

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE CHARLES RIVER HERRING COUNT!

IN THIS PRESENTATION WE WILL COVER:

- ALL ABOUT CRWA
- **RIVER HERRING AN ECOLOGICAL MIRACLE**
- **STATEWIDE MONITORING EFFORTS**
- FISH MONITORING 101
- FINDING YOUR SHIFT & GETTING STARTED





# Our History

Since 1965, Charles River Watershed Association has been the voice of the river.





## **OUR MISSION**

To protect, restore, and enhance the Charles River and its watershed through science, advocacy, and the law.

We develop science-based strategies to increase resilience, protect public health, and promote environmental equity as we confront a changing climate.

## **Our Watershed**

## THE RIVER THAT CONNECTS US

THE CHARLES FLOWS 80 MILES FROM HOPKINTON TO BOSTON HARBOR



🔊 CAMBRIDGE

BOSTON

MILFORD

HOPKINTON

MEDFIELD

DEDHAM

### WATERSHED

308 SQUARE MILES 35 CITIES & TOWNS HOME TO 1 MILLION PEOPLE



## **Climate Resilience**

Advocating for nature-based solutions, climate-smart development, and regional adaptation efforts to protect our communities and ecosystems from the impacts of climate change.

## **River Science**

Collecting robust water quality data to understand the health of our river, advocate for effective cleanup and restoration strategies, and protect public health.





## **River Restoration**

Removing defunct dams, tackling invasive species, daylighting streams, and more to restore natural ecology and build climate resilience.

### Education & Outreach

Informing and supporting community members to advocate for laws, policies, and behaviors that build community resilience and promote well-being for all.

## Stormwater Solutions

Curbing stormwater pollution with green infrastructure and stronger stormwater regulations to achieve a clean river.





## **River Restoration**

Charles River Watershed Association

Removing defunct dams, tackling invasive species, daylighting streams, and more to restore natural ecology and build climate resilience.

ORICE

## WHY RESTORE HERRING?

- ABUNDANT IN NEW ENGLAND RIVERS
- ANADROMOUS FISH, SPENDING LIFE AT SEA AND SPAWNING IN RIVERS FROM MARCH TO JUNE
- ECOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT! IMPORTANT PART OF FOOD WEB:
  - STRIPED BASS, COD, BLUEFIN TUNA, OSPREY, LOONS, HERONS, BALD EAGLES, EGRETS AND MORE RELY ON FOR FOOD
- INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:
  - VITAL TO NIPMUC, MASSACHUSETT, + WAMPANOAG PEOPLE FOR FOOD, ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS, AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL





## **MEET THE MIGRATORY FISH:**



American Shad (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

American Shad Alosa sapidissima

Eastern North America. With sleek,

spots, they can grow to be two feet

silver scales, and a row of black

long and often travel in large

schools.

American Shad are the most

abundant anadromous fish in



Alewife Herring (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



Blueback Herring (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



Rainbow Smelt (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

#### Rainbow Smelt Osmerus mordax

The Rainbow Smelt is the first diadromous fish to arrive in the Charles River in mid-March. Small, slender, silver fish, Rainbow Smelt used to return to the Charles River by the millions each spring and were caught by the barrelful in the 1800s.



Atlantic Salmon (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

Atlantic Salmon Salmo salar

Atlantic Salmon, known as the king of fish, numbered in the hundreds of thousands in New England's coastal rivers, including the Charles River.

However, the legacy of dams, industrial pollution, and overfishing have caused the extinction of the wild Atlantic Salmon population in the Charles River.

Alewife Herring Alosa pseudoharengus

> Alewife herring are a key species in the Charles River ecosystem. With a silver back and blue-green undertones, these small, swift fish dart upstream to spawn before returning to the sea for most of their adult lives.

#### Blueback Herring Alosa aestivalis

Blueback Herring, like alewife herring, return from the sea each spring. With blue-green backs and silvery, metallic scales underneath, Blueback Herring are found across the Atlantic coast, but are a species of concern.

