

RIVER HERRING VIEWING GUIDE

Each spring, MILLIONS of river herring migrate into Massachusetts waters, returning to their place of birth to create a new generation!

This guide offers information on fifteen of our states busiest fish passage locations.



Life Cycle of a Herring

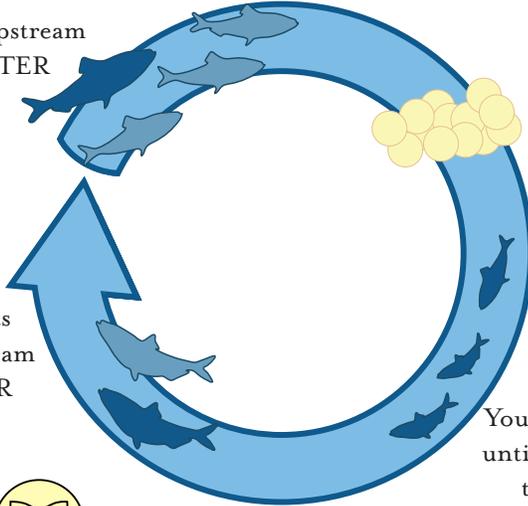


Blueback Herring
Spawn in late April through June when water temperatures reach 57°F



Alewife
Spawn in late March to mid-May, when water temperatures reach 51°F

Adults migrate upstream to FRESHWATER



Egg laying (spawning) happens in the same river they hatched!

Surviving adults migrate downstream to SALTWATER

Young fish stay in freshwater until they are mature enough to migrate to estuaries



estuary, noun. [es-tu-ary]

1. a place where freshwater meets the ocean

What is a “fish ladder”?

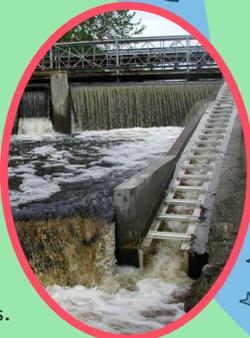


A manmade structure (which often resembles a ladder with steps) that allows fish swimming upstream to get past barriers like dams, waterfalls, and locks.

Weir pools are made up of a series of small pools of regular length to create a long, sloping channel for fish to travel upstream.

River Herring swim very fast in short bursts to pass up the ladder, making for a spectacular show!

Baffle fishways look just like ladders! Examples include Denil and Alaskan Steeppass.



Rainbow Smelt

Smelt spawn at night in freshwater from early March through May. Female rainbow smelt can lay between 5,000 and 80,000 eggs!



American Eel

The only catadromous fish in North America, meaning it lives mostly in freshwater but returns to the ocean to reproduce!

By the numbers...

There are **13** diadromous species in Massachusetts, including river herring, American eels, and rainbow smelt!

Mass DMF designs and installs eel ramps in coastal rivers to assist their upstream migrations. **9** have been installed in Massachusetts since 2007!

There are over **100** separate river herring runs in Massachusetts!

Since 2013, **23,500** river herring have been stocked throughout the region by Mass DMF!



diadromous, adj. [dahy-ad-ruh-muh s]

1. (of fish) migrating between fresh and salt waters.

A Woolen Mill Dam & Fishway
Parker River, Newbury
 This is the 1st of six dams on the Parker River, and each has a fishway to provide passage to the headwaters in Pentucket Pond.



April 15 -
 May 15

B Apple and Pond Street Bridges
Alewife Brook, Essex
 Mass DMF maintains an electronic counting station at Pond Street, with current run counts displayed! Bridges are located just off Western Avenue (Route 22).



April 1 -
 May 1

C Central Falls Dam & Fishway
Aberjona River, Winchester
 The ladder (located off Main Street near Mystic Valley Parkway) was installed in Fall of 2016, providing access to previously inaccessible habitat in Wedge and Horn Ponds.



May 1 -
 June 1

D Mystic Lakes Dam & Fishway
Mystic Lakes, Medford
 River herring are counted using an underwater video camera operated by the Mystic River Watershed Association (*mysticriver.org*)



May 1 -
 June 1

E Watertown Dam & Fishway
Charles River, Watertown
 This is the 2nd of eight dams along the Charles River - Extensive efforts from Mass DMF and other agencies has provided 20 miles of fish passage access to upstream spawning habitats!



May 1 -
 June 15

F Jackson Square Dam & Fishway
Back River, Weymouth
 The weir-pool fishway (built in the 1990's by Mass DMF) is one of seven total fish ladders, spanning 4.8 miles from Boston Harbor to Whitman's Pond.



April 15 -
 May 15

G Barker Street Dam & Fishway
Herring Brook, Pembroke
 Near the Allen and High St. intersection, Herring Brook has more than 347 acres of spawning and nursery habitat. Improved passages have greatly increased fish numbers in the pond!



April 15 -
 May 15

H War Memorial Park Dam & Fishway
Town River, West Bridgewater
 Town River has 354 acres of spawning and nursery habitat available in Lake Nippinicket. Run viewing is best seen on Arch street (between River and Bryant streets)



April 15 -
 May 15

I Oliver Mills Dam & Fishway
Nemasket River, Middleboro
 Located on Nemasket street, just off Rt 44, the river has one of the largest spawning areas in eastern Massachusetts, at more than 5000 acres!



April 1 -
 May 1

J Wareham Street Dam & Fishway
Nemasket River, Middleboro
 Located off the Wareham and Sylvan St. intersection, this large weir-pool ladder was designed and constructed by Mass DMF in 1996.



April 1 -
 May 1

K Jenny Grist Mill Dam & Fishway
Town Brook, Plymouth
 Substantial improvements have been made to the fishway (including the removal of several dams) to boost access. The Mill is located near the intersection of Summer St. and Spring Ln.



April 15 -
 May 15

L Mill Pond Dam & Fishway
Agawam River, Wareham
 More than 500 acres of spawning and nursery habitat are available in the pond and impoundments, which is located just off Rt 6/28 West. Parking is available in the Elk Lodge.



April 1 -
 May 15

M Monument River Fishway
Monument River, Bournedale
 Mass DMF has monitored this run for more than 30 years using electronic and visual counts to estimate population size, which has ranged from 91,000 fish in 1980 to 672,000 in 2000!



April 15 -
 May 30

N Lower Mill Pond Dam & Fishway
Stony Brook, Brewster
 Located near the intersection of Stony Brook and Setucket road, this fishway is described in great detail by John Hay in his book "The Run".



April 15 -
 May 15

O Mill Pond Dam & Fishway
Marstons Mills River, Barnstable
 Fish passage restoration work led by the Town has improved access to Middle and Hamblin ponds.



April 15 -
 May 15



Run Size:

- 10,000 - 20,000 fish
- 20,000 - 50,000 fish
- 100,000 + fish

Travel Information:

- Public Parking
- Street Parking
- Limited Parking
- Group Friendly
- Ideal Viewing Dates

Visit our website:

www.mass.gov/service-details/diadromous-fisheries-project