

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: June 23, 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 | 509 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3,627 | 0 | 0 |
| Leesville (Salmon) | 0 | 1 | - | 0 | - | - | 0** | 0 | 0 |
| StanChem* (Mattabesset) | 0 | 0 | 63 | 18 | 28 | - | 10 | 0 | 4 |
| Moulson Pond* (Eightmile) | 0 | 2 | 107 | 150 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | - |
| Mary Steube* (Mill Brook) | - | - | 37,888 | FINAL | - | - | - | - | - |
| Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook) | - | - | 2,842 | FINAL | - | - | - | - | - |
| West Springfield (Westfield- MA) | 0 | 5,093 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Holyoke (Connecticut- MA) | 0 | 361,887 | 0 | 763 | 64 | 413 | 33,738 | 6 | 1,738 |
| Manhan River* (Manhan- MA) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Turners Falls* (Connecticut- MA) | 0 | 30,892 | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7,255 | - | - |
| 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 | 367,492 | 38,058 | 930 | 94 | 413 | 37,389 | 6 | 1,742 |
| (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 closed 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:

Even the runs on the Connecticut River are now winding down. The numbers at the Holyoke Fishlift are down to practically nothing and although there still seem to be shad in the area of Turners Falls, they may all be post-spawned. Gabe Gries (USFWS) reports catching a few shad at the Rock Dam in Turners Falls but they don't have much fight left in them by now. The numbers of shad passed at the Turners Falls Fishway will likely increase due to the fact that First Light Power is still reviewing video files from last week but it seems that the run is just about over there, too. Everything is warm and dry with low flows and probably quick incubation times. We have not heard any numbers from the State of Vermont for the Vernon Fishway and I was unable to get an update on West Springfield for this week. I hope to get something for next week, which will be our final report for this year. Rainbow is still operating but not really passing anything upstream. The bypass gate is broken (again) and so the fishway could be valuable as a path for downstream migrants. Leesville is not passing anything but we can leave that open for a while without fear of drawing down the pond. Lest I forget!—a notable observation this season has been a handful of American Shad below the Johnsonville Dam on the Moodus River in East Haddam. In my 45+ years of monitoring that stream, I have never seen nor heard of shad there. But I earlier saw some at Leesville while snorkeling (unusual but not unprecedented) and we passed one over the Leesville fishway (THAT is unprecedented). So apparently a school veered off into the Salmon River this year and explored the Moodus River, too. Our crack volunteer team did not report any from Pine Brook.

Holyoke has picked up another Shortnose Sturgeon. Those numbers are likely to continue to increase throughout the summer. Speaking of sturgeon—earlier in the season I provided a link to a StoryMap that Tom Savoy and others developed for American Shad on the Connecticut River. Tom is back with a new StoryMap that tells the story of sturgeon (both Shortnose and Atlantic) in the Connecticut River. It is an excellent summary of our knowledge of sturgeon in the lower river, graphs of increasing population estimates, recounting of recent tracking and research, and some great photos (including Tom in a classic Bob Surplus T-shirt!). Another highlight is about a two minute video clip showing breaching sturgeon on the Kennebec River, produced by Doug Watts of Maine. Watching jumping sturgeon on the Connecticut River is a thrill but if you've never seen it, check out the Kennebec videos. I recommend this to all who are interested in sturgeon: Link to new Storymap: <https://arcg.is/LW1j0>.

Sea Lamprey spawning continues in a few of the tributaries. This week we saw them in Higganum Creek and Roaring Brook below Cotton Hollow and in Pattaconk Creek in the center of Chester. Most nesting is probably over. We have had an excellent run this year and conditions are great for surveying streams for nests but I've had to cancel this year's legendary Salmon River Lamprey Survey due to restrictions placed upon our field work by our agency due to COVID-19 precautions. There is just no practical way to do the work and comply with our protocols. Last week I mentioned that Andy Fisk, Executive Director of the Connecticut River Conservancy, was having a meal of Sea Lamprey prepared for him. That was recorded for The River radio station and is now available for listening at: <https://wrsi.com/monte/what-wine-pairs-with-sea-lamprey/> (Spoiler alert: the answer is a Malbec!) In the 16-minute piece, Chef Duran asks if Native Americans used to eat lamprey and Andy wasn't sure. The answer is yes. Often, throngs of Native Americans would cluster at falls like Hadley, Montague, Bellows Falls, Collinsville, Great Falls (New Milford), Cargill (Putnam) and fish for salmon and shad. The salmon were valuable to take home to the villages (including being preserved by smoking) and often the fishers would eat lampreys while they were camped there fishing. They were easy to catch as they clung to the rocks. The Narragansett and Nipmuck tribes fought a battle over Sea Lampreys on the Quinebaug River in eastern Connecticut.