## MIGRATION FROM SEA TO FRESH WATER:

<1% of fish species are diadromous



### HERRING LIFE CYCLE ALEWIFE + BLUEBACK SPECIES

### **HERRING MIGRATION: ORIGINS**

Each Spring, the Charles River historically welcomed **hundreds of thousands of migratory fish** from the depths of the ocean to the river's numerous lakes, ponds, and tributaries to spawn.

American Shad, Blueback Herring, Alewives, Rainbow Smelt, White Perch, Striped Bass, American Eel; diadromous fish species enjoyed ample, rich habitat with cool, flowing waters to begin their life.

**BEFORE COLONIZATION,** the Charles River flowed freely and Indigenous ancestors relied on its vibrant population of migratory fish, maintaining a productive fish weir just above the head-of-tide where the free-flowing Charles River met the Boston Harbor at what is now Watertown Square.

### DAMS POWER INDUSTRY

In 1623, Governor Winthrop granted colonists the right to build their own fish weir and **prevented Indigenous people from using it,** an act of systemic oppression to make room for the burgeoning settler population and industry.

s River Falls, Watertown, Mass.

In 1634, the fish weir was replaced with a stone dam, and a dam has remained in its place ever since. Over its long history, various industries including grist mills, a sawmill, a cotton mill, a foundry, and even Bakers Chocolate Company were built around Watertown Dam and used it as a source of hydropower.

#### 1709.

AN ACT to prevent Nuisances by Hedges, Wears, and ot the passage of Fish in Rivers

(Page 162, ch. 3.) Be it enacted, That garths, stakes, kiddles, or other disturbance or set, erected or made, on or across any river, to

[4TH SESS.] PROVINCE LAWS.-1741-42. 1087 178 CHAPTER 16. AN ACT IN ADDITION TO AN ACT MADE TO PREVENT THE DESTRUC-TION OF THE FISH CALLED ALEWIVES, AND OTHER FISH. WHEREAS, notwithstanding the several acts made for the preserva- Preamble. tion of the fish, and to give them free passage up and down the rivers, 1735-36, chap. 21. in their seasons, yet, by reason of the many dams erected, and often erecting across such rivers and streams where the several sorts of Whereas - in and b fish pass up into the natural ponds to cast their spawns, said fish are diverted in their passage, to the great decay and ruin of such fishery,-Be it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governour, Council and Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, [SECT. 1.] That whosoever shall hereafter erect or build any dam Passage in dams o be kept oven across any such river or stream where the salmon, shad, alewives or to be kept obtained

other fish usually pass up into the natural ponds, to cast their spawn, the proper seashall make a sufficient passage-way for the fish to pass up such river or 5 pick, 204, stream, through or round such dam, and shall keep it open, for the free 7 Cush. 101. passage of the fish, from the first day of April to the last day of May, annually; and all the owners or occupants of any mill-dam, or other dams heretofore erected and made across any such river or stream where the fish can't conveniently pass over, shall make a sufficient way, either round or through such dam, for the passage of such fish, at or before the first day of September next, and after that to keep such passage-way open from the first day of April to the last day of May, annually, on pain that every person offending, in any of the particulars aforesaid, shall Penalty. forfeit and pay the sum of fifty pounds for each offence.

AN ACT IN ADDITION T OF AN ACT, MADE A. D. ONE THOUSAND TITLED, "AN ACT TO PASSAGE WAYS FOR OTHER FISH, UP NE. EFFECTUAL PROVISIO

said fish were to be m of the said river to which was the dam a the dam at Daniel Le ways over the two day for the purpose for w. Be it enacted by th tives in General Cou. the same, That such vision for the passing Andrew Gillespie an they are, hereby repe

### **EARLY REGULATIONS AIM TO PROTECT FISH PASSAGE**

Beginning in **1709**, the first dam regulations were enacted to "prevent nuisances by hedges, wares, and other incumbrances obstructing the passage of fish in rivers." In 1727, the law was strengthened with a penalty to fine dam owners for failing to provide ample fish passage. In 1740, "An Act to Prevent the Destruction of Fish Called Alewives" was enacted to explicitly require dam owners to provide passage for river herring.

