



Old Mystic, CT Alewife River Herring Count Protocol

Waiver Form

Please make sure you have signed the Waiver Form. If you are under 18, please have your parents sign it, too. <https://forms.wix.com/f/7174509469097787694>

To understand alewife, their behavior, and why our count (even if we find no alewife) is critical to NE Fisheries Management, please view CT-DEEP biologist Kevin Job's slideshow with youtube narration.

<https://www.alliancemrw.org/alewife-river-herring>

Monitoring Schedule

Monitoring will take place from **March 1 to May 31**. Volunteers are asked to visit the monitoring site as often as possible. To create a more randomized sampling approach, volunteers are not assigned a specific time of day in which to collect data. However, we must spread our effort out over the spawning period and times of day to get a better understanding of the dynamics of river herring migratory/spawning runs in the Mystic River. To facilitate this, we encourage volunteers to coordinate their sampling effort with one another and will maintain a tentative survey schedule to help with this. April Sign-Up Linked here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/19EDwXanIpmuBsw6-568Djbp5OMziquo8xlGSS4JN7_E/edit?usp=sharing

What to wear and what to bring

Safety first! Dress for all weather conditions and wear bright clothing to make yourself visible to motorists. Make sure someone knows where you are headed and bring a partner if possible.

Bring your cellphone for both 10-15 minute timing and also if you want to enter data directly into the ArcGIS Survey123 app. You could also use a watch and record data on a worksheet to take home.

Where to go, where to park, where to count (see videos)

Enter Old Mystic United Methodist Church (44 Main Street, Old Mystic, CT)

into your navigation app, or find it on a map. Park behind this large white church with 4 large columns by entering on the right side of the building. Go right as you walk back out of the lot and cross into Memorial Park using the crosswalk at the stop sign.

At the site

1. Find the box at the base of the flagpole. It contains:
 - A Celsius – Fahrenheit Conversion Table
 - Pencil
 - Calendar
 - Copy of this protocol
 - Paper worksheets to fill in data in case you need to enter it at home
2. Carefully pull up the thermometer at the end of the rope. You can read it in Fahrenheit on the left or Celsius on the right. Gently lower it back in, and make sure that it is submerged.
 - a. **If no one has yet entered the temperature in your time block** (morning, midday, evening) on the calendar in the box, please write in the Celsius reading.
3. Find a way to minimize glare and increase your ability to see into the water. Fish will be easiest to see against the light background boards. Observe the area for 10 minutes looking for movement in the water or across the white boards. You might find that the polarized lenses (in the box) help with glare at certain times of the day.

What do alewife look like and how do you distinguish them from other fish?

They are 10-12 inches long and narrow. They swim in schools, usually, though you may see “scouts” moving alone or in very small groups. Darker on the top and silvery on the sides. This means they might be hard to spot! That’s why we have put boards on the bottom, to assist you in picking them out. There will be a clicker in the box to help keep count.

Generally, the other fish like trout or shad are bigger and wider. Test yourself with the photo below: Which are the alewife and which are the trout?



Recording Data and Information

Do your best to estimate the number of fish observed. This may not be easy, and it is more important that we document where and when the runs occur, but it is important to know whether you see 3, 30, or 300 fish during your observation period. **Remember that it is essential to record if you do not see ANY!** The alewife is in crisis, and a “not-observed” count is just as important for protecting them.

If you have a camera with you and see fish in the water or on the bank, or if you observe interesting animals or conditions, please take pictures. You can upload them to the form. Any interesting observations or conditions you observe are worth noting; this is often how we learn things we didn’t expect when designing the study.

There are three ways you can record the data

Option 1: The old-fashioned way. Use the pen or pencil in the box and a worksheet to take home. Don’t forget to enter it!!! Use this link from your computer at home: <https://www.alliancemrw.org/alewife-river-herring> and scroll down to click on the fish.

Option 2: From your phone, use this QR code to take you to the data entry form on ArcGIS Survey 123. In general, we find that not all web-based applications work very well on iPhones. Try it and see!



Option 3: Use the free Survey123 mobile app on your phone. This will be very smooth to use once you get it set up.

1. Download the free ArcGIS Survey 123 mobile app on your mobile device (green icon) & open
2. **Choose "Continue without signing in"**
3. Location is not needed for this study, since we are in one place only
4. It may bring you to sign-in screen: username is info@alliancemrw.org, and password is MysticRiver=2023
5. To the right of the screen, tap outline cloud with a down-arrow to download the survey
6. Wait a few seconds and tap the back arrow in upper left
7. Tap the tile and Collect. Fill out the survey and then tap the check mark in the lower right of the screen. Send now.

From Now On all you have to do is open the app and do step 7. **Don't forget!** Because our website works awkwardly on iPhones, we recommend using the app every time you come to count. And we can keep track of the data in real time.

Thank you!!! And don't forget to enter data **even if you do not see any fish!**

Packing Up and Departure (see video) on website:

Put the thermometer in the bottom of the box. Also the clicker, if you have taken it out.

1. Be sure that all papers are back in plastic bag (otherwise they will melt). If you have used a worksheet to record data, don't forget to take it home to record data!!
2. Put the box away at the bottom of the flagpole.
3. Exit the parking lot on the dirt road, going left in front of the playground to get out to the road. (see video)
- 4.

Questions? Contact Maggie Favretti 914-462-2857, Betsy Graham 860-608-5620

