

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT

Report Date: April 20, 2016



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 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	-LN observed		0	-	-	0***	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabeset)	0	19	93	0	0	-	1	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rogers Lake+ (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSpringfield (Westfield- MA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holyoke (Connecticut- MA)	0	66	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	21	65	0	0	0	1	0	0
(last year's totals)	22	416,355	237	11,822	93	21	24,573	9	20,305

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.

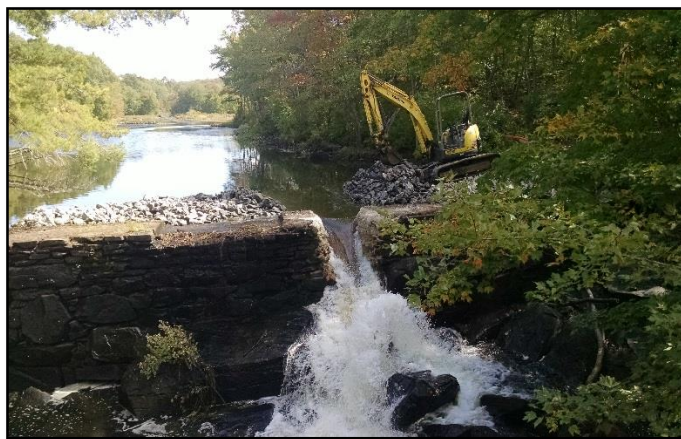
*There is a video camera that records passage. There is a considerable lag between the date a tape is recorded and when staff is able to count fish from the tape, so these numbers will not represent up-to-date counts until after the end of spring season.*** Population estimates based on end-of-the-season nest surveys.- +There is an electronic fish counter at this fishway.

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:

Even with the warm weekend, the Connecticut River is slow to warm up. It is still 6.5 C (44 F) at Holyoke and still very low for this time of year. There are shad in the river but not many are making it up through our fishways yet. I expect next week will show some progress. Our communications with Ken at the Coordinator's Office are still being set up in the wake of the retirement of Darleen Cutting so I don't have updated information on some of the upstream fishways but should soon. Alewives are spread out and being seen many places, but still in low numbers except for the Salmon River. I snorkeled there Monday and saw the strongest wave of alewives I've seen there in many years. Schools were observed from the Rt. 151 bridge all the way up to the dam. A few were also seen in Higganum Creek below the falls and the Moodus River at Johnsonville but nothing reported in Pine Brook. Many of the fish were quite small, which Sandra at the Tributary Conservancy on Mill Brook in Old Lyme reports. We saw a handful in the Moulson Pond Fishway on Monday during our volunteer training session. Ken Sprankle has been out electrofishing and getting alewives in the Mattabeset, Wethersfield Cove, and the lower Farmington River but still only very low numbers. Lots of people fishing for shad at Bart's but doesn't sound like many people are catching much. Other observations from underwater—strong white sucker runs (thousands), the tessellated darter run is just getting started. Only a couple of gravid yellow perch but others are reporting them and egg strands elsewhere. The absence of striped bass was notable. The streams are very low due to the lack of rain and we need rain badly. This is shaping up like 2014 when we had another unusually spring drought. And this time we had no snow so even the Connecticut River is low.

I'll continue my reports on the dam removals done during the summer of 2015. This week's featured project is the **Ed Bills Dam Removal Project**. The dam was the second barrier in the Eightmile River system in Lyme, East Haddam, and Salem. The Rathbun Dam and its Moulson Pond Fishway is the first dam about 3 miles below and we report fish counts from this fishway in the table above. The Ed Bills Dam was privately owned but the steppass fishway was owned by the Lyme Land Conservation Trust. The fishway passed fish but not effectively due to the location of the entrance and the owners agreed on its removal to improve the river ecosystem. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was the project sponsor and Amy Singler was the project manager with considerable assistance from Sally Harold. Funding came from a variety of sources including National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and DEEP. Design was done by Milone and MacBroom and the construction was done by Mattern Construction. The steppass fishway was disassembled and put into storage so it can be re-used at a future fishway project. The project was complicated by abutting landowner issues, incredibly soft sediment dominated by rotting leaves that was often impossible to grade, and occasional high water events. Since this dam had a fishway, the removal may not technically open up "new" river miles to migratory fishes, but an open river passes more fish than a river with a dam and fishway so this is a net gain. This project improves access to 7 miles of great habitat all the way into Salem and reconnects the river with a previous TNC dam removal at Zemko Dam several years ago. Other than the Rathbun Dam which has the fishway, this was the last major dam in this watershed. An interesting lesson from this project is how biologically dead a very scenic pond can be. When we drained the pond, we found very little submerged aquatic vegetation, fish, mussels, turtles, frogs, etc. Just a lot of stinking, rotting leaves. Now a flowing, gurgling, well-oxygenated trout stream with gravel, sand, and cobble flows through it.



The first breach of the Ed Bills Dam. Note the large boulder that the water is splashing onto (it extends to the left beyond the cascading water. See photo to right.



