Migratory Fish Restoration

How much river restoration for migratory fish has been done?

Alewife photo by: B. Gratwicke www.dcnature.com

River herring access has been restored to 42% of their historical distribution within the mainstems of the major rivers in the Piscataqua Region. This represents substantial progress in meeting PREP's goal of restoring 50% of the historical distribution of river herring by 2020.

EXPLANATION Major efforts are underway to restore river herring access to their historical freshwater streams and ponds in order to support recovery of their populations. Figure 20.1 shows the miles of freshwater in the main branch of each major river that was historically accessible to herring, and how many miles of that habitat are currently accessible. There is 100% access to main-stem sections of the Winnicut, Exeter, and Cocheco Rivers but less than 30% access in all other rivers. Overall, river herring access has been restored to 42% of their historical distribution within the main stems of the region's major rivers (Figure 20.2). This represents substantial progress in meeting PREP's goal of restoring 50% of the historical distribution of river herring by 2020.

Winnicut River Fish Passage, Greenland, NH. Photo by: C. Lentz.

Why This Matters

Dams and road crossings of streams often block migratory fish from swimming upstream to reproduce and safely downstream to grow in the estuary and ocean, limiting their populations.

PREP GOAL **Restore native diadromous fish access to 50 percent of their historical mainstem river distribution range by 2020.**

FIGURE 20.1 Mainstem stream miles accessible to river herring in major rivers of the Piscataqua Region

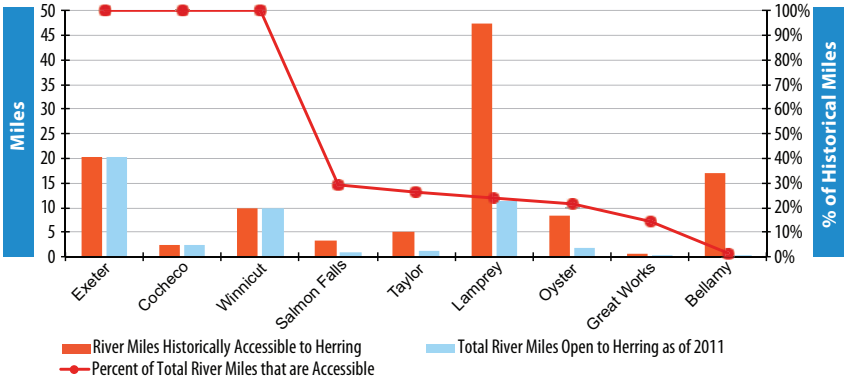
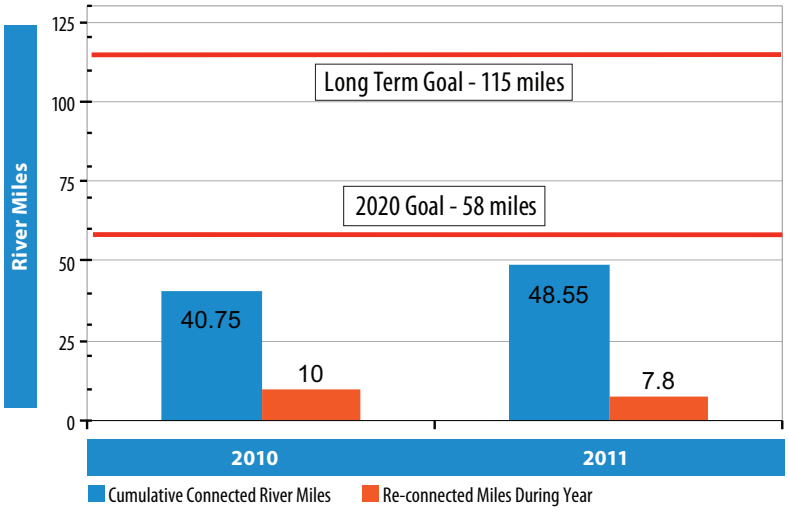


FIGURE 20.2 Upstream river miles re-connected for migratory herring on the mainstems of major rivers



Newly installed Wiswall Fish Ladder on the Lamprey River, Durham, NH. Photo by D. Cedarholm

Success Story

Returning Fish after 200 Years

Thanks to leadership from the Town of Durham, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, migratory fish from the Great Bay Estuary are now swimming upstream to habitat in the Lamprey River that they have been blocked from reaching for over 200 years. Access to at least 7.8 miles of the Lamprey River was restored by constructing a fish passage ladder over the Wiswall Dam in Durham, with initial estimates of 14,000-26,000 fish getting past the ladder in the first year.