

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 11, 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)	1	86	8	2	0	0	92*	1	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	2	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	10,000s	10,000s	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube ⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	898	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	15/1	34,821	0	12	184	1	5,058	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=	16/0	34,907	10000s	12++	184	0	5,150	3	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:

The season seems to see-saw between extremes: first it is unseasonably warm and then unseasonably cool. After another warm spell, we find ourselves back into March-like conditions with water temperatures at Holyoke staying low around 56 F (13 C) while the Salmon River dropped to 48.5 F (9.2 C). These low temperatures has put the brakes on the shad and river herring runs for now but may not affect the salmon run, which is ramping up. Rainbow trapped its first salmon on Sunday - 32" long female, very "bright" (silvery)—and Holyoke is up to 15. Radio-tagging has begun and so far one salmon has been released at Holyoke to continue its upstream migration. Linda Bireley of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust reported observing a fish below the dam by Moulson Pond that resembled an adult salmon. We were not able to confirm that sighting but friends along the Eightmile River should keep their eyes peeled for salmon and report any suspected sightings to me ASAP. Elsewhere, the Merrimack River program reports trapping 5 salmon at the Essex Dam. The Merrimack Program has a new website: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/cnefro/complex.html> It includes links to many other programs but you can follow the options to the Merrimack. As of today, trap numbers at the fishways were not posted but Joe expects to get them posted soon.

The salmon smolt run is being described as "phenomenal". Lots of fish counted at the Turners Falls bypass and at the bypass at Rainbow, where we are getting hundreds each night. This cool spell will be good for allowing the smolts to arrive in the estuary before temperatures get too high for them to effectively adapt to saltwater. We hope to finish salmon fry stocking this week. We've had good conditions for stocking.

The river herring run to the river consisted of both species as of last week's report and was going strong. The cold snap has pushed back all runs and we're not seeing fish at any location right now. Before the wave ended, the bluebacks seemed to be coming on strong and Ken Sprankle and the USFWS was able to transplant over 1,000 fish into the Westfield River. (See photo below and for some great shots of spawning blueback herring and herring eggs in Wethersfield Cove, visit Captain Blaine Anderson's website: <http://fishingct.com/nggallery/page-78/album-1/gallery-11>) I expect that once the weather warms up again, we'll see more bluebacks running up the tributaries and into the fishways. It would not surprise me if the alewives don't re-appear. The timing is about right for them to depart from the River, although the runs may persist in the western coastal area of Connecticut.

We are now at the time of the season when the Connecticut River fishways begin opening sequentially. Once Holyoke begins passing significant numbers of shad, Turners Falls opens. Once fish pass Turners Falls, Vernon is opened. Jay McMenemy (VTFW) reported that Vernon was opened on Friday. Fish are counted at Turners Falls via camera and computer and Bob Stira of FirstLight Power reports that it will be a couple of days before he can begin to provide us with fish count data.

I served my traditional Mother's Day Dinner—grilled shad, roasted asparagus, and boiled new potatoes—and can report that the shad is both easily found at local markets (unlike some years) and delicious!



Ken Sprankle and seasonal employee netting river herring in Wethersfield Cove.

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)	1,037	1,569	0	135	1	0	0	2
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)	2,558							
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	present (not enumerated)							
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)	164,110							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							11,553
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)	9,5074							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	50,668							
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	1000s							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	1,017 (missed much of run due to counter malfunction)							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		64,312	759	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= 5/04. 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:

As reported in the previous section, the cool weather has stopped the river herring runs for now. Last night we got 10 alewives at Brides. We suspect most of the alewife runs are winding down but Brian is starting to see blueback herring at Mianus and we expect to see them at Saugatuck, Housatonic, Shetucket and other larger streams. You'll see from the table we have viewed tapes at Greeneville and there is the start of a strong shad run there with over 1,000 already lifted. No new data at Taftville and Tunnel because Bob was away for his daughter's graduation. We hope to see some new numbers posted for those fishways next week. Drew reports the flashboards were replaced at Occum, so attraction to that fishway should be better now. Electrical problems continue to plague us at Kinneytown. It is passing fish but we can't record them until these are straightened out. Some miscellaneous reports from the past week: Kierran from Save the Sound reports seeing large numbers of herring below the Derby Dam on the Housatonic (probably bluebacks) as well as lots of herring in Edgewood Park in New Haven (West River), where Save the Sound is working with the City to improve fish passage at the Orange Ave. tide gates. Kierran has put together a video for school kids and posted it on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeNqT3yoyvU> I have not been able to review it since state workers are blocked from visiting YouTube. Scott Williams reported the runs stayed high on Guilford's East River (see photo to right below). Mary from QRWA reports yet ANOTHER fantastic fish rodeo at Wallace Dam where they lifted 2,048 river herring and 9 gizzard shad. This year's activities by these volunteers have exceeded the passage at some small fishways in our state. This is great! Commissioner Marrella helped out again! Here's some great news—last year the Town of Stonington installed a small aluminum Denil fishway at Vargas Pond Dam on Stony Brook. Photos of the fishway were featured in an early Weekly Fish Report. This week, our crew documented alewives using the fishway! Successful passage in its first year! This small pond will not support huge numbers but I predict this will turn into a nice little run of fish for the folks in Stonington—congratulations!

We tried to transplanting alewives today but only got 10 fish. The trucking season may be over—Friday is our last chance. So far, we have trucked about 3,700 alewives and released into the following streams: Quinnipiac, Farmington, Naugatuck, Shetucket, Patchaug, Rowland Brook (trib of Blackhall), Chalker Mill, Saugatuck, Aspetuck, Silvermine, Noroton, and the Rippowam. Out of action today, the crew is hauling new weirboards down to Low's Dam Fishway, which lost some in the recent high waters.

Our glass eel count at Fishing Brook is up to 11,000+. Brian Eltz is also seeing good numbers of eels on the Mianus Pond Dam eel passes. Tim has put together a nice video showing our crew checking the Fishing Brook Eel Pass and collecting data required by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. You can see them measuring the length of the glass eels, assessing their pigment stage, and finally weighing them. To view this video, please visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association website at www.ctriversalmon.org. Speaking of eels, check out our newest eel pass, lower left...



The Lake Forest Eel Pass is done and ready to pass eels (which are gathering below) as soon as the pond is brought back up and begins to spill. The spillway above the eel pass is slightly lower than the rest so real low summer flows will favor the eel pass. The rocks to the left are for larger yellow eels while the rocks to the right will target elvers.



The Capello Pond Fish Counter, East River, Guilford. The photo is taken from above the dam. The steep pass fishway is on the other side (to the right). The screened funnel forces fish to swim through the counting tunnels and data are recorded in the instruments in the lock box to the left.