However, with the explosion of dams across New England and their role as the main economic engine for the Industrial **Revolution, regulations to protect** migratory fish species often went unenforced.



Figure 1. Historical dams and resulting timelines of habitat loss (inset graphs) from eight watersheds in New England. The black points depict earlier dams (1630–1718), and the white points represent later dams (1845–1900). The lighter watersheds are southern New England habitat; the darker watersheds are northern New England habitat. Northern New England watersheds include the Androscoggin, the Kennebec, and the Penobscot. Dams were classified using natural breaks (Jenks) and projected using Massachusetts State Plane 2001. HABITAT LOSS ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Mattocks et al (2017), *Bioscience*. 67(8).



## **Commercial landings river herring**



Commercial Landings (lb)







#### **HERRING & ALEWIVES DECLARED EXTINCT**

By 1920, American Shad and Alewives, two of the most populous native migratory fish species, **were declared extinct in the Charles River.** 

The first Alewife fishery in Massachusetts to go extinct, the possibility of their return was deemed remote in a study from the Division of Fisheries & Game. Their sharp decline was attributed to industrial pollution and the significant obstruction of dams in the Charles River.

### HERRING SURVIVE, BUT POPULATIONS STILL IN DECLINE DUE TO DEFUNCT DAMS

American Shad and Alewives did not go extinct, thanks to the **considerable cleanup and restoration of the Charles River.** But, today, aging, functionless dams persist, obstructing the free passage of vital migratory fish species. Stagnant Water Stagnant Water Low Dissolved Oxygen Death of Aquatic Life

ATATATA

Sediment Accumulates Excess Nutrients Invasive Plant Growth

Temperatures Rise

Cyanobacteria Blooms

Evaporation

## DAMS DESTROY RIVER ECOSYSTEM



Fish Passage Blocked
 No Spawning Habitat
 Fish Predation

Rushing Water Erosion Thermal Pollution



### CLIMATE CHANGE IS BRINGING NEW CHALLENGES FOR MIGRATORY FISH

The climate crisis brings additional threats—extreme heat, drought, and sea-level rise. Migratory fish face warmer waters + lower streamflow, which can cause catastrophic fish kills. As sea levels rise + saltwater intrudes further inland, the critical freshwater spawning habitat is restricted even further.



---Robert Kearns

Climate Resilience Specialist

## REMOVING DEFUNCT DAMS

### SOUTH NATICK DAM

Town voted to remove the dam in 2022!



DAMS ON THE MAINSTEM RIVER

### WATERTOWN DAM

First barrier to fish passage







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## THE DAM REMOVAL MOVEMENT

We are building momentum to remove failing, defunct mill dams to **restore fish passage and heal the river ecosystem** for the entire eighty miles of the Charles River, starting with Watertown Dam.

## BY COUNTING FISH, YOU HELP US ADVOCATE FOR RIVER RESTORATION!

#### MONITORS CONDUCT 10-MINUTE OBSERVATIONS

DATA COLLECTED & ANALYZED BY CRWA & DMF

RESULTS INFORM ADVOCACY FOR DEFUNCT DAM REMOVAL!



COUNTING IN THE MYSTIC RIVER



STATEWIDE MONITORING EFFORTS

The Charles is one of many important fish spawning areas in MA!



