

Bournedale Herring Run Weir Reconstruction

POC: John Pribilla

In August 2025, Cape Cod Canal USACE field staff, combining park rangers, maintenance operations, and electricians, partnered with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MDMF) to conduct work on the Bournedale Herring Run. Originally constructed in 1936, this fishway serves as a passage for adult herring to swim upstream from the ocean to freshwater for spawning in the spring, and then for the juveniles to swim downstream in the fall.

The work was primarily coordinated by USACE Park Ranger John Pribilla, who identified the concrete weirs in need of demolition and reconstruction and organized USACE resources and personnel for the work while coordinating with the MDMF, who have a shared interest due to the species and location of this run. Members of both organizations took part in the physical demolition and then reconstruction of four of the concrete weirs, helping the river herring complete their diadromous journey between salt and fresh water.

The importance of these small fish does not go unnoticed as they are a keystone food source for not only a variety of other fish, but also several birds, small mammals, and historically, humans, earning them the commonly used title as a small fish with a big impact.

