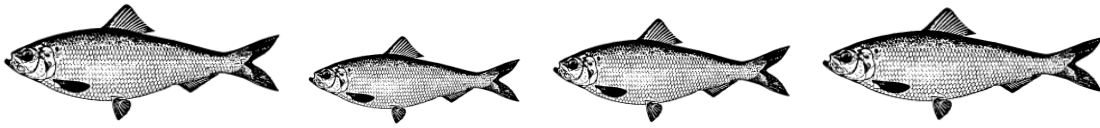


Maine Rivers releases 2020 Alewife Trail Map



Yarmouth, April 15, 2020— Maine Rivers is pleased to share the 2020 Alewife Trail Map which provides an opportunity to read about and virtually experience the annual migration of alewives while the Governor's stay in place order is in effect. Alewives migrate into Maine waters every year, and in increasing numbers, because of restoration efforts motivated by the recognition that these silver fish are a cornerstone of freshwater and marine ecology. Information on the Map will give you a better appreciation of their importance and annual migration.

Once tremendously prolific, for hundreds of years the return of alewives to Maine's rivers and streams meant spring was coming. The arrival of silvery fishes making their way up from the ocean to spawn in lakes and ponds was proof that a long and perhaps hungry winter would be coming to an end.

Access to habitat is a huge problem for Maine's migratory fishes, species like Atlantic salmon, short-nosed sturgeon, American shad, salter brook trout as well as alewives. For these fish species, "essential travel" requires moving between saltwater and freshwater to live safely and reproduce. For a fish, travel restrictions are created by dams that lack fish passage, or poorly sited road culverts. Dams and road culverts can cause difficulties—or can be a matter of life and death.

Healthy fish populations feed birds like eagles, cormorant, great blue herons and osprey. They are also food for seals, otters, mink and raccoons. Alewives are also associated with improving water quality by hosting freshwater mussels. The alewife floater (*Anodonta implicata*) is a freshwater mollusk that travels by catching a ride on the fins or gills of host fish. Freshwater mussels may be North America's most imperiled animals—and they are valuable. To feed itself an alewife floater may filter more than 5 gallons of water a day, removing bacteria, algae, zooplankton and sediments from the water.

What is essential travel for an eel? Or a sturgeon? What does it mean to have no access to vital habitat where you can stay cool, eat or reproduce? What does "safe passage" mean to a young alewife forced to swim through the turbines of a hydropower operation? A river runs through or near every Maine community, and every river has a story. Many communities in Maine are reexamining their waterways and figuring out how to make them more fish friendly by removing blockages like dams that lack fish passage and improperly sized road culverts.

Spring is coming. Restoring the aquatic connections of our rivers and streams is a way to bring back life and resilience. We encourage you to learn more about the rivers and streams of your community.

For more information: www.mainerivers.org or Landis Hudson, <landis@mainerivers.org>