

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: June 23, 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)	4	560	8	15	0	0	3,100**	3	145
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	2	0
Moulson Pond (Eightmile)	0	-	10,000s	10,000s	0	0	0***	0	-
Mary Steube ⁺ (Mill Brook)	-	-	1,239	(closed June 9)	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	4	3,408	0	1	0	0	485	0	315
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	39/10	162,634	0	76	351	290	39,782	0	0
Turners Falls (Connecticut- MA)	0/8	13,601	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon (Connecticut- VT)	0/8	269	-	0	0	0	3,179	-	-
Bellows Falls (Connecticut- VT)	0/4	0	-	0	0	0	391	-	0
Wilder (Connecticut- VT)	0/2	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Townshend Dam (West- VT)	0/1								
TOTALS=	47/10	166,602	10000s	92++	351	290	43,367	5	460
(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:

Shad continue to trickle in at Holyoke but the run is basically over. No new fish reported at West Springfield or Rainbow. It is interesting to note that this year was one of the best years in a long time for shad passage at Turners Falls in terms of the percentage of fish that passed through the lower fishway (Cabot Station) that also passed through the upper fishway (Gatehouse). [This is a different issue than the percentage of shad that were lifted over Holyoke that also passed through Turners Falls.] There have been several changes in 2010, including a modification to the new Gatehouse entrance, different operational procedures, and the fact that the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project upstream of the Turners Falls Dam was not operational throughout much of the run due to maintenance activity. Further analysis of the data is required to try to make sense of it all and see if there are clues to how we can permanently improve shad passage through this fish passage complex. However, the percentage of shad that pass through Turners Falls that also pass through the Vernon Fishway has gone way down this year and to date no one has any explanation for that.

A handful of Atlantic salmon has been captured since last week at Holyoke, West Springfield, and Rainbow. The river flow remains low but passing thunderstorms can produce a mini-spike in the flow and cool things down enough to draw in a fish every so many days. The Connecticut fishways are opening very close to the threshold level at which salmon will not ascend fishways (25 C/ 77 F) and typically surpass that temperature by mid-day. The nights cool the water a bit and we start all over again the following morning. I've often suspected that prolonged periods of low flow and high temperatures (> 25 C) will drive salmon to cool holding areas to over-summer. Once established in such places, it probably takes more than a few hours of cooler temperatures to get them 're-started' on their upstream migration. We may be getting into that time period in Connecticut now, with the hot weather we're experiencing today and tomorrow. Unless we get an extended cool wet period (not on the horizon), we may not see any more spring salmon and may have to wait for the fall to see if any salmon sitting below at a cold spring will move up in anticipation of the spawning season.

Ten radio-tagged salmon were released at Holyoke and as of yesterday's CRASC meeting, the distribution of those fish are as follows: two have entered the Deerfield River and the other eight have passed through the Turners Falls fishways. Of those 8, all of them have passed through the Vernon fishway. Of those, three have entered the West River (one was trapped and trucked over the Townshend Dam a couple of days ago, see table above), one has entered the Cold River, and 4 have passed through the Bellows Falls fishway. Of those 4, one has entered the Black River, one remains 'at large' in the mainstem, and 2 have passed through the Wilder Dam fishway (one has been seen back in the fishway but may have moved again by now). I'll look for an update from Jay by next week's season-end report and try to provide a map showing the locations of these fish.

Ken Sprinkle and partners have conducted lamprey nest surveys on the Green, Manhan, Mill, Sawmill, and Falls rivers and Amethyst Brook in MA and report nest counts over twice what they were last year. Our nest survey for the Salmon and Eightmile rivers in CT will take place tomorrow (hottest day of the year!) and will be reported here next week.



The confluence of the Salmon River (right) with the Connecticut River in East Haddam, CT near rivermile 16. The Leesville Fishway is located about three miles upstream of the right edge of the photo, at the head-of-tide.

