Herring Observations in the Aberjona (2019)

This season, a small group made observations in Horn Pond Brook and the Aberjona River, mainly to see if herring were moving through the underground culvert by Winchester High School into the upper Aberjona.

Here are the observations:

This year, we saw fish in the upper Aberjona, upstream of the culvert, but fewer fish than in 2018. *(When the new culvert was installed under the field, the Conservation permit required that skylight openings be placed in the top allowing shafts of sunlight to attract migrating fish, which would open upriver habitat. Elaine)* In 2018 there were lower flows in Horn Pond Brook, so maybe the herring were more willing to explore the Aberjona and go through the culvert that year. Also, there was more cloud cover in 2019, so maybe the fish did not go up the culvert this year because the culvert was darker in 2019 compared to 2018. This is the second year we have seen herring in the upper Aberjona.

Herring seem to travel quickly. We saw them shortly after they appeared in the Upper Mystic. The days that herring were observed in the upper Aberjona coincided with the days of peak counts at the Mystic Lake Dam, which was on 05/22 and 06/03.

This year was characterized by rain, cloud cover, and high flows in Horn Pond Brook and the Aberjona. The rain and clouds sometimes made observation difficult. Wedge Pond was flowing downstream and was not observed to be flowing upstream.

Sue Brown (with input from others) made a great spreadsheet that captures our observations. You can see it here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vhfff7-txJL1zU8Hgv69c2o5ja19OfoKqqXKR9H9zVE/edit?usp=sharing

Other Herring News

The Mystic River Watershed Association estimates that 642,000 herring used the fish ladder at the Mystic Lakes Dam. This is slightly more than 2018 and about the same as 2017. Many thanks to MyRWA for their work and support.

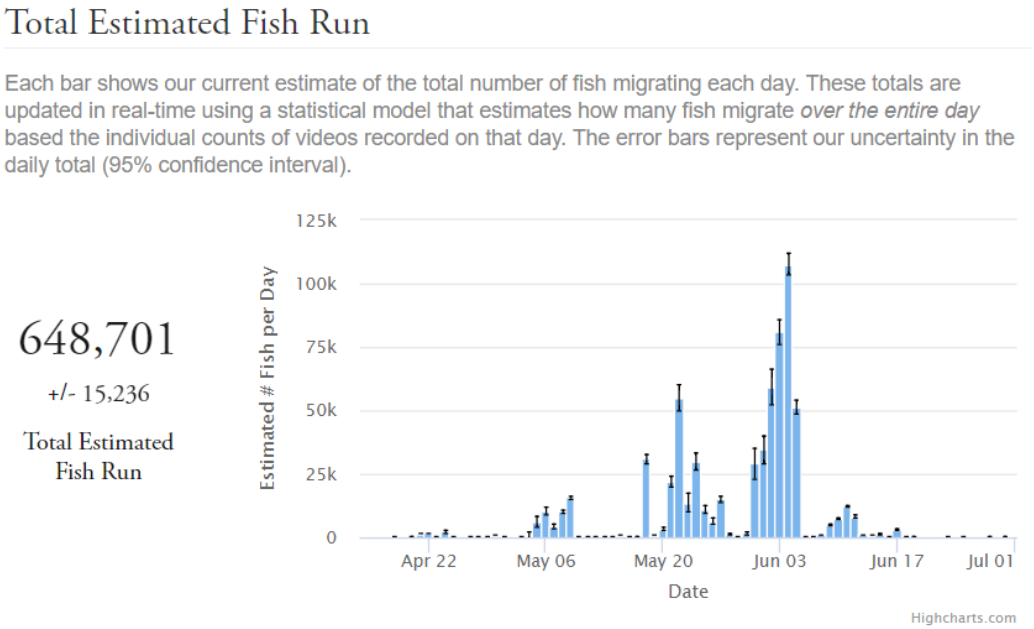
Data from Winchester's fish ladder and from Horn Pond Brook will be available later this year. Also, scientists from MIT and the Division of Marine Fisheries conducted a

study tracking some herring that were outfitted with acoustical pingers. Results will be ready later this year.

Photographers flocked to Winchester to take fantastic photos of herons and other birds feasting on the fish. It has become a destination for the photographers. *(We hope to use this migration to create an event - attract tourists, and couple it with public art, now that we have a designated cultural district. Elaine)*

Save the Date: The annual River Herring Network meeting will be on October 17. Up north this time, at the Andover Public Library, usually the meeting is on the Cape. It's an interesting day for all things herring.