The East Branch Eightmile River with the dam gone. Remnants of the stone dam can be seen at the left side of the photo. The boulder on which water was splashing remains in the middle of the photo.

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)	79	281	0	0	0	3	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	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	4	0	0	-	0	0	0
Trading Cove Brook** - (Trading Cove Brook, Montville)	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	-
Jordan Brook** - (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	16	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** - (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	1,089	0	-	-	-	0	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		101,170						
Clarks Pond - (Indian River, Milford)	-	1		-		-	-	
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)		246	-	-	-	-		
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		625	-			-	0	
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	124	0	0	0	0	0	
Bunnells Pond* (Peqonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	16	0	0	0			
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		0	0			Fish counter not operational		
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		3,228	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= 4/18 Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= 4/18. Haakonsen= 4/18 Hallville= 4/18

**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.

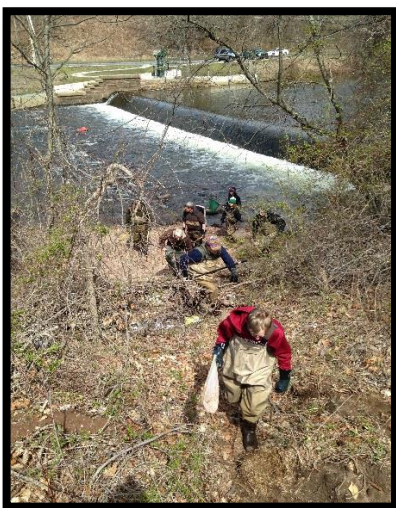
Counts in parentheses indicate numbers seen in a run that is now over and no further fish were counted during the past week. Typically used for alewife runs later in June.

COMMENTS:

You can see that alewives are showing up at most reporting sites but the numbers are still pretty low. Bride Brook had a good weekend, logging over 50,000 fish and we're starting our annual translocation trips. Dave reports spawning in Bride Lake. The fish are now piling in pretty good at Latimer Brook, even after the numbers above were reported. We also documented a moderate run going up the Pattagansett River and into Dodge Pond in East Lyme but already are battling the beaver in that small stream coming out of Dodge Pond as flows continue to drop. A few scales at Brookside in Preston and four alewives have passed Hallville, so that run has yet to really fire up. Taftville and Tunnel fishways are working with video but First Light lacks the staff at the moment to review the video so those data will likely be late coming in. We have not seen any fish in the central coastal area. I spent yesterday afternoon with volunteer Dennis Bennett visiting tributaries on the lower Quinnipiac River and we found actively spawning alewives in Rice's Ponds, a series of old sand/gravel pits connected to the Quinnipiac. (See photo below.) No fish seen on the West River in New Haven or in the Housatonic or Naugatuck rivers. The Kinneytown Fishway is operating but the dam's boards are out so flow to the fishway is lower than ideal. We hope that the boards will go up soon and provide full design flow to the fishway. There are a few fish in at Sasco Creek and Ian reports many spawning in Bruce Pond in Greenwich. Amanda with the Town of Greenwich counted 860 alewives this past week at the Mianus Pond Fishway in Greenwich, but that seasonal count is still low. As with the Connecticut River, no one is reporting striped bass in the rivers yet. By the way, if you are using these reports to find places where you can poach alewives (the taking of alewives is prohibited everywhere in the state), please know that the EnCon police also read these reports. They nabbed a couple of folks yesterday who were netting fish fish right below a fishway. Thanks guys!

Our program is assisting New England Hydro with a fishway evaluation at Hanover Pond Dam, the second dam on the Quinnipiac River in Meriden. NEH will be building the first Archimedes Screw Generator (ASG) at the dam later this year. There already is a fishway at the dam and NEH needs to show that the operation of the ASG will not hamper the effectiveness of the fishway. This spring, they are studying the effectiveness of the fishway before the ASG is built and next year they'll start studying it after the ASG is operational. A video recording system has just been installed at the top of the fishway and this past week our crew captured over 200 white suckers in the river, tagged them, and released them below the dam. We will look for the tagged fish on the video images. If anyone sees white suckers swimming around with a bright red streamer on its back, let us know.

There is an internet radio station that provides live audio streaming called iCRV (Connecticut River Valley), located in the Ivoryton section of Essex. They focus on many topics of interest to the residents of the river valley, including environmental issues. I will be featured on a brief weekly show on Wednesdays starting next week, during which I'll be reporting on the status of the fish runs, discussing diadromous fish biology and management, and answering questions from listeners. You can visit their site at www.icrvradio.com to learn more. More details to follow next week.



Our DEEP crew carrying white suckers up the bank of the Quinnipiac River to a waiting transport truck. The fish were netted below the Wallace Dam and moved up to the Hanover Pond Dam. The Haakonsen Fishway, seen on the opposite shore, is passing many white suckers.



A small school of alewives spawn in the murky waters of a Quinnipiac River backwater called Rice's Pond in North Haven.