

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: May 12, 2020



This is a report generated by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection/Fisheries Division- Diadromous Program. For more information, contact Steve Gephard, 860/447-4316. For more information about fish runs on the Connecticut River 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	6	0	0	0	0	25	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	63	6	20	-	9	0	2
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	99	85	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	35,885	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)			2,596						
West Springfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	18,616	0	21	14	3	14	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	18,622	36,047	2	3	0	4	0	2
(last year's totals)	3	318,707	11,308	5,113	366	207	20,479	20/0	0

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. The same for Rogers Lake—they first pass through Mary Steube and therefore won't be counted as part of the total.

COMMENTS:

The runs did not progress as much as we expected due to the cold weather (snow on Friday!). The water temperature went down once again—the story of the season. Holyoke continued to lift shad but not in large numbers. Video counts at Turners Falls have not been updated yet but Steve Leach from FirstLight suspects that shad were moving up both the Gatehouse and Spillways ladders on Friday. Rainbow Fishway has had a couple of days when 40 shad went up during the day but then dropped back down in the evening. Anglers are catching shad but the cool weather is probably keeping the catch low. Retired Kensington Hatchery Supervisor Al Sonski went up to Holyoke and landed three shad but more impressively, he caught a darter! Al- are you going to have that mounted? What color shad dart to you recommend for darters? Shad netter John Smoloski reports that the numbers of shad in the river is pretty good this year with females outnumbering males by nearly 50 to 1. He is only going out 2 or 3 times a week due to low demand, likely exacerbated by the social distancing practices. I'm planning on picking up some shad for tomorrow night's dinner. In the valley, there are several places to buy it in Old Saybrook, Haddam, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, and probably a few other places. If you're outside the valley in Connecticut, it is probably more difficult, but check in with your local fish market. A few more Alewives went up Mill Brook and Eightmile River this past week but by now we think the run in Mill Brook is pretty much over. Spent fish are piling out of Rogers Lake and Lower Millpond. We've opened up a downstream passage chute on the spillway to expedite their safe exit. We'll keep those counters going for now. In addition to a record number of Alewives using the Rogers Lake fishway, Andrew from Yale reports 18 trout (mostly brookies, but some rainbows and browns) have come up into the lake from the brook. Valinn is providing us with the window counts at Moulson Pond Fishway as well as observations from the area. He has seen an unusually high number of American Shad below the Rathbun Dam on the Eightmile River this year. Earlier this past week our volunteer monitors and staff were seeing Blueback Herring in the Eightmile, Salmon, and Moodus rivers as well as Wethersfield Cove, but all such activities seem to stop with the cold weather on Friday and have yet to re-start. A few more Sea Lampreys counted at fishways but that run is slow to get going, too. With the pandemic social distancing, we had to cancel many fishway tours and open houses. To compensate, we hope to produce a number of video fishway tours. I worked with the Kelsey and Stacey of the Connecticut River Conservancy to produce the first one for the new Wiederhold (Millpond) Fishway in Essex. The CRC has posted it on YouTube but set a premiere date of May 15th. I'll do a reminder next week, but here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSZjTfkh8eY>. We hope to do more in the future. The World Fish Migration Foundation is hosting a 24-hour webinar about migratory fish and restoration actions world-wide, starting this Thursday. I lack space to give it proper justice; to learn more go to: [Global Swimways Webinar Marathon!](#)

With not much to report on the Connecticut River, we have space to acknowledge Connecticut's newest fishway: **Page's Millpond Fishway** on the Farm River in North Branford. Its main target is river herring but there may be Sea Lamprey and Sea-run trout along with many resident trout. This was completed and opened yesterday! The fishway was managed by Save the Sound (STS) using grants from National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and the EB Mitigation Fund, designed by Nathan L. Jacobson Associates (NLJA), and constructed by Schumack Engineered Construction (SEC). The lower section of the fishway consists of four units of steep pass fishway that were salvaged when the Ed Bills Pond Dam and Fishway were removed several years ago. The upper fishway is one long raceway that will also support an eel pass (to attach to the gray pipe in the photo to the right below). This is the second fishway on this stream and will connect five miles of upstream habitat. The fishway is on private property and not open for public visitation but can be viewed from the Mill Road Bridge in North Branford.



The lower portion of the Pages Millpond Fishway.



