

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: May 1, 2018



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.ctriversalmon.org.

CONNECTICUT RIVER LOCATIONS

FISHWAY (RIVER)	ATLANTIC SALMON	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	STURGEON/ TROUT++	AMER. EEL
Rainbow* (Farmington)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	0	283	0	0	-	0	1	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	5,787	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Springfield (Westfield-MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut-MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manhan River* (Manhan-MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turners Falls* (Connecticut-MA)	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
Wilder* (Connecticut-VT)	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	0
Other (all sites)	0								
TOTALS=	0	0	1,876	0	0	0	0	0	0
(last year's totals)	20	541,637	922	800	230	23,955	1/9	20	0

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.

*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. ++Shortnose Sturgeon (Holyoke)/Sea-run Trout (other locations) 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 Connecticut River is still very high and muddy. If you look at the river in East Haddam, you can see the clear water coming out of the Salmon River and maintaining a separate plume from the muddy Connecticut River water for a considerable distance downstream. The Holyoke Dam Fishlift had to shut down due to high water and they hope to re-open by Thursday. Most fishways are just passing White Suckers. We have yet to take on the backlog of video at Rainbow and StanChem due to staff shortages. We are seeing herring in the Eightmile River, both down by Joshuatown Road and up at the Rathbun Dam, but Valinn's video review for Moulson Pond Fishway only picked up one this past week. I think most are overshooting the fishway for the dam. Rowan Lytle seems to be everywhere this year and reported some herring in the Scantic and shad being caught at Barts on the Farmington and Stu is seeing herring up Pine Brook. I snorkeled Leesville over the weekend and saw low numbers of Blueback Herring, which I suspect is what Stu was seeing in Pine and what we're now seeing down in the Eightmile. Ken Sprankle of the USFWS electrofished Bluebacks in the Mattabesset this past week and said that he also got some Alewives but most were males and the females appeared to be all spent. I had a first at Leesville during the snorkel—bowfin. I saw two below the dam. Reports have been coming in that they are now common in Salmon Cove. Water temperatures are still swinging wildly. Nearly 15 C (59 F) on Saturday but after some cold nights, it was 8.5 C (47 F) by Monday morning.

There has been a lot of work on the Pawcatuck River system in the past few years with fishways and dam removals. This past year, they removed what used to be dam #3—Bradford Dam & Fishway. Now, the USFWS in collaboration with the USGS and URI are doing shad tagging studies to show how the fish are moving up through the entire watershed and accessing upstream habitat and using the fishways. For newspaper articles describing the work, visit <http://www.providencejournal.com/news/20180424/tagging-humble-herring-on-pawcatuck-river> and <http://www.thewesterlysun.com/News/Westerly/Tags-will-tell-if-river-restoration-is-a-success.html#gallery-1>

Each year we seem to show photos of predators in fishways. Featured this week is a video still shot of a cormorant migrating upstream at the Greenville Dam and a seal marauding a coastal Massachusetts fishway. I like to show this photos because it demonstrates how bringing back migratory fish runs brings back lots of wildlife that feed on the fish. I don't expect any of you to sit down tonight for an Alewife dinner but we need to recognize that these fish are critically important to lots of other things out there. The striped bass are in our rivers because of them, the sky is full of ospreys flying around with Alewives in their talons and we're seeing a major influx of colonial nesting birds like egrets and herons in the last two weeks. (But I do expect you to treat yourself to a Connecticut River shad dinner this season.)



A cormorant swims upstream past the viewing window at the Greenville Dam Fishlight. It isn't clear whether the bird swam in the exit and turned around and swam back or if it entered below and actually got lifted and dumped out of the hopper. (Photo by Norwich Public Utilities)



A seal is actively feeding on Alewives in the Agawam Fishway in Massachusetts. These two photos show that strong river herring runs support diverse wildlife—even in fishways! (Photo John Sheppard, Mass DMR)

OTHER LOCATIONS WITHIN CONNECTICUT

FISHWAY (RIVER)	AMER. SHAD	ALEWIFE	BLUEBACK HERRING	GIZZARD SHAD	STRIPED BASS	SEA LAMPREY	SEA-RUN TROUT	AMER. EEL
Greenville* (Shetucket R., Norwich)	0	636	0	0	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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kinneytown* (Naugatuck R., Seymour)	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	5	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	227	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	8,224	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., East Lyme)		0	no counter this year, alewives seen			-	-	
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		372,254						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	457		0	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		284	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	1,465	0	0	0	4	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		0	0	0	-	0	-	0
Bunnells Pond* (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	1,324	0	0	0	0	0	-
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		passing fish	0	-	-	-	-	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		30,026	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:*

