

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 21, 2010



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	0	0	0	0	0	0*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	1000s	0	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	58	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	28	0	0	1	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	-	-
Bellows Falls (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0/0								
TOTALS=	0/0	28	-	0++	1	0	0	0	0
(last year's totals)	74/10	161,095	-----	39++	67	649	21,403	5	5,602

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.

**Many of these species move at night. There is a video camera that records overnight passage when staff is not present. So this count is a combination of real-time counts and video counts. 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. ++This total does not include the imprecise estimates at Moulson Pond 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:

My drive to work includes crossing the river at East Haddam. A great way to start the day today—watching a mature bald eagle glide about 30 feet over the calm river surface as the morning light broke on the water. At 41,000 cfs, the Connecticut River is at normal or a bit below normal flow levels. Holyoke has opened and passed 28 shad so far—according to Darleen at the USFWS. They closed down for the weekend but opened up again for full spring operation on Monday. We expect more complete counts by next week. West Springfield is operating, too, but we have received no reports of fish yet. Rainbow was opened on April 15—right on schedule—thanks to hard work by the Farmington River Power Company, which got the headgate fixed, trashbooms in, and a variety of other chores completed just in time. A tip of the hat to them. No diadromous fish seen yet. So the shad at Holyoke are the beginning of the run but they are probably everywhere and by next week I expect we will be reporting them elsewhere. Joe Zaiantz reports that netters are catching some shad in the lower river.

We have operated the downstream bypass for two nights so far but not a lot of salmon smolts yet. Nine on Thursday and 15 on Monday, both 'wild' (fry stocked) and hatchery. Obviously, a lot of fish could have moved out over the dam during the floods before the bypass was opened. But we are still seeing many smolts feed in the headpond, so we expect more to come. The water temperature has dropped back down to 10C (50 F) on the Farmington and 13.5C (56F) on the Salmon River, so this is better for the smolts. Bruce Williams is stocking salmon fry in the Farmington River watershed this week, using lots of volunteers.

The situation with river herring is particularly interesting this year. As expected, alewives have moved up the river and are showing in many of the standard places. The count for the Mary Steube Fishway is low since the fishway operated for a week or so before the counter went in and many fish had already gone up. We don't have counts at Moulson Pond but they have been strong there. I saw a handful at Leesville and Ken Sprankle of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has been sampling Wethersfield Cove and have found them there. However, the surprise is that blueback herring are already in and have probably been in for a week. Ken has found them in the Cove and it appears that the Lyme Land Conservation Trust is seeing them at Moulson Pond Fishway. In years past, the bluebacks usually didn't appear in the river until May 1. In recent years, we have seen that date advance, perhaps by a week. But we've never seen them this early—trailing the alewives by only 2 weeks. The same has been observed in coastal streams (see comments in the next section of the report). This will make it increasingly difficult to distinguish the two species within runs and we may have to start referring to them as "river herring" like other states do.

Striped bass are in the river and we're seeing more and more anglers out after them. Leesville has been passing large numbers of white suckers and yesterday I passed a very large brown trout. Yellow perch and some cyprinids (minnows) are showing up at Moulson Pond.



Just another flood photo, showing the Ed Bills Fishway on the East Branch Eightmile River. The fishway is under the cascade that passes underneath the bridge. No damage was done other than a couple of 3 foot diameter boulders in the fishway entrance.

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)	0	0	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
Versailles Pond (Little R., Sprague)	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
Whitfords Brook (Whitfords Br., Groton)	0	no report						
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)	fishway destroyed in flood							
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	1,804							
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	present (not enumerated)							
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)	88,135							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	<50							6,237
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)	504							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	465							
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	100's							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	? (counter malfunction- working to fix it and re-install)							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	31,406		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= 4/20.

***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.*

+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:

The Rocky Neck Culvert Replacement Project dedication was held on Monday. Over 20,000 alewives used the new channel over the weekend. The run is way ahead of past year's pace and we don't know if it is an early run or if the new culvert allows them to come up early. The Day (New London) ran an article about the alewife run on April 16 and covered the dedication, but I have only seen a photo. Various television stations and NPR also covered the event. After the run exceeded 50,000 to the trap, Dave Ellis opened the Beaver Swamp Fishway on the grounds of the State Penitentiary (upstream of Brides Lake) and watched dozens of alewives ascend the steep pass as he stood there. Dave also witnessed a gizzard shad at the trap at Brides Brook—something we have not seen previously. The new culvert may be making the stream more accessible to more species. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service hired well-known underwater photographer Bob Michaelsen to produce a video about the Brides Brook run and project and that can be viewed at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/multimedia/video.html>.

Over the winter, the City of Stamford removed the Main Street Dam on the Mill (Rippowam) River. Yesterday, we all held a celebration on the banks of the river and released some alewives from Brides Brook into the stream to help re-build the population. Locals later told us that they saw two schools of river herring head upstream days before we arrived—so the removal of the dam is already paying dividends. In attendance were Deputy Commissioner Susan Frechette and Mayor Pavia, who told me that as a kid he used to catch river herring and toss them over the dam! I haven't seen the press on this yet, but watch for the Stamford Advocate.

Wildman Productions is back in business. The first video of the season shows alewives ascending the Latimer Brook fishway and being counted by our staff. To view this video, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association site at www.crriversalmon.org and click on "2010 Fish counts".

All fishways on the Shetucket River are now opened: Greenville on April 16, Taftville on April 19, and Tunnel on the Quinebaug River on April 20. However, we don't have tapes/images to view yet. We will have the latest fish count data for these facilities by next week's report. Drew at Norwich Public Utilities reports seeing schools of river herring below Greenville. Kinneytown Fishway is operating and seasonal Samantha reports it has passed over 100 suckers and a handful of smallmouth bass but no diadromous species yet. The eel pass will be opened tomorrow. The fish count at the Capello Pond fishway is an undercount since we know that some fish got upstream before we installed the counter and the battery went dead over this past weekend. The fish counter is still out at the Wood Dam on the Saugatuck and we hope to learn later today whether or not we can quickly repair it or if the unit has to be sent back to the manufacturer, resulting in the loss of all data for this year.

In addition to the load of fish we took to the Rippowam River yesterday, we plan to ramp up the trucking of alewives this week, delivering pre-spawned fish to over a dozen streams statewide during the next couple of weeks before the run at Brides Brook drops off.

Other miscellaneous alewife observations- Brian Eltz reported schools reaching the first dam on the Byram River in Greenwich (Connecticut's westernmost stream). We've seen moderate numbers in the Pattagansett River at the Gorton Pond Fishway and the breached dam downstream. Sadly, yesterday I saw a moderate-sized school in Trading Cove Brook just downstream of the fishway that was washed away by the floods. They won't be going upstream this year. We have not reached a number of streams and would love to hear reports from you on fish runs, including Sasco Brook and Mill River in Fairfield, the Quinnipiac River at Wallace Dam, the Norwalk River, the West River in New Haven, and anything seen at the Housatonic River near the Derby Dam.

The glass eel run is accelerating. We are seeing greater numbers at our trap on Fishing Brook in Old Saybrook and Brian Eltz reports seeing hundreds of eels at the eel passes at the Mianus Pond Dam, including a new eel pass the Town recently installed.