

River Herring Monitoring in NH

NH Fish and Game is seeking volunteers to take action and help monitor annual river herring returns on the Exeter River.

CONTACT:

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Each year New Hampshire Fish and Game biologists open the Department's seven fishways at the beginning of April to monitor the annual spring spawning runs of anadromous fish, such as river Herring (Alewives and Blueback herring) and American Shad, in six coastal and estuarine river systems along the coast of New Hampshire.



This year Fish and Game is seeking volunteers from early April through the end of May to help count river herring migrating upstream in the Exeter River. These counts will help Fish and Game to estimate the annual returns of herring.

Volunteers are needed that can commit to doing 10-minute visual counts, ideally several times a week. Visual time counts will be conducted 7 days a week, 6 to 9 times a day, between the hours of 7am and 7pm in downtown Exeter. No previous experience is needed and training will be provided prior to the annual spring spawning run.

The removal of the Great Dam in Exeter improved access for river herring to over 7 miles of potential spawning habitat in the lower Exeter River. Each spring, herring can be seen swimming up the ledges where the old dam once stood as they run a gauntlet of ospreys, herons, sea gulls, cormorants, and other predators. Monitoring the return of herring is essential for developing management strategies that can help restore anadromous fish to a level of abundance that will enable them to fully utilize historical spawning habitat.

If interested, please contact the Marine Fisheries Division at (603) 868-1095 or at Reg3@wildlife.nh.gov and get signed up to help count river herring.