CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 15, 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.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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem** (Mattabesset)	-	0	28	0	0	-	0	0	0
Moulson Pond** (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-
Mary Steube+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	671	-	-	-	-	-	
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	0	699	0	0	0	1	0	0
(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.

COMMENTS:

We have alewives running strong in the Connecticut River as far north as the Mattabesset River in the Middletown-Cromwell area but no reports of fish any further upstream. That's not to say they aren't there but we have not seen nor heard reports. The Connecticut River is running at 80,000 cubic feet per second (cfs)—which is a lot! Much of it is driven by snowmelt up north and so the water is still real cold. Large volumes of cold water could be keeping the migratory fish low in the system for a while. We've seen alewives in the Mattabesset before we passed any at the Moulson Pond Fishway on the Eighmile River in Lyme. Those fish seemed to have come in yesterday. Ken Sprankle (USFWS) was sampling the Mattabesset yesterday and the fish were pretty thick up there. Sounds like his crew was competing with a nesting pair of bald eagles for the alewives. Meanwhile, you'll see that we have started passing alewives at the first dam on the Mattabasset—the StanChem Fishway. I have not had a chance to get in at Leesville (maybe at the end of the week) but expect the alewives have piled in there. We witnessed many alewives going up the Moulson Pond Fishway yesterday but we have not had time to review yesterday's video yet, so you'll see that the official count is still zero. (By the way—you may have noticed a "1" for shad at Moulson in last week's report. That was just a typo. Thanks to all of you who noticed but did not inundate me with indignant emails. Error noted and corrected.)We also are starting to see small numbers of sea lamprey. The first one passed up the Moulson Pond Fishway over the weekend. No reports of shad in the river, yet. Holyoke is ready to go but the water is too high for them to operate—flows are nearly double of what they can handle. The rain today will likely aggravate the situation and it could be next week before the flows drop enough for Holyoke Gas & Electric to start lifting.

Our program starting stocking salmon fry this past week. With the new Legacy program, only Connecticut will be stocking salmon and the relative few salmon stocked (~200,000) will be put into selected portions of the Salmon and Farmington River watersheds. The high water is complicating plans and we may have to knock off stocking for the rest of the week until the flows subside. In terms of non-diadromous fish, the white sucker run is in full swing. They are passing at the West Springfield Fishway, StanChem, Leesville, and Moulson Pond. We've counted 119 so far at StanChem and I had about 250 in one trap at Leesville on Sunday.

Since things are slow on the Connecticut River still, I use the space to acknowledge all of the contributions of others that support this report (both the Connecticut River page and the "Other Locations" page). First, of course, is our project crew. They are out daily looking at streams, sampling fish, downloading data, reviewing video back in the office, and compiling reports. The work load gets greater every year. They do a great job. We also have great partners that own and/or operate fishways across the State (and MA) that report data to me. Some are utility companies, some are conservation groups, some are private individuals. There are even other individuals who roam the streams of our state and report to us what they are seeing. There are also people (both in and outside of CT) who send in articles, photos, links to stories, etc. all about diadromous fish that add greatly to this report. And finally, there are those who help distribute the reports and post it on their websites. I should dedicate one report to just thanking all these people but the list would be long and I would be sure to forget someone. We appreciate everyone who cares about diadromous fish and really thank those of you who contribute your time, effort, and observations with the rest of us for these reports. When you read these reports throughout the coming weeks, understand that the effort of many help produce them.

The salmon that get stocked out of the Tributary Conservancy's incubators are really small because they have not yet begun to feed. The fry stocked out of Kensington State Fish Hatchery are a bit larger because they have been fed for a few weeks prior to stocking.

When there is a lot of water pouring over the Holyoke Dam, they cannot operate the fishlift. That is currently the situation. Once the flows drop down to below 40,000 cfs, lifting will begin. Once fish start passing Holyoke, upstream fishways will begin to be opened.

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)	0	0	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	5	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	1	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	6,852						
Gorton Pond (Pattagansett R., E.Lyme)	-	0	0					
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		99,214	0					
Clarks Pond (Indian River, Milford)		0	0	-		-	-	
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		492	0	-	-	-	-	
Landon Dam** (West River, Guilford)		111	0	-	-	-	0	0
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	90	0	0	0	8	1	0
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)		0	0	0	0			
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		11	0	0				
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		6,875	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= n.a. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= 4/12 Haakonsen= 4/5 Hallville= 4/12.