Socially distancing at the fishway opening: LSuter (owner), Karl, Jackson*, ??*, H.Pfrommer and M.Carroll from NLJA, A.Krofta (STS), S.Gephard (DEEP), S.Hines*. *=SEC (photo courtesy of A.Allen, STS)*

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

<u>FISHWAY</u> (RIVER)	<u>AMER.</u> <u>SHAD</u>	<u>ALEWIFE</u>	<u>BLUEBACK</u> <u>HERRING</u>	<u>GIZZARD</u> <u>SHAD</u>	<u>STRIPED</u> <u>BASS</u>	<u>SEA</u> <u>LAMPREY</u>	<u>SEA-RUN</u> <u>TROUT</u>	<u>AMER.</u> <u>EEL</u>
Greeneville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	578	133	4	8	2	1	0	1
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland* (Shetucket R. Windham)	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	
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	28	0	(plenty of trout)		0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	191	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	17,389	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gortons Pond* (Pattaganset R., E.Lyme)		71		(no additional data expected; had to take counter to Brides)				
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		409,115	FINAL- COUNTER OUT					
Fishing Brook** (Fishing Brook, OSaybrook)		12,084						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		232	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	134		-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		319	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	319	0	7	0	26	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		1	0	0	-	29	-	2
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		<i>fish in fishway/no estimate</i> (Operating but no videography this season due to COVID-19)						
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		2,529	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= 5/11 Taftville= na Occum= na Tunnel= na Kinneytown= 5/4 Haakonsen= 5/11 Hallville= 5/4 Hanover= 5/11 Bunnells= na Chapmans= 5/11 **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:

Similar to what we reported in the Connecticut River section, the runs added a few more ticks due to the calendar but much fewer than expected due to the cold weather. Most of the fishways added a few more Alewives but the runs seem to be winding down in New London County (east). It remains to be seen if the runs of Middlesex, New Haven, and Fairfield counties will have some more energy once it warms up (this coming weekend?) or if it is just too late and the Alewife season is just about over. There are only a few places along the shoreline that still host runs of Blueback Herring so when the Alewives quit, it gets quiet fast. Bright spots remained Latimers, Fishing, and Mianus. Ray Baldwin saw his first Alewives at Clarks Pond Fishway but the areas being monitored in Fairfield and Westport were quiet. There were fish in the Bunnells Pond Fishway this week but we don't have an estimate. Still not a lot happening on the Quinnipiac River and we're not expecting to see much of anything go up the Kinneytown Fishway on the Naugatuck River until Enel (Kinneytown Hydro Company) fixes the busted flashboards on the spillway. This is sending lots of water down the bypass reach and attracting fish away from the fishway.

The star of the last week was the Greenville Fishlift on the Shetucket River in Norwich. It started passing hundreds of American Shad. Tim is reviewing the video and says there are a lot of big fish and they look real good—and fresh. Anglers are catching shad below the dam, on the east shore, where fishing is allowed. We've seen a lot of herring below, too, so we hope that we'll pass more of them soon. Alert long-time readers may have noticed the passage of one Sea Lamprey at Greenville. We normally don't do a shout-out for one fish but this is notable. The Shetucket River has lacked a Sea Lamprey run since living memory. The run was wiped out by dams and perhaps tidewater pollution. Adult Sea Lampreys enter spawning streams by following pheromone trails produced by larval Sea Lampreys living in the streams. Therefore, when a population is lost, stray adults tend not to re-colonize the stream due to the lack of a pheromone cue. So after 20 years of providing fish passage at Greenville, there still have not been a Sea Lamprey run to the Shetucket, even though the species is common in the Connecticut River and few other places. But, alert reader, you may recall that last year we transplanted pre-spawned adult Sea Lamprey into Shetucket River tributaries including Beaver and Merrick brooks. We know they spawned because we found their nests. So there are now larval Sea Lamprey in the watershed producing pheromones and we assume this one counted lamprey is the first of many adults that will now follow that trail from the Sound into the Shetucket River. The scent trail will likely get stronger next year as the larvae get larger and we add more. This is how we restored the run to the Naugatuck River and now this is the beginning of the restoration of the run to the Shetucket. It will be fun to watch as the number go up.

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 8,720 glass/66 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 5,902 glass/119 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 0 glass/0 yellow; Hanover Pond= 0 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= 0 glass/0 yellow. Occum= 0 yellow eels; Kinneytown= 0 yellow.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is live on iCRV (www.iCRVradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesdays. Due to the COVID situation, I call in rather than sit in the studio. If you can't tune in at 8:00 am, listen to it at any time: www.icrvradio.com/programs/program/50. They archive the shows.



A group of Alewives heading upstream through the Chapmans Pond Fishway, captured by the video camera.



An otter video bombing the Hallville Fishway.