

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 19, 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)	2	96	8	7	0	0	1,604**	2	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	2	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	10,000s	10,000s	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube ⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	1,070	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	1,352	0	0	0	0	351	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	22/7	86,103	0	38	206	8	7,460	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=	24/7	87,551	10000s	45++	206	8	9,415	4	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:

Much of the past week has been 'slow' due to the cold nights and dropping water temperatures. However, the warm weekend warmed things up and got things going again at least for one day. Yesterday's much-needed rain and today's overcast weather may continue that slow down a bit but when Thursday's predicted 80 degree weather hits on top of the increased flows from the rain, I expect big pulses of fish moving upstream. The salmon captures are starting to ramp up, mostly at Holyoke. They captured #22 about an hour ago and have already tagged and released 7 salmon to resume their upstream migration. I helped handle salmon R-02-10 at Rainbow yesterday—a large powerful male (?) from a hatchery smolt. It had two teeth marks in its belly but seasonal Peter Dimoulas will attest to the fact that they were there before I touched it, so it wasn't me. I think it was a seal. The Merrimack River reports 14 salmon back so far to the Essex Dam Fishlift. In Maine, 124 salmon have been trapped at Veazie and one passed at Cherryfield on the Narraguagus River. Of course, it is still very early for Maine.

The salmon smolt run at Rainbow was pretty small Thursday night and we were thinking the run was about over. But it came roaring back on Monday night with lots of smolts moving (all but one were fry-stocked) so it's not over yet. We'll be back sampling the bypass on Thursday night. In regard to fry stocking, I was mistaken in last week's report—we don't expect to finish our fry stocking until the middle of next week.

Shad and blueback herring runs slowed down last week due to the cooler temperatures but shad continue to come in at Holyoke, West Springfield, and Rainbow. They're probably passing at Turners Falls by now but we have not received any reports from FirstLight Power. Jay reports no anadromous fish at Vernon fishway yet. We have begun shad trucking for the season. Yesterday, Dave Ellis picked up a load from Holyoke for the Quinnipiac River and today he will be doing a double load—one for New Hampshire and one for the Naugatuck River. There was a good wave of spawning blueback herring in the tributaries (e.g. Salmon River) on Sunday and Monday. On Monday, we joined forces with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the intrepid Ken Sprankle to net bluebacks out of Wethersfield Cove and transplanted them into the Farmington River in Farmington. I thought Ken was going to net up a couple of anglers during one sweep. I haven't seen the final numbers but with two trips for three trucks, we may have moved 4,000 fish. I hope to have video to share next week. The alewife run is probably over.

Sea lampreys are also moving and I expect those numbers to pick up during the next week. The Rainbow Fishway numbers for lamprey are probably larger than this time for most years because at this point, most of the fish are moving up the fishway at night and we don't get around to reading the video until later in the season. But this year, we are up to date on video so the total includes both daytime and nighttime counts. It is difficult to count lampreys in the window when their numbers are high so as the run accelerates, we will get behind on the video watching. We also count down-running smolts at night—this past week we counted 266. Most use the bypass instead of the fishway.



A fat, ~20" long sea-run brown trout hanging out at the viewing window at the Rainbow Fishway.

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)	1,589	1,569	0	239	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	1	0	0	0	18
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)	164,167							
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)	present (not enumerated)							12,178
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)	10,396							
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	50,668							
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	1000s							
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)	1,350 (missed much of run due to counter malfunction)							
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)	77,340	1,532	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= 5/13. Taftville= 5/16 (?). Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 5/13. 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:

The cool weather discussed in the previous section slowed down the fish runs along the shoreline, too. The alewife run is winding down at most locations. We pulled the trap and counter at Bride Brook this past week due to lack of fresh up-runners and a huge wave of spent down-runners. Down-runners are also being seen at Mianus Pond and Branford Supply Pond fishways. The counter has been pulled at Branford but remains in at Mianus. Some fresh alewives are still trickling in there. Brian samples the run and determined that some bluebacks had begun to run previously but this last week, all of the fish were alewives. Fish continue to pass at Wood Dam at the Saugatuck River but we missed the opportunity this last week to sample so we're not sure if they are alewives, blueback herring, or both. The other river herring news to report is the presence of alewife scales and otter scant at the Davis Pond Fishway in Norwalk. This is the first indication of alewives using this fishway in several years and we are gratified by the news since we just rehabilitated the fishway last summer. (See photos below.)

As for the counts in the table, there were some errors in last week's report. Each week, I type the new numbers in and then delete the old numbers. Apparently I failed to delete ALL of the old numbers for alewives at Greeneville and Capello Pond. The numbers this week are correct (unfortunately, in the case of Greeneville).

The environmental reporter for National Public Radio station WNPR (CT), Nancy Cohen, did a brief piece on river herring last week. You can read and listen to it at <http://www.yourpublicmedia.org/content/wnpr/heckofa-lotta-herring> . Ben- check out the photo credit!

The glass eel run has slowed down at Fishing Brook and at Mianus Pond Dam. We've started getting counts at Mill River but those numbers (108) are still low. Greeneville Eel Pass is out of operation, Taftville is still under development, and we have not received data from Tunnel or Occum yet this year.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the departure of Brian Eltz from the Town of Greenwich. He resigned from his position with the Conservation Commission to accept a job with the DEP's Inland Fisheries Division (Western District). While we are thrilled to have him join our Division, we are sorry to see him leave the ranks of the diadromous fish community. He has done a great job at Greenwich, both at the Mianus Pond Fishway and investigating eel populations and passage opportunities on the Byram River. We wish him well. The Conservation Commission of the Town of Greenwich, under Denise Savageau's leadership, has a good program and a strong commitment to the Mianus Pond Fishway and we're sure it will take the necessary steps to keep up the good work.

Featured Fishway for the week: Davis Pond Fishway, Silvermine River (tributary of the Norwalk River) in Norwalk. This is a privately-owned fishway that had been damaged in recent floods and our program rehabilitated the fishway last summer with help from the landowner, The Nature Conservancy, and the Town of Norwalk. It appears to be operating well this season.



The exit of the Davis Pond Fishway, showing new wooden weirs. This section passes through the earthen dam.



The lower portion of the Davis Pond Fishway, showing the nature-like channel that brings fish up from the base of the spillway to the exit, shown to the left.