Here's a chart from the Mystic River Watershed Association for 2019 from the count at the Mystic Lake Dam. Check out Mysticherring.org for more info.



Also, we are taking a look at locating an information kiosk about the migration run, since it generates a lot of interest. Here is the information - we are working on

how to do it and where, with review from the Design Review Committee and others. The project objective is **t**o inform the public of the CFD fish ladder, the Mystic River herring migration and the importance of reopening herring habitat to the ecosystem.

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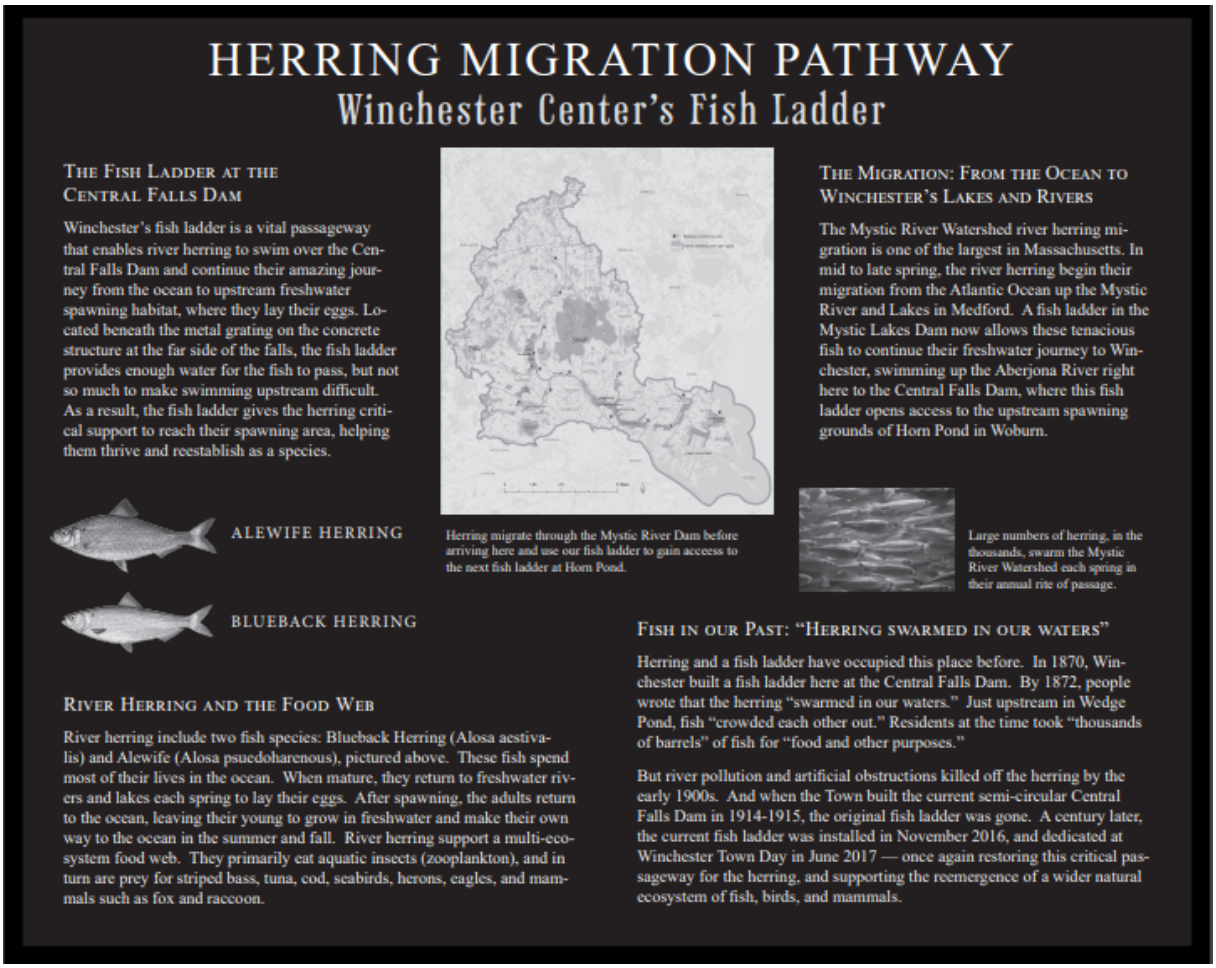

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