Kevin Job adjusts the flow of the new Kensington Pond Dam Eel pass on the Mattabesset River as Tim Wildman takes the photo. The hinged predator cover is opened to the left for the photo.



Chef Neftalí Duran prepares to serve CRC's Andy Fisk a meal of Sea Lamprey, recorded for The River radio (93.9). Note Andy's T-shirt.

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) | 3,174 | 133 | 4 | 38 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich) | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Scotland* (Shetucket R. Windham) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 51 |
| Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston) | 7 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 31 |
| Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston) | - | 51 | FINAL CAMERA | | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford) | - | 203 | FINAL COUNTER OUT | | - | - | - | - |
| Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme) | - | 17,569 | FINAL COUNTER OUT | | - | - | - | - |
| Gortons Pond* (Pattaganset R., E.Lyme) | | 71 | FINAL COUNTER OUT | | | | | |
| Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme) | | 409,115 | FINAL- COUNTER OUT | | | | | |
| Fishing Brook** (Fishing Brook, OSaybrook) | | 12,084 | FINAL- COUNTER OUT | | | | | |
| Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton) | | 234 | FINAL- CAMERA OUT | | | 0 | 0 | 0 0 |
| Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford) | 187 | | FINAL- COUNTER OUT | | - | - | - | - |
| Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford) | | 373 | FINAL- COUNTER OUT | | - | - | - | - |
| Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford) | 4 | 333 | 42 | 13 | 0 | 258 | 0 | 0 |
| Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden) | | 4 | 0 | 4 | - | 162 | - | 9 |
| Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport) | <i>fish in fishway/no estimate (Operating but no videography this season due to COVID-19)</i> | | | | | | | |
| Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich) | | 3,661 | 3,287 | FINAL- COUNTER OUT | | 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= 6/12 Taftville= 6/01 Occum= na Tunnel= 6/01 Kinneytown= 6/12 Haakonsen= 6/12 Hallville= 6/10 Hanover= 6/11 Bunnells= na Chapmans= 6/01 **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:

There really is no more upstream passage occurring. We just shut down the Greenville Fishlift and expect First Light to shut down Taftville and Tunnel soon, even if there still is a backlog of video to review. Kinneytown will be shut down tomorrow but with those zeroes how will we be able to tell the difference? We expect New England Hydro to close the Hanover Pond fishway any day now, too. That will leave just Bunnells open and we'll get to that soon. The big story this week has been the mass exodus of young-of-the-year Alewives. It is as if someone blew a whistle to signal that it was time to go. Thousands and thousands of little Alewives that hatched this spring are surging out of Bride Brook, Chapman Pond, Fishing Brook, Mianus Pond, Kensington Pond, and probably other places where we have not gotten to yet to check. At Kensington Pond, they had begun to drop over the dam and collect below the spillway (see photo below), but then water had ceased to flow over the dam. We made some



adjustments to the boards at the downstream fish bypass pipe and they started using it to drop down below the dam. Similarly, adjustments were made to the Fishing Brook Steppass fishway and thousands of trapped young-of-year began dropping down into tidewater. We will be visiting many other locations this coming week to ensure that these fishes' emigration is not hampered. It is not clearly understood what all prompts the young to leave but it could be that they overgraze the zooplankton community and when their food diminishes, they leave.

Next week will be our last report of the year. Anyone who has any last reports, data, observations, photos or questions should get them to me before next Tuesday. Thanks!

The glass eel runs along the shoreline are winding down but the inland elver runs are still going strong, although they may have peaked in the southern part of the state. Most of the eel passes are now up and running. We just installed the new eel pass at the Kensington Pond Dam (Mattabesset River, Berlin) and are very optimistic about its potential (see photo in the previous section).

Eel Counts- Fishing Brook = 12,979 glass/115 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 45,859 glass/843 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= 30 glass/36 yellow; Hanover Pond= 1,477 yellow; Greenville Eel Lift= 5 glass/31 yellow. Tunnel= 3,195 yellow eels; Kinneytown= Opening tomorrow. Occum= 1 yellow eel (need to adjust spray bar); Scotland= 32 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.



*This are young of the year Alewives, captured in a bucket by the Greenwich Conservation Commission as they descended the Mianus Pond Fishway on their way to the sea. Upstream migration is over and the fishway has been converted to downstream passage for these outrunners.
(Photo by B. Stanton)*



Another historic mill goes down. This one is off Canal Street in Shelton, CT, just downstream of the Derby Dam where plans are being developed for a fishway. Runs of American Shad, Alewife, and Blueback Herring congregate under the dam when they ascend the Housatonic River. Not only will lots of debris likely end up in the river but who knows what contaminants get washed into the river during the fire-fighting efforts.