## MarineFisheries Commonwealth of Massachusetts



### **John Sheppard**

Research Biologist MA Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF)

#### A REVIEW OF RIVER HERRING COUNTING PROGRAMS IN MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL STREAMS







### John Sheppard

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Diadromous Fisheries Biology, Management and Restoration Project

> MarineFisheries Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Presented at the Charles River Watershed Association (April 3, 2024)

### OUTLINE

- 1. OVERVIEW
- 2. PRINCIPLES FOR CONDUCTING VISUAL COUNTS
- 3. SAMPLING DESIGNS FOR STATISTICAL TREATMENT
- 4. MA DMF VISUAL COUNTING PROGRAM
- 5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**
- 6. CASE STUDIES
- 7. DATA LIMITATIONS



High school students participate in counting river herring in the Shawsheen River (Spring 2017)

#### 1. OVERVIEW



#### MA River Herring Monitoring Summary (2023)

- 48 streams counted in 2023 (9 watersheds, incl. CT River)
- By method:

Visual = 30 (63%)
Electronic = 13 (27%)
Video = 4 (8%)
Lift = 1 (2%)

- 90% of streams monitored by citizen scientists or with assistance by citizen scientists in 2023
- Volunteers:
  - Municipalities Middleborough-Lakeville Herring Commission
    - Pembroke Herring Fisheries Commission Town River Fisheries Commission
  - Watershed Associations North & South River Watershed Association Mystic River Watershed Association
  - NGO's
    - Association to Preserve Cape Cod Barnstable Clean Water Coalition Buzzards Bay Coalition
  - Private Organizations Alewives Anonymous

#### 2. PRINCIPLES FOR CONDUCTING VISUAL COUNTS

Rideout, S.G., J.E. Johnson, and C.F. Cole. 1979. Periodic counts for estimating the size of spawning population of alewives, Alosa pseudoharengus (Wilson). Estuaries 2(2): 119-123.



#### 2. PRINCIPLES FOR CONDUCTING VISUAL COUNTS: COUNTING LOCATION



A. Total population estimate

B. Escapement estimate

#### C. Restoration response

#### **3. SAMPLING DESIGNS FOR STATISTICAL TREATMENT**



Nelson, G.A. 2006. A Guide to Statistical Sampling for the Estimation of River Herring Run Size Using Visual Counts. Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Technical Report 25, Gloucester.

#### 4. MA DMF COUNTING PROGRAM (VISUCOUNT)

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	Rel	mences	
	Unit's Manual Mela	1907.3991	
Data Processing	Survey Design	Data Analysis	Export to DMF
Data Detry	Design Draty	Court Data	Epot
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ount Data Entry	Press T	ab or Enter Key After Each Entry
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Date (e.g., 61/01(2010):	Name:	_
Start Time (e.g., 14:30):	End Time (e.g., 14:30):	Count:
Water Temp (Celsius):	Air Temp (Celtaius):	Weather:
Commente:		1 = 0% (Sould Source) 2 = 1% (Sould Source) 2 = 3% (Source) 3 = 3% (Source) 4 = 21% (Source) 5 = 7% (Source) 6 = Source) 7 = Ref(Source) 7 = Source) 8 = Source) 9 =
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#### **INPUT DATA**

REQUIRED

1.DATE 2.START TIME 3.END TIME 4.COUNT OPTIONAL

NAME
 WATER TEMP
 AIR TEMP
 WEATHER CODE
 COMMENTS

#### 4. MA DMF COUNTING PROGRAM (cont.)

#### **Example: Herring River, Wellfleet (2012 – 2023)**



#### Herring River Wellfleet

Year	First.Day	Last.Day	Length	Missing	Count.Days	One.Sample	P.Start	P.End
2012	77	145	69	0	69	1	07:00	19:00
2013	81	151	71	8	63	4	07:00	19:00
2014	91	147	57	0	57	2	07:00	19:00
2015	91	145	55	0	55	1	07:00	19:00
2016	87	148	62	0	62	1	07:00	19:00
2017	91	151	61	0	61	1	07:00	19:00
2018	91	150	60	0	60	0	07:00	19:00
2019	91	151	61	0	61	0	07:00	19:00
2020	86	152	67	0	67	4	07:00	20:00
2021	88	152	65	1	64	2	06:00	20:00
2022	80	156	77	0	77	0	07:00	19:00
2023	91	151	61	0	61	0	07:00	19:00

#### 4. MA DMF COUNTING PROGRAM (cont.)

#### **Example: Herring River, Wellfleet (2012 – 2023)**



Estimated daily counts (DOY: 91 - 145)

