

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: June 8, 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)	3	560	8	15	0	0	3,100**	3	16
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	2	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	10,000s	10,000s	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube ⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	1,259	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	3	3,284	0	1	0	0	485	0	285
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	35/10	154,442	0	76	278	255	39,782	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/6	9,218	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	0/6	259	-	0	0	0	3,185	-	-
Bellows Falls (Connecticut- VT)	0/3	0	-	0	0	0	391	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	0/2	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0/0								
TOTALS=	41/10	158,286	10000s	92++	278	255	43,367	5	301
(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 low flows and the high water temperatures are working together to bring most runs to an end early. Many fishways have registered temperatures in excess of 25 C (77 F), which is when Atlantic salmon stop going up fishways and at that point, many shad will just be spawning wherever they happen to be. I was driving south along the upper river last weekend when thunderstorms were crossing Vermont and New Hampshire and many of the tributaries were turning brown with increased flows. Those flows are now reaching Holyoke and the flow rate jumped from 5,000 cfs to 20,000 cfs. Unfortunately, the rains have mostly missed the Connecticut tributaries, which remain very low. The cooler nights have also lowered the water temperatures—Leesville was at 16 C (57 F) this morning. Low rivers are more susceptible to temperature changes. While the cool weather could help extend the season, it may be too late for the species that spawn during the spring, like shad, blueback herring, and sea lamprey. They have probably reached their threshold and have already spawned. For salmon, which spawn in the fall, the cool weather could help bring more in but what we really need is a good slug of rain to the tributaries to raise their flows. The only salmon to be trapped since last week's report was a bright, 29 inch female at Rainbow yesterday. Bruce Williams reports that the first (small) striped bass had arrived in the window and was hanging out when the salmon shot through the slot and glided into the window. That scared the striper back down the fishway and we haven't seen it since.

When I was in Quebec last week, I read Tim's report that Bellows Falls passed salmon and Wilder fishway would be opening, so as I was traveling through the northern watershed on my way home, I visited Wilder in hopes of seeing the fishway and maybe even a salmon, I was disappointed to discover that TransCanada does not open the fishway to the public so I had to view the dam and the fishway from the parking lot. I am doubly disappointed since we received from TransCanada this morning the photo below of two salmon hanging in the window at the Wilder Dam fishway! Jay McMenemy of VTFW has just reviewed the video record from over the weekend and reports one of the salmon was there on Saturday when I was there! Three salmon have passed through the Bellows Falls fishway, so one of them has apparently peeled off into a downstream tributary. The water temperature in the upper watershed where these upriver fishways are located is cooler and the problems with warm water that I discussed for Holyoke, Rainbow, West Springfield, and Leesville are not an issue—at least not now—and these salmon will likely continue to move upstream for some time. The same might be said for sea lamprey. The runs are about over in the downstream areas but you can see that some are still passing through Vernon and Bellows Falls. Sunday night at Rainbow only 8 came through the fishway. The shad are also winding down. Only 17 shad passed at Rainbow on Sunday and about 800 at Holyoke yesterday. Word has it that many of the shad passing Holyoke are spent, which is another indication that the run is about over.



Two sea-run salmon hanging out in the window of the Wilder Dam fishway in Wilder, VT, 217 miles upstream of Long Island Sound. Next stop, the Ammonoosuc River? (photo by Joe Verdine, TransCanada)

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)	2,380	156	0	842	1	0	0	3
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	7	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	1	0	3	0	0	0	83
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	38	0	3	30	440
Mill River Eel Pass (Mill River, Hamden)								609
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)						17,947
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)		10,976 (season over)						
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		50,668 (season over)						
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		1000s						
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		2,118 (missed much of run due to counter malfunction)						
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		93,007	5,676	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= 5/24. Taftville= 5/28 (?). Occum= 5/24 Tunnel= 5/13?. Kinneytown= 6/1.

***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:

Bluebacks continue to trickle in here and there (e.g. Mianus Pond in Greenwich and Wood Dam at the Saugatuck River) but that seems to be winding down. Mike reports seeing many of what he believes to be juvenile river herring at the Mianus Pond fishway. Many of the smaller fishways are not passing fish and the flows are so low that they are beginning to draw down the headponds, so we have closed a handful already and plan to close more soon.

The runs at Greenville stopped suddenly due to the water temperature and it appears what we are seeing there is mostly gizzard shad. Gizzard shad have made a strong come back on the Shetucket River (as well as in the Connecticut River). Last year, Greenville passed a total of 12. This year, you can see from above that it has already passed 842. Taftville and Tunnel have passed only minor numbers of shad and river herring but other species are using the fishways, including suckers and trout. All shad trucking in the watershed has ended.

Tim reported on the Kinneytown situation last week and we continue to get data from that location. The runs of shad and river herring are slowing down but we're passing a lot of trout, many of which appear to be sea-runs. We know that we missed a lot of date this year and likely missed the peak of the runs but the video system and its infrastructure now seem to be performing well and we should be set to get improved data from this fishway in future years.

The run of young-of-year eels is winding down, as evidenced by the numbers at the Fishing Brook eel pass. The run of yellow eels in upriver locations should continue and even increase for the next month or so.



A photo snipped from the digital file at Kinneytown, showing a gizzard shad passing the window. The arched grating seen under the fish is designed to keep fish from passing under the lower lip of the window and avoiding detection by the camera.