

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 6, 2014



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/r5crc. For more information about Atlantic salmon, visit the Connecticut River Salmon Association at www.ctiversalmon.org.

CONNECTICUT RIVER LOCATIONS

FISHWAY (RIVER)	ATLANTIC SALMON*	AMER. SHAD	AMER. ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Rainbow (WFMD) (Farmington)	0	2	0	0	0	0	30	0	0
Leesville(WFMD) (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem**(WFMD) (Mattabesset)	0	3	154	15	0	-	8	0	1
Moulson Pond** (Eightmile)	0	0	11	0	0	0	5	0	-
Mary Steube*(WFMD) (Mill Brook)	-	-	1,109	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+(WFMD) (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0/0	135	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	144	0	9	0	0	0	0	0
Manhan River** (Manhan- MA)									
Turners Falls** (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	-
Vernon** (Connecticut- VT)	0/0	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=	0/0	284	1,274	24	0	0	43	0	1
(last year's totals)	92/4	397,486	9,597	3,228	824	208	24,939	18	16

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. **There is a video camera that records passage. 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.

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. (WFMD)- Tours or open house for World Fish Migration Day, May 24 (<http://nature.org/ctfish>)

COMMENTS:

You can see that the **American shad** run is still sputtering along. The number has gone up since last week but not by much. The river temperature remains abnormally cold. Rich Murray of Holyoke Gas and Electric reports that the temperature at Holyoke has been 6.5 – 8.5 C (44 – 47 F). Shad are not even supposed to enter the river until it reaches 10 C (50F). Holyoke suspended lifting on Friday and Saturday due to high flows but resumed again on Sunday. It is too early to assess the run strength. Anglers are catching a bunch and in the words of one long-time commercial fishing observer, the netters “are not complaining”. Interpret that as you will.

Ken Sprankle of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is continuing his regular electrofishing survey of Connecticut River coves for **river herring**. This week he was in Wethersfield Cove and reported catching and sampling 209 blueback herring and 29 alewife. There were large schools of bluebacks throughout all areas of the cove. Ken says there are lots of fish around but the alewives are pretty much ‘spent’ (post-spawned). The water temperature is still cool at 10-12C (53-54F). This is consistent with what we have seen in many Connecticut tributaries. A few alewives sticking around (e.g. Mill Brook, Mattabesset River, Higganum Creek, and a few in the Salmon River) but the bluebacks have come on strong showing us the best early May wave in recent years. Bluebacks are in the Salmon, Moodus, Mattabesset, and Farmington rivers. I find it interesting that the cold weather has delayed many fish runs but the blueback herring seem right on time. Let’s hope this good early showing translates into a better year for them than we have seen in recent years. Snorkeling indicates the sucker run is about what I’d expect in early April, a handful of mostly small stripers, no trout (although we did pass two beautiful large brook trout up the Leesville Fishway this week before Trap #1 malfunctioned), and relatively few tessellated darters, which should be spawning *en masse* now. Atlantic salmon smolts are still being observed passing down the Rainbow fishway and surely are moving elsewhere, too.

The fall-out over last week’s discovery of a dead 7-foot long **Atlantic sturgeon** on a beach in Lyme, CT continues. Some of the news coverage was rather amusing—“extinct fish species found in Connecticut River!” A chat room on a news site had two boneheads arguing whether or not it is appropriate to refer to the fish as “prehistoric”. Another found it as an excuse to go on an anti-government rant. The sturgeon was dead because of the government. Hmmm? Well, for the most part, it was a positive news event that got people interested in fish and the Connecticut River. Tom Savoy’s on camera interviews got a lot of air time and the photo that I ran last week with Pete and me with the sturgeon ended up on the Weather Channel. Meanwhile, a friend from Enfield emailed to say a local resident just hooked another sturgeon below the Enfield Dam and knew to release it. So even in death, this fish helped educate the public. By the way, it was Mindy and Captain Mark of the RiverQuest who called that sighting into our Dispatch. Mindy thinks she saw the same dead fish at Eagle Landing a full two weeks earlier.

Another personal note: **Mary Colligan** of NOAA-Fisheries has accepted another job and will be leaving her position as Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources out the Gloucester office (Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office). Her division looks after federally-protected marine species like whales, river herring, and Atlantic salmon. In fact, Mary has played an important role in the restoration/protection of Atlantic salmon in New England. In addition to other roles, she has been a long time member of the U.S. delegation to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) and for many years served as the Delegation Manager for the U.S. Her knowledge, skills, and commitment were recognized a few years ago when she was elected as President of NASCO and has presided over the annual meetings of the Council. As a U.S. Commissioner to NASCO, I can tell you that we all greatly benefited from Mary’s work—we and Atlantic salmon. Mary will be greatly missed. The upcoming meeting June 2 – 6 in France will be her last and shortly thereafter she will leave her native New England to take a position with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service heading up their polar bear protection project. We wish her all the best. At least with salmon, you never had to worry about being eaten...