Estimated run sizes (DOY: 91 – 145)

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

FROM NELSON (2006)

- 1. PROGRAMS FOLLOW A 2-WAY STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLING DESIGN
- 2. VOLUNTEERS MAKE 3 10-MINUTE COUNTS DURING EACH OF THREE DAILY PERIODS
  - i.e.) 7am 11am 11am – 3pm 3pm – 7pm
- 3. CONDUCT COUNTS DAILY THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE SPRING SPAWNING RUN
  - i.e.) APRIL 1 MID-JUNE



Massachusetts River Herring Network annual meeting (October 15, 2015)

#### **6. CASE STUDIES**

#### Mystic River (Medford, MA)

- Time series: 2013 2023, minus 2020 (10 years)
- Run size estimation:
  - Location: Upper Mystic Lake ladder
  - Volunteer visual count
  - 2-way, 3-period stratified sampling design
  - Mean counts/day: 9 (3 per 4-hr. period)
- Consistent sampling intensity and design
- Counting augmented by video monitoring
- Potential for inclusion into ASMFC coast-wide stock assessment











#### 6. CASE STUDIES (cont.)

#### Nemasket River (Middleborough, MA)

- Time series: 2005 2023 (19 years)
- Run size estimation:
  - Location: Wareham Street ladder
  - Volunteer visual count (Town appointed Herring Wardens, MLHC)
  - 2-way, 2-period stratified sampling design
  - Mean counts/day: 6.4 (3.2 per 6-hr. period)
- Consistent sampling intensity and design
- Abundance data supplemented with biological sampling data
- Included into ASMFC coast-wide stock assessment (2017)









#### 6. CASE STUDIES (cont.)

#### Marstons Mills River (Marstons Mills, MA)

- Time series: 2012 2023, minus 2020 (11 years)
- Run size estimation:
  - Location: Mill Pond
  - Volunteer visual count
  - 2-way, 3-period stratified sampling design
  - Mean counts/day: 9 (3 per 4-hr. period)
- Consistent sampling intensity and design
- Candidate for inclusion into ASMFC coast-wide stock assessment







#### 7. DATA LIMITATIONS

- The estimates are not true population estimates indices of abundance
   12-hr daily observation period
- 2. The counts may not account for changes in phenology

  Changes in spawning migratory patterns over time in MA coastal rivers (Legett et al. 2021; Dalton et al. 2022)
- 3. The counts may not account for changes in diel migration patterns
   i.e.) early morning/evening movements
- 4. Difficulty maintaining consistent count metrics
- 5. Difficulty maintaining volunteer involvement

## **THANK YOU**

- USFWS (CNEFRO & CTRO)
- Association to Preserve Cape Cod
- North & South River Watershed Association
- Buzzards Bay Coalition
- NOAA Restoration Center
- Massachusetts River Herring Network
- Municipal Wardens & DNR Personnel
- Watershed Associations
- Barnstable Clean Water Coalition
- VOLUNTEERS!!

https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/om/tr-25.pdf www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



## FISH MONITORING 101

How to participate in the herring count!





## FISH MONITORING METHODOLOGY



APR 15 - JUN 30 | WATERTOWN DAM

**VOLUNTEERS FOLLOW DMF PROTOCOL** 

**10-MINUTE MONITORING SHIFTS - EACH IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ACCURACY!** 

OBSERVATIONS MADE AT SAME LOCATION - ONLY COUNT FROM VIEWING PLATFORM

COUNT OF ZERO IS STILL USEFUL! EVEN IF YOU DON'T SEE FISH, IT IS IMPORTANT TO STILL RECORD.





## WHAT SUPPLIES DO I NEED?



## WHEN YOU PREPARE TO MONITOR, BE SURE YOU HAVE:

- CLICKER
- TIMER
- POLARIZED SUNGLASSES
- CELL PHONE TO RECORD DATA

## THESE SUPPLIES CAN BE FOUND IN THE BOX ON SITE!





STEP 1: ARRIVE AT WATERTOWN DAM!

