

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 4, 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/r5cnc. 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	32	8	0	0	0	108*	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	1000s	1000s	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	505	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	4/0	11,568	0	7	118	0	696	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=	4/0	11,600	1000s	7++	118	0	804	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:

Everything is 'heating up' now. River conditions are good for migration and shad are pressing up the mainstem as well as the Farmington River and other tributaries. (No report yet from the West Springfield fishway on the Westfield River.) It is too early to say how strong the run will turn out to be but apparently the run in the James (Virginia) and Delaware (PA/NJ/NY) rivers were good; the run in the Rappahannock (VA) was down; and it seems too early to say for the Susquehanna River, where the Conowingo Dam has lifted about 17,000 shad (2009= 29,000). But the herring runs seem to be strong in most places, at least in the Northeast. We hear that the runs were good in New Jersey, Massachusetts and Maine. They continue to be good in Connecticut and specifically the Connecticut River. Another wave of alewives came in at Mary Steube (Mill Brook) and in the Eightmile and Salmon rivers (probably both alewife and blueback herring). The runs at Moulson Pond and Leesville are the best we've seen in year—schools are dense. In recent years, Leesville has only received one short wave so it will be of interest to see how long these fish stay in. Rainbow has passed a handful but all fish sampled yesterday were alewives. However, Ken Sprinkle (USFWS) sampled the lower river by Loomis last night and said most of the many herring down there were blueback herring. Ken just called from Wethersfield Cove on his cell phone—the cove is boiling with blueback herring. He has seined up 1,000 to be trucked to upstream portions of the Westfield River in MA. Local residents who helped Ken net say this is the most herring they've seen in 15 years. Most of the bluebacks are not ripe yet.

The lamprey run is strong and they are appearing at most locations. Last night they were streaming up the Rainbow Fishway by the bucketloads. Yesterday, they had climbed the side forebay spillway at the Rathbun Dam on the Eightmile River—something we have not seen previously. Although there are no reports of any striped bass in fishways, they are certainly around and anglers are actively taking them. Other non-diadromous fish are moving as well. Yesterday, I had 500 white suckers in the Leesville trap. They are also moving up in other tributaries. Spawning runs of darters and spottail shiners are arriving for the party, too.

Holyoke trapped the first adult Atlantic salmon of the season on Thursday, April 29 and the count there is now at four. Temperatures are still cool (65 F/13 C at Holyoke) and conditions good. Before long, we will begin tagging and releasing some adult salmon at Holyoke, as part of the 10% release. The downrunning salmon smolt run has been dynamite. After a few slow nights that left us wondering if most of the smolts left with the highwater in March, Tim and I counted 480 at Rainbow on Thursday night and over 300 last night—both fry-stocked and hatchery-reared. Bob Stira reports that Greenfield Community College counted 750 last night at the Turners Falls bypass. They've already counted more in 2010 as they normally do in an entire season. NOAA reports that the smolt run on the Sheepscot and Narraguagus rivers in Maine are in full swing, as well.

FINALLY, A SAD NOTE- Those of us who work with diadromous fish in New England think of ourselves as a team. Regardless of which State we work in, we are all working toward common goals. Last week we lost a valuable team member, Dr. Melissa Laser of the Maine Dept. of Marine Resources- Bureau of Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat, who died unexpectedly of natural causes. She will be missed.



Melissa Laser of Maine DMR standing along good diadromous fish habitat—which she worked to protect.

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)	132	149	0	6	1	0	0	1
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)	1	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)	2,396							
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	present (not enumerated)							
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)	160,066							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							11,353
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)	5,786							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	31,608							
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	1000s							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	765 (missed much of run due to counter malfunction)							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	62,704		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= 4/25. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 5/2. 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.

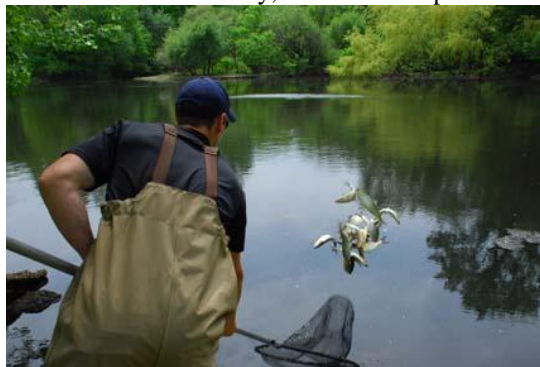
Counts in parentheses indicate numbers seen in a run that is now over and no further fish were counted during the past week. Typically used for alewife runs later in June.

COMMENTS:

Another eventful week along the shoreline as a new wave of river herring run up local watersheds. While blueback herring are mixed in with alewives in the larger streams, the smaller streams seem to be hosting mostly alewives still. Many of the streams are the same ones reported earlier but we have reports of large schools of river herring in the West River in New Haven near West Rock Park where Wintergreen Brook flows in. No reports of fish up to the Pond Lily Fishway. We also have signs of a run up a tributary of the Blackhall River in Old Lyme, headed toward the McColloch Fishway. No word yet from our volunteer on the status of the runs in the Blackhall closer to Blackhall Pond. The run size at Bride Lake continues to amaze as it surpasses 160,000. (Some spent downrunners are beginning to appear at Brides.) The featured video of the week is a great clip of alewives entering the Bride Lake trap and then swimming through the fish counter tubes. To view that video, go to the CRSA's website (www.ctriversalmon.org) and click on fish reports and videos on the left side. The CRSA has also made available our DEP videos from past years and you can view them at http://www.ctriversalmon.org/runs_archive.html. I've also attached to the email a short video clip from the Mianus Pond Fishway showing a large trout passing the viewing window along with some alewives. Brian at Mianus is reporting seeing a lot of glass eels using the eel passes at that dam. Our Fishing Brook eel pass glass eel count is up to 11,353 but most of our eel passes are yet to open for the season. The Quinipiac River Watershed Association had another fantastic Fish Rodeo below the Wallace Dam and lifted over 1,600 river herring again! They reported seeing gizzard shad, sea lamprey, and trout as well. Bill McWha sends along an article about a similar 'net and toss' operation on the Main St. dam on the Saugatucket River in Wakefield, RI:

<http://www.scindependent.com/articles/2010/04/29/local/doc4bd9a45e31b08829043732.txt>.

We've been transplanting alewives across the state almost daily, with recent trips to the Saugatuck, Naugatuck, and Noroton.



Seasonal Brandon Ritchie tosses alewives into the Noroton River in the Olson Woods Nature Preserve owned by the Darien Land Trust



Sea lampreys on the side spillway of Rathbun Dam, Eightmile River. They already have climbed a 6 ft vertical wall to reach this point.



Two shad slide down the chute at the Greenville Dam Fishlift after being lifted with ~20 of their closest friends. After dropping a foot into the exit flume, the fish will swim past a viewing window to be counted.