

CONNECTICUT WEEKLY DIADROMOUS FISH REPORT
 Report Date: April 3, 2017



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	151	0	0	0	0	494	2	0
Leesville (Salmon)	0	-	-	0	-	-	0**	0	0
StanChem* (Mattabesset)	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Moulson Pond* (Eightmile)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Mary Steube* (Mill Brook)	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
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	SNS**=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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(last year's totals)	6	391,096	792	3,558	684	619	36,914	6	19,799

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
 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:

It is typical for the season to start much later on the Connecticut River than the coastal streams in Connecticut. This is because the much smaller watersheds of the coastal streams are mostly contained in Connecticut and lose their snow early. However, the 11,000+ square mile watershed of the Connecticut River includes the White and Green mountains and snow persists later—resulting in the river remaining colder and higher later into the season. This has been an unusual spring (aren't they all, now?) and the river had a freshet in late February/early March. While there was additional snow up north this weekend, the river remains low (22,400 cfs vs. 40,000 cfs normally for this time of year). Ken Sprankle of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service started his weekly electrofishing sampling of the river on March 29, hoping to get some "zeroes" before the fish arrived. Surprise! He captured seven alewives in the Mattabeset River (water temperature= 5.5 C (41 F). We have sometimes seen alewives in the lower river by that date but never have we had them over 25 miles upstream by late March. With early warm weather and low flow (and thus low velocity) to fight going upstream, we assume they're getting a head start.

Today, we opened the StanChem (Mattabeset River, Berlin) and Leesville (Salmon River, East Haddam) fishways. The water temperature was 6 and 7 C (43 - 44 F). We expect to open Mary Steube (Mill Brook, Old Lyme), and Moulson Pond (Eightmile River, Lyme) by mid-week. The Holyoke Dam Fishlift and Rainbow Dam Fishway will be opened by mid-month. We have more rain coming so the river may begin to rise.

More news will follow as the runs ramp up but I will make use of the calm before the storm to report on things that have happened since this report went on hiatus in July. Both the Marine Fisheries Division and the Inland Fisheries Division experienced many retirements. Our agency is under a total hiring freeze so we cannot replace these people. Gone from Inland are Al Sonski, Jerry Leonard, Don Mysling, and Mark Johnson. Gone from Marine are Dave Simpon (previous director) and Penny Howell. It was deemed that Marine Fisheries was too small to warrant being a separate division so the two divisions merged into one: the Fisheries Division. Mark Alexander is now an assistant director supervising the marine programs. The loss of Don and Mark has Diadromous Program staff helping out with Habitat Conservation & Enhancement duties. Times are difficult and everyone has a lot on their plate—so bear with us.

In late fall of 2016, **The Nature Conservancy removed the Norton Mill Dam on the Jeremy River** in Colchester (see before and after photos below). Sally Harold of TNC put together a team that included the dam owners headed by matriarch Nan Wasnieski, the Town of Colchester, and the DEEP to complete this project that was years in the making. The project, funded in part by a Hurricane Sandy Resiliency Grant, opened up 17 miles of the headwaters of the Salmon River watershed, benefitting Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey, American Eel, and resident trout. Our program is still stocking salmon fry upstream of this site as part of the Legacy Program and this stream is heavily stocked with trout. This was the largest dam removal in our state to date and 17 miles is a great bang-for-the-buck in Connecticut. The Town of Colchester now owns the land along the river where the mill used to be and will finish its clean-up and turn it into a public park. This site can be seen from the Rt. 149 bridge in North Westchester, about a mile south of exit 16 off Rt. 2, near the Airline Trail access on Rt. 149. Congratulations to Sally and her team on a very successful project.



Norton Mill Dam prior to removal with the ruins of the old paper mill to the left. The dam was so leaky that during low flows of summer, it didn't maintain the pond, which can be seen behind the dam, drawn down. Note the rock outcrop along the right side of the photo.



Norton Mill Dam after removal and some fall rains. The mill building has been razed. Note same rock outcrop to the right. The liberated stream channel is once again a bedrock rapids with very little soft sediment.