**NAVIGATE TO:** 42 California St. Watertown, MA 02472 Free 2-hour parking; be careful crossing the street!



## **STEP 2: WALK TO THE MONITORING LOCATION**

**VIEWING PLATFORM ABOVE THE FISH LADDER!** Walk to end of path between fences, move back temporary fence to access box.





### **STEP 2: UNLOCK THE BOX!**

CODE: 4641





## **DETAILS ON NEXT SLIDE...**

### **STEP 3: COUNT FISH!!!**

**VIEWING PLATFORM ABOVE THE FISH LADDER!** Count fish that go upstream over the white board, from right to left, in ten minutes.





## **1. SET CLICKER TO 0**

## 2. SET TIMER TO 10-MINS

3. START COUNTING! ONLY COUNT FISH MOVING UPSTREAM

4. COUNT FOR 10-MINS

### **STEP 3: COUNT FISH!!!**

**VIEWING PLATFORM ABOVE THE FISH LADDER!** Count fish that go upstream over the white board, from right to left, in ten minutes.

## Watertown Dam Fish Count

Electronic form for entering visual counts at Watertown Dam, 2024

lkumpf@crwa.org Switch account

Not shared

\* Indicates required question

#### CLICK HERE >>>

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAI pQLSdeSyPUZe4cSd0GS2K5DdLFt5BA0RZO pKKvWQkXNkHxAbRURQ/viewform

STEP 4: RECORD YOUR RESULTS!

#### **USE CRWA'S DATA SHEET!**

With your phone, use QR code or link above to open the data form. DATA TO RECORD:

## 1. DATE & TIME

## 2. # OF FISH

## 3. AIR & WATER TEMP FROM THERMOMETER

## 4. WEATHER & NOTES



### STEP 4: RECORD YOUR RESULTS!

#### **USE CRWA'S DATA SHEET!**

Record count, air and water temperature, date & time, and weather!



# STEP 5: CLEANUP & RETURN SUPPLIES

Return materials to box, lock box to fence, close temporary fence, take your belongings with you!

## SIGN UP FOR YOUR SHIFT!

## Sign up online!







 Scroll to the bottom of the herring count page and click the "Schedule Now" Button



Email Lisa Kumpf, <a href="https://www.lkanow.com">lkumpf@crwa.org</a> with questions!

♥ Charles River Herring Count —	× 👜 Book a	in Appointment w	rith Cha 🗙 🕂										-	٥	×
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Watertown Dam, Charles River Greenway, Watertown, MA.	12:00 PM			01:00 PM			02:00 PM			03:00 PM					

4. Fill out required information and hit "Book Appointment"

## 3. Navigate to the desired date to see available times and click what one you want

♥ Charles River Herring Count —	× 🖻 Book an Appointment with Chi x +
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BOOK APPOINTMENT	Count Fish > Lisa Kumpf > Apr 15, 08:00 AM > Info > Complete
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Charles River Greenway,	BOOKING NOTES
	✓ Book Appointment

Email Lisa Kumpf, <a>Ikumpf@crwa.org</a> with questions!

5. Click the "Book Again" button or repeat steps 1-4 to fill another timeslot!



## Email Lisa Kumpf, <a href="https://www.lkanow.com">lkumpf@crwa.org</a> with questions!



## VISIT: www.crwa.org/fish-count



## Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) Volunteer Waiver

## SCAN ME

Please complete this waiver if you intend to participate in a volunteer opportu the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA). A separate waiver should b https://forms.gle/FzXY594b1J5Kdrth9 for each individual in your party. One adult will need to fill out a separate waiver for any minor(s) in your party.

## REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE!

Everyone must sign CRWA's Volunteer Waiver! Youth may participate with an adult.

## SAFETY & TIPS

Reminder to sign waiver!





## HAPPY MONITORING!

## **QUESTIONS? NEED TO CHANGE YOUR SHIFT?**

Email Lisa Kumpf, <u>lkumpf@crwa.org</u> !