

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 27, 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	2	0	0	0	0	40*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	1000s	100s	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	463	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	438	0	0	9	0	5	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	440	1000s	100s++	9	0	45	0	0
<i>(last year's totals)</i>	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:

The shad are definitely in. Several hundred have been lifted at Holyoke and two passed at Rainbow. Atlantic Seafood in Old Saybrook reports having shad in the market for about a week. They're also being lifted at Greenville on the Shetucket River (see next section). The water temperature at Holyoke is 51 F (11.5 C) but the lower river is a bit warmer. Flows in the Connecticut are down below 16,000 cfs—these are great conditions for shad and river herring runs. River herring runs ramped up this past week—Thursday through Saturday were particularly strong with good pushes in most observed tributaries including Mill Brook (Mary Steube)—a lot of spent females—Eightmile River (Moulson Pond)—mixture of alewives and bluebacks everywhere—Salmon River (Leesville), Moodus River, Great Brook (Chester)—up to Norma Terris theater—Roaring Brook (Glastonbury)—up to Cotton Hollow—and Farmington River—into the Rainbow Dam tailrace. None passed at Rainbow yet. Most of these runs appear to be mixtures of both species. Ken Sprankle (USFWS) reports large numbers of blueback herring in Wethersfield Cove.

Lampreys are also started to move up into the tributaries now. Striped bass are in. Yellow perch are running strong in the Eightmile and Salmon rivers. Strong runs of spottail shiners in Mill Brook, Moodus River, and Salmon River and it appears that the tessellated darters are beginning to congregate at Leesville. The sucker run at Leesville is getting stronger and they are passing through the fishway in large numbers.

Staff watching the window at Rainbow report counting 171 Atlantic salmon smolts going down but the counting of smolts at the Rainbow Dam Bypass continues to be 'slow'. (I sound like a salmon angler describing fishing.) We are starting to wonder if the high flows during the end of March flushed a lot of smolts out of the river. At this rate, we expect Thursday's count to be low as well. More warm weather is headed our way for the weekend and the water temperatures should rise again. If there are smolts still in the system, they should be moving down by Monday's sampling. Conditions have been good for stocking this year's crop of Atlantic salmon fry into targeted streams. We have about two more weeks left to that effort. Next week, we'll be receiving shipments of fry that were hatched from the White River National Fish Hatchery in Bethel, VT for the Farmington River.

If the forecast holds true, next week could see strong increases in runs on the Connecticut River. With temperatures reaching the 80s and no big storms in sight, the water will warm and I expect a jump in activity at Holyoke, Rainbow, and West Springfield. Shad, blueback herring, sea lamprey, and striped bass will all be on the increase and we may see our first salmon of the season soon. This is about the time that anglers start seeing them in Windsor, Windsor Locks, and Holyoke. Remember—if you hook a salmon, you cannot keep it. Release it without delay (or photography-induced stress). For those of you who have never witnessed the run at the Holyoke Dam Fishlift, you might want to consider a visit soon. See the electronic brochure attached to the email.



Happy Earth Day! DEP Commissioner Amey Marella lifts a bucket of river herring from below the Wallace Dam on the Quinnipiac River in Wallingford so that they can be released upstream of the dam. Hopefully, a fishway will be built here next year so our hardworking commissioners won't have to keep lifting buckets! (See story in next section of the report.)

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)	"handful"	>30	0	0	1	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)		2,235						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		present (not enumerated)						
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		88,135						
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		present (not enumerated)						10,412
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)		4,425						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		30,899						
Bunnells Pond (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		1000s						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		183 (missed much of run due to counter malfunction)						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		52,897	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= 4/26.

**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:

It seems quite clear now that we are experiencing the best alewife runs in Connecticut that we've seen in several years. Runs peaked over the previous weekend but the current cool, rainy spell has slowed them down for now. Blueback herring appear to be mixed in at some locations but not as prominently as in the Connecticut River. Starting from west and proceeding easterly: Mianus Pond Fishway- the good run continues, more than doubling last year's run totals and Brian Eltz reports seeing numerous downrunners (fish that have spawned). Saugatuck River- the counter is fixed, installed, and starting to count fish. Stripers are below the Wood Dam. Alewives from Brides Brook already transplanted upstream in both Saugatuck and Aseptuck. Bunnells Pond Fishway (Bridgeport)- a strong run with no numbers reported. But if you want to see a cool video and see what it looks like inside of a steep pass fishway, check out Tim's latest video, now posted on the Connecticut River Salmon Association's website: www.ctriversalmon.org. Kinneytown Fishway- we are experiencing electrical problems that is shutting down our camera. We hope to resolve this soon but we know we are passing suckers and smallmouth bass. Hopefully some anadromous species are moving up now. Quinnipiac River- each year the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association sponsors a 'fish rodeo' at which they net fish from below the Wallace Dam in Wallingford and carry them around the dam and release them above. Typically, we send over a staffer to assist. This year Mary and Marty went right to the top: Commissioner Amey Marella!!! (see photo in previous section) They moved over 1,000 river herring in one day! I'm afraid now that the Commissioner realizes how much fun fish are, she'll want to quit her job as commissioner and join us in the Inland Fisheries Division—and who will we get to do the difficult job of commissioner?? No report of other species at Wallace Dam yet. Branford Supply Ponds Fishway- check out those numbers! For the last three years, the number has been around 3,000. Currently it is over 30,000! This is the first year that large numbers of fish hatched above the dam would have returned as adults. While these numbers are still provisional as we rub our eyes and check our equipment, Dr. David Post of Yale (who manages the fish counter) believes the count is legit. Capello Pond- This is the first year for a fish counter at this fishway on the East River in Guilford and we like the numbers we're seeing. The next upstream fishway at Lower Guilford Lake Dam is passing good numbers of alewife and we know we missed the first wave with the fish counter. Bob Harris of Old Saybrook reported a big wave of herring moving up through the Fishing Brook fishway Thursday night but we don't have a counter on that one so we have no data to report. The counter at Brides Brook has logged a new (recent history) record: 147,918. We are proud of the new culvert at Rocky Neck but clearly some of this increase reflects the strong runs seen elsewhere. Good numbers are being seen at Gorton Pond (Pattagansett River) and Latimers Brook fishways. We have been unable to get reports from Poquetanuck Brook, Jordan Millpond Fishway, Trading Cove Brook, or Whitfords Brook this week. I was at Whitfords and confirmed that the fishway was not damaged by the floods (the dam was) but the water was too dark to see fish.

MAIN STREET DAM, MILL/RIPPOWAM RIVER- STAMFORD. Last week I reported on the celebration of this dam removal but I couldn't find my photos. Here I offer a 'before and after' shot.



Main Street Dam to the left; same stretch of stream last month after removal, to the right.