

Shad Facts: Did You Know?

- Adult American shad return to the Connecticut River in April and May when azaleas and shad bushes bloom in the valley and the river temperature is above 40°F.
- In the spring, male shad tend to return to the river first.
- The adults weigh about 5 pounds but female shad are usually bigger than male shad.
- The adult shad do not eat in freshwater once they have been to the ocean.
- The shad returns in the Connecticut River peak when river temperature is 67°F.
- Shad are four or more years old when they return to spawn.
- One female shad produces about 250,000 eggs over time in May, June and July.
- About half of Connecticut River shad die after spawning having used up all of their energy reserves.
- Shad will spawn their eggs directly into the mainstem Connecticut River.
- The eggs hatch within a few days.
- Shad have a larval form that changes into a fish form after about a month.
- The juveniles grow near where they hatch and then they migrate to the ocean when the river temperature falls below 60°F.

Shad Party!!

Folks in Lambertville, NJ celebrate the return of shad with a big town festival held the last week of April every spring.

Shad Geography

- Connecticut River shad have traveled thousands of miles by the time they return having migrated seasonally between the Gulf of Maine and Cape Hatteras.
- The historic in-river range of shad is from Long Island Sound to Bellows Falls, VT.
- Because shad have trouble getting over the Turners Falls dam, some are trucked & released upstream near both Brattleboro, VT and Hinsdale, NH.

The most shad ever recorded at the Holyoke fish lift is 720,000 in 1992.

Shad Business News

- Over 4,000 people fish for shad just in Massachusetts every year—mostly in the months of May and June.
- The local economy receives about \$45 for every shad caught by an angler in a boat and \$22.50 for every shad caught by an angler from shore. This is based on how much the angler spends on equipment, gasoline, coffee, etc. This makes shad returns worth hundreds of thousands, even millions of dollars locally.
- All this, and the historic commercial fishery for shad still exists in CT.

To find out how many shad have returned to the Connecticut River, call the Fish Hotline:
413-548-9628