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)	2,459	156	0	855	1	0	0	8
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)	3	0	0	38	0	4	30	867
Mill River Eel Pass (Mill River, Hamden)								1,353
Trading Cove Brook (Trading Cove Br., Montville)		fishway destroyed in flood						
Latimers Brook+ (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)		2,558	(season over)					
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)		present	(season over)					
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		164,149	(season over)					
Fishing Brook (Fishing Br., O.Saybrook)		present	(season over)					18,594
Capello Pond** (East River, Guilford)		32,651	(season over)					
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		50,668	(season over)					
Bunnells Pond (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)		1000s	(season over)					
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		3,000	(missed much of run due to counter malfunction)					
Mianus River Pond** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		93,077	7,028	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= 6/20. Taftville= 5/28 (?). Occum= 5/24 Tunnel= 5/13?. Kinneytown= 6/20.

***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:

Both the Mianus Pond Fishway in Greenwich and Wood Dam on the Saugatuck River in Westport had hits on their fish counters last week but most are considered downrunners and we have now declared the runs over. Denise Savageau of the Greenwich Conservation Commission reports they have hired a replacement for Brian Eltz, who left to take a job with CTDEP's Inland Fisheries Division in the Western District. Joe Cassone, formerly a seasonal employee with the CTDEP in the Eastern District, starts today and will be pulling Mianus Fishway fish counter with interim fish guy and volunteer extraordinaire Michael Aurelia. Welcome aboard to Joe! Lots of juvenile river herring have been seen emigrating at many locations, including Bunnells Pond (Bridgeport), and Brides, Beaver Swamp, and Latimers brooks (East Lyme). It appears that sizeable American eels are congregating below the spillway at Bunnells Pond Dam to prey upon the emigrating young-of-year alewives.

Note that there has been some re-calculating of numbers for fish passed at some fishways with electronic fish counters. These are 'corrections' conducted by Dave Ellis after looking at the data and re-checking figures. Most involve a handful of fish here and there but you may notice a substantial jump in numbers for the Capello Pond Fishway, which has been closed for a couple of weeks. Earlier in the season, Dave had discounted very large numbers for a couple of counting tubes on one day, feeling that the numbers were so high, suspecting they probably represented weeds or the like in the tube. But upon closer examination, he realized that this was the same couple of days when David Post reported real high numbers for Branford and every other fish counter in the state tallied peak numbers for the year on that day(s). Dave now realizes that a big wave of fish came through the state during those few days, that all observations were consistent, and there is no reason to discount those data. Therefore, the counts have been restored and it shows what a great year we had for Capellos—particularly since we missed the early part of the run due to counter malfunction.

We bid farewell to seasonal Sam Wright who was reviewing images for us at the Kinneytown Fishway. We are just about up-to-date with those electronic files and have counted three American shad moving through that Denil fishway. In addition to the diadromous fish reported for Kinneytown, it has also passed 42 brown trout and 3 eels. The eels reported in the table above are fish captured in the stand-alone eel pass and then carried around the dam. Additional eel passes will start up soon. Our crew reported a 'first' for eel pass catches this past week: a mallard duckling at the Mill River eel pass. Apparently it just waddled up the eel pass and fell in the trap. It was released in good condition. Seasonal Brandon Ritchie just reported that this eel pass and the one at Fishing Brook are still collecting a few glass eels. For Greenville, in addition to the diadromous fish listed, it has passed 41 Atlantic salmon (hatchery broodstock) and 4 white perch. The Tunnel and Taftville fishways have also passed non-diadromous species, as well, including a number of trout that seem to like living in front of the Tunnel viewing window. FirstLight Power has not updated its numbers for these fishways recently and I hope they will be able to do so before next week's year-end wrap-up report.



A half dozen young-of-year alewives netted below the Bunnells Pond Dam and Fishway. (Actually there is a seventh one hiding.) Schools of these fish are now descending both the fishway and coming over the spillway on their way to the sea.