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	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	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hallville Pond* (Poquetanuck Br. Preston)	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Jordan Brook ** (Jordan Brook, Waterford)	-	10	0	0	-	0	0	0
Latimers Brook** (Latimers Br., E.Lyme)	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gorton Pond** (Pattagansett R., East Lyme)		0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brides Brook** (Brides Brook, E.Lyme)		8,999						
Chapmans Pond* (Menunketesuck R., Clinton)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branford Supply Pond Dam** (Queach Br., Branford)	30	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Lower Guilford Lake** (East River, Guilford)		0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Haakonsen Fishway* (Quinnipiac R., Wallingford)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hanover Pond Fishway* (Quinnipiac River, Meriden)		0	0	0	-	0	-	0
Bunnells Pond* (Pegonnock R., Bridgeport)	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Wood Dam** (Saugatuck R., Westport)		0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Mianus River Pond* ** (Mianus R., Greenwich)		0	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= n.a. Taftville= n.a. Occum= n.a. Tunnel= n.a. Kinneytown= n.a. Haakonsen= n.a. Hallville= n.a. Hanover= n.a. Bunnells= 6/20. n.a.

******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:

We first detected Alewives at Bride Brook during those warm days at the end of February. Then it got cold again and the run stopped but we installed the counter. Fish have trickled in but the rate picked up last week. You can see that we counted a few at Jordan and Branford, but it probably means there are fish at other places, especially in New London County, where we don't have counters. With more rain coming and the daffodils finally popping up, we expect more fish to arrive this coming week. We expect to be opening most of the other coastal fishways this week. Reports from NY and MA indicate they are seeing Alewives, too, especially in the Nemasket and Agawam rivers (MA).

We stocked about 5,000 sea-run brown trout smolts in both Latimer Brook and the Menunketesuck River. After holding them back for about a week, the nets were pulled and the fish are probably all now in Long Island Sound. The Archimedes Screw Generator at the Hanover Pond Dam on the Quinnipiac River in Meriden was constructed over the summer and winter and just began operation. The fishway will be opened soon and we'll be working with New England Hydro to evaluate the impact on downrunning fish and to ensure it does not diminish the effectiveness of the fishway. Further upstream on the Quinnipiac River, Save the Sound removed two dams last summer. I'll summarize those projects in an upcoming weekly report. The Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District built the Chapmans Pond Fishway on the Menunketesuck River in Clinton over the summer and fall and it is now operational. Since it has a video camera, it has been added to the table above. We don't have electricity to the fishway yet (hopefully soon!) so early season counts will be done by hand in the trap. Once the power is hooked up, we'll transition to video. More on that project in a future weekly report. The Greenville Fishlift began operation and has passed a few sunfish and perch according to Jeff from Norwich Public Utilities, but they had to shut down Saturday due to high water. With more rain coming, he doesn't expect to re-start it until next week. We have resumed alewife sampling for the Yale University ecological study of Rogers Lake in Old Lyme. About 1,000 Alewives were fin clipped (for genetic identification) and released into the lake late last week. Two more such releases are planned. The glass eel run has started to reach our traps—see data below.

You may recall that a few years ago, there was a petition to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to list the two river herring species (Alewife and Blueback Herring) under the federal Endangered Species Act. After investigating and reviewing the data, NMFS declined to list either species. Last week a court ruled that NMFS must reconsider the decision in respect to Blueback Herring. There has been more data made available in the meantime and NMFS may need to review that information. The ruling was in response to a suit brought by the Pew Foundation and Earthjustice on behalf of stakeholders in Maryland and Delaware, where the species is also in poor condition. I'm sure this will take some time to play out but it will be watched with great interest, particularly here in southern New England where Blueback Herring runs are in really bad shape. On Friday, the DEEP Commissioner extended the total ban on harvesting river herring in Connecticut for another year.

Glass eels- Fishing Brook = 27 glass eels/3 yellow eels; Mill River Eel Trap= not operational yet; Greenville Eel Lift= not operational yet; Lower Millpond (Old Lyme)= 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. I won't be on April 12th but for the rest of the month, we'll be giving updates on the new fish migration season.



Bruce Williams stocking sea-run brown trout smolts into Latimer Brook.



The glass eel run is on. These glass eels are part of a sample taken by Fisheries Division staff at its index station, as required by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Data on numbers, size, pigmentation, and environmental conditions such as water temperature are collected each year and entered into a coast-wide database.