**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:

Alewives are in all over but no huge numbers, yet. Yes, 99,000 is an impressive tally for Brides but given that we should surpass a quarter of a million there and have a couple 20,000 fish nights, it doesn't seem as if the run has really kicked in yet. Joe Cassone from Greenwich reports that he had 4,500 fish pass through the Mianus Fishway in the last two nights, and several hundred per day before that. He also reports that the birds and raccoons have apparently discovered the run, too, and getting fat off of it. A few fish at Wood Dam on the Saugatuck and Captain Ian reports alewives at Sasco (can the black-crowned night herons be far behind?), Mill River (are the repairs to the Tide Dam done yet?), and our sleeper stream, the mighty Tokeneke Brook! Nothing seen yet on the Goodwives, Fivemile, Norwalk, or Mill/Rippowam where the City pulled out that dam a few years ago. (Note to Ian and others- I want a report of alewives getting as far upstream on the Rippowam as Turn of the River!!!!) Our folks have been checking their streams and have not seen much else other than is reported in the table above. We've seen quite a few fish in Poquetanuck in Preston (Brookside), where Dave and Tim removed a big snag from the channel to ensure fish could pass. We've only see one alewife on video at the upstream Hallville Pond but we have barely begun to look at the video. Besides that one alewife, we have seen trout and bass passing the Hallville Pond Fishway. Last Friday it seemed everyone stopped by Latimer Brook and saw the big wave of alewives pull in there. Everyone was reporting them to me and you can see our fish counter was working overtime. A good start at Haakonsen Fishway on the Quinnipiac—90 alewives and a whopping 789 white suckers! Jeff at Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) reports that Greeneville is finally lifting and with their security cameras, they could see a couple of hundred (likely) alewives being lifted but we have not had a chance to review those window videos yet so we don't have a count to provide this week. Bob Stira at FirstLight reports that both Taftville and Tunnel are operational but no fish yet; the same with NPU's fishway at the Occum Dam. Both FirstLight and NPU report problems with their fishlifts at Greeneville and Tunnel. They're operational but not working at full capacity. Is there a fishlift virus going around?

I have two fishways to highlight this week. The first one is one of the smallest in the state—the **Vargas Pond Fishway** in Stonington on Stony Brook. I've told this story before: the dam to the old ice pond is only about 20" high but high enough to block alewives. We had a great project with the Town, DEEP-OLISP, and our project to fabricate and install a small aluminum Denil at this location. Working with the Town was great. But the fishway was so small and we had so many other priorities, that we never fully evaluated or monitored it. But this year we have a great intern in that area and she has seen many alewives going up that fishway. No surprise but it is always nice to confirm what we assume. The other fishway is the **Landon Dam Fishway** on the West River in Guilford. We won't tell the whole story here but there were some problems at that dam that our Department and Leslie MacLise-Kane (then Environmental Planner for Guilford, now with Audubon at The Bent) helped iron out. Once the fishway was in, a cadre of volunteers led by Sally Richards—a name familiar to many of us—helped monitor it for several years. But they never saw fish use it. But we were sure that it was because the fish were using it at night and the monitors were checking only during the day. This year, we put our "revolving" fish counter (funded by Save the Sound) in at that location and it has already documented fish going through it. Again, no surprise but this was one of the last fishways in the state where we had not confirmed successful passage. So hats off to Leslie, Sally, and all those great people in Guilford back then who helped make it happen. On to Witch Hazel Pond?

So there are still some no-shows where we hope to see fish by next week's report—notably, Bunnell's Pond in Bridgeport. Our folks are reporting water temperatures ranging from 6 – 13 C (43 – 55 F) with the coolest being in the west.

Glass eels- we just started seeing them this morning at Fishing Brook (total count= 74) and Bengt Kjellberg at the Branford Water Supply Pond Dam reports seeing them there (maybe we'll try to distribute his eel video next week). Joe has not seen any yet at Mianus, but visiting staff from the Bronx River Alliance told Joe they had seen a few glass eels in one of the Bronx River tributaries.

Party Time! The Gang is Back in Town! *A wave of wild alewives press up Bride Brook on their way to the lake to spawn. Do we ever get tired of seeing this sight?*

Fish Counter at Landon Dam: *Dave Ellis and Bruce Williams (partially obscured by branches) install a fish counter at the Landon Dam fishway.*