Greenville= 4/15 Taftville= 4/24 Occum= 4/28 Tunnel= 4/24 Kinneytown= 4/25 Haakonsen= 4/26 Hallville= 4/20 Hanover= 4/23 Bunnells= 4/15 Chapmans= 4/5

******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.

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 warm weather is bringing the fish in. Bride Brook had a strong week logging nearly 200,000 after clearing out the sand at Rocky Neck. We're looking at a 400,000+ year there! The Latimer Brook run will likely be the best in several years. You'll see we are still about two weeks behind in reviewing the Greenville video on the Shetucket River. Those numbers will rise and although we have yet to see shad at Greenville, if they don't show up on the archived video records, the next few days with temperatures in the 80s and NPU cleaning out trash from the intakes, I expect the shad to make a strong appearance any day. FirstLight and its contractor Kleinschmidt Associates are close to current for video at Taftville and Tunnel but no anadromous fish passing yet. (We have retracted last week's data from Tunnel.) NPU has Ward working at Occum, which was shutdown for high water for a while, and he reports white suckers and brown trout moving up. The eel pass is also operational now but no data to report. We had problems with the counter at Branford this past week so that number didn't change. There have been problems with the Wood Dam counter on the Saugatuck River and so we're not posting data but fish are moving through. Bunnells had a real strong start but then seemed to calm down—but we're two weeks behind on video due to staff shortage. Mianus Pond had another strong week similar to last—almost 5,000 Alewives passed. They've surpassed 30,000.

Other reports- Marc from Norwalk Aquarium reports Alewives at Davis Pond fishway on the Silvermine, which is the first confirmation we've had in many years. Ray continues to see Alewives above the fishway patch at Clark's Pond Fishway and his index (not a count) is 43, which is good. Captain Ian reports over 1,000 in the Mill River and many in Sasco Brook (both in Fairfield) over the weekend. Dennis has been busy in the lower Quinnipiac and reports Lots of herring in Waterman's Brook but it appears the culvert under I-91 is perched and holding them back. A few fish coming into Bruce's Ice Pond and bringing the Black-crowned night herons with them. Likely a run into Rice's Sand Pit Pond due to two dozen cormorants and a head of a herring but too muddy to see fish. The folks on the Norwalk River are getting excited about the prospect of the Flock Process Dam coming out this summer. Alexis Cherichetti at the City of Norwalk reports the project is out to bid. See the NRWA's newsletter for an update: http://norwalkriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NRWA_Newsletter_Spring_v8.pdf. In addition, the Town of Wilton had reversed itself on the potential removal of the Merwin Meadows (Dana) Dam: <https://goodmorningwilton.com/that-dam-dam-bos-moves-forward-on-norwalk-river-dam-removal/>. Furthermore, the heavy rains of the past couple of weeks have breached the Cannondale Dam, the next dam upstream. More on that later.

Strong runs going in the Hudson with Blueback Herring showing up. Runs are finally ramping up in RI and MA with good numbers in northern MA. A few fish have arrived in New Hampshire.

Yet another wave of glass eels at our Fishing Brook trap. This will be the best glass eel run in many years. We have begun to distribute some to upstream lakes in other watersheds. Sarah with the Greenwich Conservation Commission remarked that the glass eel run there is late but she finally saw some this past week (see below). For a great short video showing glass eels using the Delaware-style eel pass at Mianus, go to the Connecticut River Salmon Association's webpage: <http://www.ctriversalmon.org/river-runs/> and click on the link below "2018 Videos". Danica of NYC Parks & Rec reports the first glass eels at the Bronx River eel pass this past week.

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 19,742 glass/70 yellow; Chapmans Pond= 428 glass/21 yellow; Mill River Eel Trap= operational but no data yet; Greenville Eel Lift= not operational yet.

My weekly Diadromous Fish Radio show is live on iCRV (www.iCRVradio.com) at 8:00 am on Wednesday and re-played at 3:00 and 7:00 pm that day 8 am on Saturday. iCRV now archives shows so if you miss one, you can go online and click on "Outdoors" and the "Fishing" and find past shows to listen to.



A glass eel climbs up one of the eel passes at the Mianus Pond Dam in Greenwich. (Photo Greenwich Conservation Commission)



A school of Alewives after exiting the Latimer Brook Fishway in East Lyme, CT. (Photo Tom Cleveland)