20

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 (Holyoke)/Sea-run Trout (other locations) 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 Connecticut River has dropped way down—8,200 cfs (typical for this year is 15,000 cfs) but temperatures are still moderate for the season at 16 – 19 C (61 – 68 F). It's been a good week for American Shad, with nearly 77,000 lifted at Holyoke. About 2,000 have made it through the next upstream fishway at Turners Falls and we don't have data yet for the Vernon Dam Fishway but there are reports of shad moving up through that third fishway. It's not yet June and we're probably a bit over halfway through the shad lifting season so we could be on our way to another good run of 400,000. I think the coming week will be critical for that. With good lifting conditions, the shad should move up in large numbers. If they don't, perhaps some of them spawned below Holyoke when they were delayed over high water. The netters in the lower river have apparently stopped netting because the fish markets in Old Saybrook are saying this last week was the last of the shad. That means all the fish that will enter the river this year probably have done so but there obviously is a lot of shad north of Hartford that still could pass upriver fishways. The video counts for Rainbow are still way behind (May 6) and we know that shad have been moving through that fishway (with a lot of Sea Lamprey) this past week but we don't have those data yet.

Holyoke has also passed four Shortnose Sturgeon (see photo below). Ken Sprankle electrofished Wethersfield Cove recently and came up with several hundred Blueback Herring.

In Maine, things are getting busy at the Milford Fish Lift at the first dam on the Penobscot River. They broke their own record for river herring, having passed 1.3 million already. Shad and Striped Bass have just shown up and they're up to 110 Sea Lamprey. They've already lifted 20 Atlantic Salmon, retaining 10 for broodstock. The first Atlantic Salmon of the season on the Connecticut River was passed at the Holyoke Dam on May 27.

This year's annual meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is in Portland, Maine June 11 – 15. Prominent on the agenda is the negotiations for new regulatory measures (including catch quota) for the West Greenland fishery which is known to intercept U.S. Atlantic Salmon as well as distressed stocks from other nations. On May 24, the Association of Fishers and Hunters in Greenland finalized an agreement with the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the North Atlantic Salmon Fund that effectively "buys out" the commercial fishery for 12 years. Greenland has agreed to announce at NASCO that they will set a zero-catch quota for their commercial fishery and the conservation organizations will "financially support alternative economic development, scientific research, and education initiatives focused on marine conservation". The news of this agreement has just been announced and the details of it have yet to be shared. There will still be a subsistence fishery for personal and family consumption of Atlantic Salmon and there is bound to be much discussion of that fishery and its amount of its landings at the NASCO meeting.

The Connecticut River Salmon Association has posted a National Park Service video on "River Connections" on its website: <http://www.ctriversalmon.org/2018/05/28/river-connections-video/>



The Sea Lamprey run up the Rainbow Dam Fishway is picking up. Here, a migrating Sea Lamprey rests by attaching to the viewing window at pool number 24.



Holyoke has lifted four Shortnose Sturgeon including this one. After an accidental mortality of this species last year, great care will be taken with sturgeon. Many will be tagged as part of the study to evaluate the new downstream passage facility at the dam.

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)	773	1,653	122	73	3	0	1	1
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	4	115	0	0	0	0	0	848
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	61	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	(512)	FINAL	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	(16,210)	FINAL-	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		(395,026)						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		23	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		(738)	FINAL	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		(942)	FINAL	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	3,007	35	8	0	103	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		21	0	1	-	3	-	1
Clarks Pond Fishway*** (Indian River, Milford)		4,041						
Bunnells Pond* (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	25,966	0	0	0	0	0	-
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		passing fish	0	-	-	-	-	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		32,978	6,093	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= 5/24 Taftville= 5/15 Occum= 5/06 Tunnel= 5/15 Kinneytown= 5/30 Haakonsen= 5/25 Hallville= 5/24 Hanover= 5/?
Bunnells= 5/11 Chapmans= 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. *These are counts made by a volunteer when he is present and represents an index not a census. 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 in eastern Connecticut is now over and we've pulled all of our electronic fish counters for the season and called it a wrap. The video stations remain in place since those fishways have other species moving through them. There were still small numbers of Alewives moving through Whitford Brook, which is in extreme eastern Connecticut, but on May 25, Jon got his first zero. So that run may finally be over, too. However, Alewives continue to run in western Connecticut. A few more at Haakonsen Fishway (Wallingford) and in Clark's Pond (Milford), and 300 river herring through the Mianus Pond Fishway, but some of those were Blueback Herring. The bright spot for Alewives continues to be Bunnells Pond in Bridgeport. The fishway has set a record, surpassing last year's record of 21,407 and we're still two weeks behind in our video review AND they're still running! As we've reported before, the pond is full of cormorants—around 40! At times there are two of them inside the exit pool of the fishway gobbling up Alewives and now we believe they have learned to squeeze between the gaps of the cover grates of the downstream resting pools and grab fish in there. We will block that access and have some ideas of reducing depredation next year. But the mortality is not a huge concern. There is a good run there and the birds are only taking a small percentage of the run. Clearly the run is still increasing. Our crew reports watching the video and seeing a school of Alewives approach the camera to the right while there is a cormorant in the fishway to the left. The school hesitates moving forward with the bird in the water. Suddenly, one fish tries to make a run for it and the bird gets it. But as that happens, 40 to 50 other Alewives rush past the camera and the bird and into the headpond. Motto: you can't eat us all.

A new paper that expands our knowledge on the population structure of river herring was published in *Fisheries Research* this past week. The co-authors include a lot of familiar names in river herring management and research:

Reid, K., E.P. Palkovacs, D.J. Hasselman, D. Baetscher, J. Kibele, B. Gahagan, P. Bentzen, M.C. McBride, J.C. Garza. 2018. Comprehensive evaluation of genetic population structure for anadromous river herring with single nucleotide polymorphism data. *Fisheries Research* 206: 247-258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2018.04.014>

The shad run is still going strong at on the Shetucket River and this week we finished trucking shad from Greenville upstream to Scotland to support First Light's studies. In addition of the fish that we have trucked upstream as part of the Scotland Fishlift Evaluation Study, Norwich Public Utilities has trucked 181 shad and 125 river herring upstream of the Occum Dam. Lots of broodstock salmon passing through the Occum Fishway—and total of 20 this week. Twelve in one day. Things are picking up at the Tunnel Eel Pass. Of the 848 season total, 650 were passed yesterday. They're seeing plenty of eels of all sizes at the Mianus Pond eel passes in Greenwich but don't conduct counts.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 37,822 glass/178 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 20,566 glass/303 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 1,346 glass/258 yellow; Hanover Pond= 4 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= not operational yet. The number shown on the previous page for Tunnel is for its eel pass, not the lift, and all fish are elvers or yellow.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is live on iCRV (www.iCRVradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesdays. If you can't tune in at 8:00 am, listen to it at any time: www.icrvradio.com/programs/program/50. Last week the radio host Dave Williams tagged along with Dave Ellis and me as we transplanted Alewives from Latimer Brook to Millpond in Essex. Click and listen (May 22) to the expedition and discussion of moving Alewives.

