

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 25, 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	391	8	27	0	0	1,967**	2	16
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	2	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	10,000s	10,000s	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube ⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	1,209	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	1,463	0	0	0	0	359	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	27/10	117,166	0	60	246	22	20,953	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	303	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	41	-	-
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=	29/10	119,020	10000s	87++	246	22	23,320	4	16
(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:

No additional salmon captured in Connecticut this past week although they continue to be trapped at the Holyoke Dam in MA. Four salmon were trapped at Holyoke over the weekend. As is the custom, we have gotten ahead on the 10% release at Holyoke so that the tagged fish can have cooler water in which to recuperate and the tagging crew does not have to keep coming back for every tenth fish. Surprisingly, we don't yet have any reports of salmon passing through the fishways at Turners Falls. Jay reports only sea lampreys showing up at Vernon so far. On the Merrimack, the salmon count at the Essex dam is 19 and on the Penobscot they have counted 204 salmon at Veazie Dam—a fast start.

The salmon smolt run at Rainbow was pretty small Thursday and Monday nights, with less than 20 captured each night. There was one hatchery smolt on Thursday but none last night. With water temperatures rising, it is good these fish are mostly gone.

Even though the shad run slowed during the cool weather, good numbers continue to come in at Holyoke, West Springfield, and Rainbow, which has already posted its best shad numbers since 1997! Let's hope they get out of the fishway before the next rain or else those numbers will start coming back down. Both the CTDEP and the USFWS are trucking shad out of Holyoke. Loads have gone to several streams in Connecticut as well as into the Connecticut River in New Hampshire.

Last week we reported moving blueback herring from Wethersfield Cove to the Farmington River. The final numbers for that effort is 4,575. They were at it again yesterday, although not many fish were captured. The featured video this week shows the capture and transport process. You can also see the blueback herring actually spawning along the beach in the cove. To view this video, visit www.ctriversalmon.org, click on the outline of a salmon on the left margin that is labeled "River Runs" and then pick out the video from the top of the list.

Sea lampreys ran strong this past week with the number at Holyoke doubling and so many at Rainbow that we now cannot keep up with our video counting. A few have started spawning below the Leesville Dam as well as below the falls at Higganum Creek. Fish have been slow to 'bounce back' at Leesville after the rain and cool weather. No sign of another wave of blueback herring despite the fact that they have returned to Wethersfield Cove. It is mostly smallmouth bass and spawning darters at Leesville, although this morning I passed a large (~30") rainbow trout and 12" brown trout. Can more exciting salmonids be far behind??? The sucker run is winding down. Tom Savoy and Jacque Benway of the DEP's Marine Fisheries Division, along with Ken Sprankle of the USFWS, were out tagging striped bass in the Connecticut River this past week. They tagged 25 and saw relatively few river herring. Bob Sadzinski of Maryland DNR reports that down there hickory shad are having a great year, perhaps the best in recent memory. Hickory shad run in the Connecticut River but do not come up as far as the first dams and fishways so our impressions on run strength are drawn from angler reports.



Teeth marks on salmon R-02-10 from the Rainbow Fishway.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. <u>SHAD</u>	<u>ALEWIFE</u>	<u>BLUEBACK HERRING</u>	<u>GIZZARD SHAD</u>	<u>STRIPED BASS</u>	<u>SEA LAMPREY</u>	<u>SEA-RUN TROUT</u>	AMER. <u>EEL</u>
Greeneville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	1,962	156	0	286	1	0	0	2
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	1	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	174
Mill River Eel Pass (Mill River, Hamden)								298
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 (season over)						
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		present (not enumerated)						13,960
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)		10,775						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		50,668 (season over)						
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		1000s						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		1,594 (missed much of run due to counter malfunction)						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		87,078	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= 5/24 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 alewife run is winding down. Large numbers of downrunners have been seen at Bride Brook, Branford and Mianus Pond. Counters have been pulled at Brides and Branford but they are still on the job at Mianus Pond and Capello Pond. Our old friend Mike Aurelia is back as a volunteer at Mianus with the departure of Brian Eltz and reports that the run continues to be low numbers of alewives with no bluebacks to be found. Sally Harold of TNC on the Saugatuck also reports that all incoming fish at the Wood Dam fishway are alewives and one was even ripe, indicating some fresh fish are trickling in. Sally also reports large numbers of black-crowned night herons hanging out at Sasco Brook, the border between Westport and Fairfield. Our staff also reports seeing large numbers of fish in the Sasco under the Rt. 1 bridge. In the past, this stream has supported blueback herring runs as well as alewife so we're not sure what is currently on the heron's menu.

This is the time of year when our focus begins to shift away from the smaller coastal streams to the larger rivers. We have lacked data at Kinneytown Fishway on the Naugatuck River due to electrical problems. The fishway has been passing fish but we haven't been able to count them. Those problems were solved this past week and we hope to have data to report next week. Greenville Fishlift on the Shetucket has had a good week with American shad and a boatload of gizzard shad (which seem to be making a comeback this year after several years of declining numbers). Greenville is also passing white perch and Atlantic salmon broodstock. Taftville passed its first shad of the season as FirstLight experimented with different operating regimes. We were unable to confirm new numbers for Tunnel Fishlift. Drew from Norwich Public Utilities reported passing an alewife at Occum Fishway and we hope those shad that passed through Taftville are headed his way. A team of workers from the DEP, FirstLight, and NPU tagged 100 shad at Greenville this past week to support upstream fishway studies. All received PIT tags (Passive Integrated Transponder) and 25 received radiotags, in addition.

As reported last week, the glass eel run is winding down although Fishing Brook is still picking up pigmented young-of-year. In the table above, the numbers for Fishing Brook, Mill River, and Kinneytown are all eel pass fish. The numbers for Greeneville and Tunnel are fishlift numbers. Greeneville Eel Pass was destroyed in the floods but we expect to start getting numbers from the Tunnel Eel Pass along with those from eel passes at Occum, Lower Millpond, and Bunnells soon.

SHAD TAGGING AT GREENEVILLE FISHLIFT- PIT tags are like E-Z Passes for cars on tollways. Upstream fishways have PIT tag antennae, that act like the toll booths. When a fish with a PIT tag swim up the fishway and through the antennae, their individual code is registered along with the time of day. This can help evaluate the performance of these fishways.



Fish Tech Dave Ellis inserts a tag into a shad with the assistance of seasonal workers Ryan Mowrey, Todd Andrews, and Brandon Ritchie.



The PIT tag is a small glass capsule that is poked into a small incision in the shad's side and slides into the body cavity. Bleeding is minimal and survival is quite high. The entire process takes about 30 seconds per fish and the fish is then released.