

## ATLANTIC SALMON FRY STOCKING

Connecticut is involved in an interstate cooperative effort to restore Atlantic salmon to the entire Connecticut River watershed. Salmon were exterminated in the late 1700s when dams were built that prevented salmon from reaching spawning areas. Current restoration efforts focus on the stocking of newly-hatched salmon called fry in the tributaries of the Connecticut River. In the State of Connecticut, the Farmington and Salmon River watersheds are stocked annually. The young salmon spend up to two years in the rivers growing to a length of about 6 -10 inches, and then migrate out to sea. Adult salmon typically spend two years in the ocean before returning to their home rivers to spawn. Returning adult salmon are on average about 30 inches long and weigh about 10 pounds. Currently, all adult salmon returning to the Farmington and Salmon Rivers are captured at the Rainbow and Leesville fishways for broodstock. The fish are held at the Richard Cronin Federal Salmon Holding Facility in Sunderland, Massachusetts until they are ready to spawn in the fall. When they are ready the eggs are stripped-out, fertilized, and incubated to provide the next generation of fry for stocking. The eventual goal of the program is to have sufficient numbers of adult salmon returning to Connecticut to allow for recreational fishing and some natural spawning.

This year the Inland Fisheries Division is scheduled to stock approximately 500,000 salmon fry. Most of the fry will come from the DEEP's Kensington State Hatchery in Kensington, Connecticut. An additional 35,000 fry will come from incubators run by a private foundation, the Tributary Mill Conservancy in Old Lyme, CT. Stocking will occur over a five-week period beginning in mid-April.

Fry are transported to the streams in tanks mounted on trucks, and then the exact number of fry required for each stretch of stream is measured out by weight. The fry are loaded into 5-gallon buckets and given to stockers to be distributed within a given stretch of river. To ensure maximum survival the fry have to be carefully distributed in areas of good habitat. Good salmon fry habitat are stream areas of less than 2 feet deep with moderate currents and a bottom composed of coarse gravel and small cobble. This can be difficult work, requiring stockers to walk through woods and in and along streams carrying buckets of fish and water. Crews of three to twelve people are required for each day of stocking, depending on stream access, stream size, and the number of fry to be stocked.

Considering the Division's current staffing levels and financial constraints this task would not be possible without the help of volunteers. Many individuals and organizations have assisted in previous years. They include the Farmington River Watershed Association, Connecticut River Salmon Association, Farmington River Anglers Association, Connecticut Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association, and the Pequabuck River Watershed Association. Physically fit individuals interested in volunteering weekdays this spring should contact the Inland Fisheries Division immediately. Volunteers need to provide their own transportation, footwear (hipboots or chestwaders are strongly recommended), and lunch. Stocking normally extends from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. For more information please contact: **Bruce Williams, Connecticut/DEP Marine Headquarters, Diadromous Fish Program, P.O. Box 719, Old Lyme CT 06371, (860)447-4317, email: [bruce.williams@ct.gov](mailto:bruce.williams@ct.gov)** , or the **Farmington River Watershed Association, 749 Hopmeadow St. Simsbury, CT 06070, (860)658-4442 Ext '0'**.

**CONTACTS:****Bruce Williams**

Connecticut/DEP –Marine Headquarters

Diadromous Fish Program

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**WHAT TO WEAR:** Dress appropriately for the weather. Stocking will normally continue whether it rains or shines. Dress in layers, which will allow you to add or remove clothes as needed. A change of clothing and extra dry socks will often make the drive home more pleasant. Leaky boots and slipping in the water are fairly common occurrences.

**WHAT TO BRING:** Volunteers should bring their own bag lunch, footwear, and rain gear (if needed). Hipboots or chestwaders are strongly recommended as footwear. Volunteers should be prepared to cross water that is at least knee deep.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Volunteers are expected to provide their own transportation. Volunteers will meet the hatchery truck loaded with fish at one of fourteen rendezvous locations (see back). The usual rendezvous time will be 10 AM. After meeting the stocking crew there may be opportunities to ride with other volunteers or in state vehicles. The amount of time required to stock on any given day will vary, depending on the particular area being stocked. Normally all stocking is completed before 4:00 PM.

## **ATLANTIC SALMON RENDEZVOUS LOCATIONS:**

- 1 - Commuter parking lot next to the Congregational Church, Rt.189 North Granby**
- 2 - Friendly Ice Cream, parking lot, Rt.4 & 177, Unionville**
- 3 - Mallory Brook Plaza (parking lot for Movie Theater and Tractor Supply Co.), Rt.44, Winsted (previously the Ames Shopping Center)**
- 4 - Lost Acres Volunteer Fire Dept/Post Office, Rt.20, West Granby**
- 5 - New commuter parking lot at the junction of Rt.44 and Rt.179 in Canton, diagonally across from the Saybrook Fish House.**
- 6 - little park on the downstream side of the Rt.20 bridge over the Farmington River in Riverton, opposite the Hitchcock Chair Store**
- 7 - dirt pull-off on the south side of Rt.4 just west of the junction with Rt.179 in Burlington**
- 8 - Tuber put-in at Satan's Kingdom Recreation Area, Rt.44, New Hartford**
- 9 - Town Park (Callahan Park) on the downstream side of the Rt.219 bridge in New Hartford**
- 10 - Anglers Parking area on the downstream side of the Rt.318 (Steel) bridge in Pleasant Valley (Church Pool Area)**
- 11 - Rockwell Park, near Rt.72, Bristol (in parking lot across the river from swimming ponds)**
- 12 - Comstock Covered Bridge, Rt.16, Colchester**
- 13 - Commuter parking lot, Rt.149, Colchester (Exit 16 off Rt.2)**
- 14 - DEP Eastern District H.Q., Rt.66, Marlborough**