Mary Colligan of NOAA-Fisheries (and Kim Blankenbeker, also of NOAA- Fisheries) at a NASCO sponsored event in the Faroe Islands.



Ken Sprankle’s USFWS crew electrofishing river herring on the lower Farmington River.

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Greeneville* (WFMD) (Shetucket R., Norwich)	76	601	0	1	0	0	0	0
Taftville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occum* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tunnel* (Quinebaug R., Preston)	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	out of order		0	0	0	5	0	0
Hallville Pond* (WFMD) (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	17	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (WFMD)- (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	16,239						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	-	0	0					
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		262,229	0					
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)		66	0	-		-	-	
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (WFMD) (Queach Br., Branford)		1,291	0	-	-	-	-	
Landon Dam** (West River, Guilford)		543	0	-	-	-	0	0
Haakonsen Fishway* (WFMD) (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	1,696	0	0	0	31	2	
Bunnells Pond* (WFMD) (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		910	0	0	0			
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		3,115	0	0				
Mianus River Pond* ** (WFMD) (Mianus R., Greenwich)		31,464	0	0	0	0	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= 4/29 Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= 4/26 Kinneytown= 4/12 Haakonsen= 5/5 Hallville= 5/3.

**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. (WFMD)- Tours or open house for World Fish Migration Day, May 24 (<http://nature.org/ctfish>)

COMMENTS:

Although we did not add a lot of fish to our counts last week, it was far from a quiet week in terms of work. With the heavy rain approaching (some places got close to 6 inches of rain), we pulled all of our electronic fish counting equipment from fishways at risk. We lost a laptop to water last year and the Kinneytown camera to floods this year so we didn't want to take the any chances with losing more equipment. (Our budget couldn't take it—we're repairing a truck yet again!!!) Every fishway weathered the storm fine (although it got pretty close to overtopping the countinghouse at StanChem) and then we had to re-install everything. Between this work, cleaning flood debris out of fishways, running to some urgent meetings, and being out most of today trying to get Kinneytown back up and running, we did not compile all of the data for this report so you'll see some fishways reporting the same data as last week. We'll try to get updates by next week and hopefully next week there will be more fish and fewer fire drills. I was out all day in one direction while Tim started the day with our electrician Dave Pawlak trying to fix a malfunctioning trap at Leesville and then to Kinneytown to get that camera working. I never saw him and don't know if he succeeded. If I'm late to answer some of your emails, please understand how hectic it is this time of year.

The high water on the Naugatuck River sent water over the top of the upper cofferdam at the construction site of the **Tingue Fish Bypass** Channel in Seymour. For a while, the channel was carrying about the same amount of water that it was designed to pass. And it looked pretty good! Jim MacBroom of Malone and MacBroom, the principal engineer of the project, was out in the channel in chestwaders and a velocity meter collecting data. There are fishing widows and football widows but I guess Jim's wife is a flood widow. Every time local streams flood, you can find Jim out and about taking photos, collecting data, and making observations.

Bride Brook added 29,000 alewives to its count this week and Mianus Pond Fishway had a 10,600 fish night—which is a good haul for them. Denise Savageau, Greenwich's Conservation Director, is sending in the weekly fish reports now that Joe is gone. Latimer only added another 1,100 fish this week but fish were around most of the week and a tour of a Noank boat club got to see a school hanging around the entrance. Staff report that the number of river herring seen at Haakonsen (Quinnipiac River) is an undercount because while Kevin was there, the fish were streaming past the window but many were far away from the window and barely visible through the turbid water and unlikely to be seen on video. The only other eastern Connecticut stream with river herring observations was the Pattagansett River (East Lyme). In the west, fish were seen in the Mill River and Sasco Brook (both in Fairfield), and the Housatonic below the Derby Dam where we saw them in the tens of thousands! (See below)

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 6,443; Mill River Eel Trap= 166; Greenville Eel Lift= 46, Lower Millpond (Lyme)= 46,278.

Many of us will gather this Saturday at 10 am at Glenwood Park in Bridgeport (intersection of Glenwood and Boston Ave.) to help Save the Sound celebrate the new **Pequonnock Apron Fishway**. Over the years, you've heard of this project, seen the Mayor's legendary YouTube video of alewives on their sides, and heard us worry about delays in construction. Well, it is done and working great. Last time I was there, every pool had a bunch of alewives holding in it. This project also included the installation of the alewife cam up in the nearby Bunnell's Pond Dam Fishway (<http://68.197.202.82:57555>). So a lot to celebrate and there will be volunteers planting along the river. See you there!

Visit this site for a copy of the NEFMC Press Release [Measures to Promote Accountability in the Atlantic Herring Fishery](#). The Press Release provides details about the Council's April 22-24 Council meeting in Mystic, CT.



Remember the face of the otter in the window at the Occum Dam Fishway last year? It's back, as seen in this image provided by Wayne McLaughlin of Norwich Public Utilities.



Just in the past couple of days, the river herring have come in strong in the Housatonic River below the Derby Dam. This photo by Kevin Job shows that it ain't like the good old days but it ain't too shabby either.