

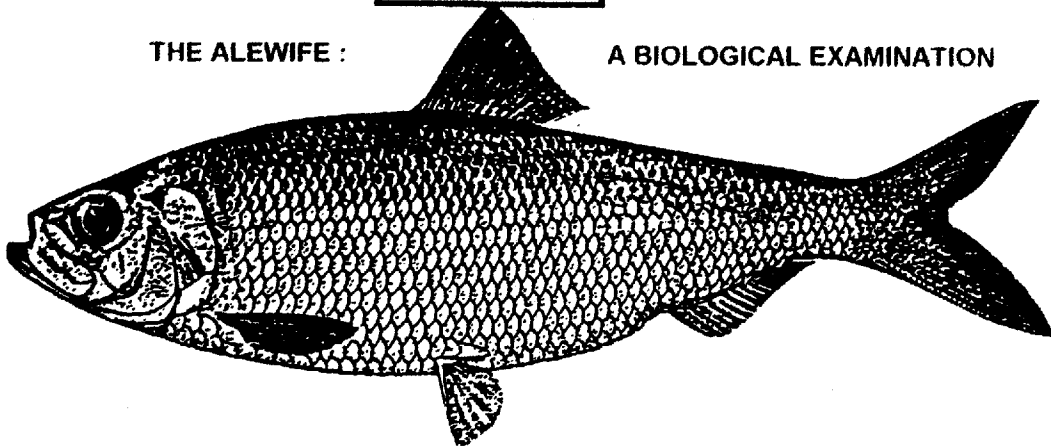
THE PEMBROKE HERRING RUN
A HISTORY OF THE VALLEY AND FISHERY

AND

PHFC

THE ALEWIFE :

A BIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION



PEMBROKE HERRING RUN: A HISTORY OF THE VALLEY AND THE FISHERY

Description: The North River, formed by the junction of Indian Head River and Barker River flows northeasterly through the towns of Marshfield, Scituate, Norwell, Pembroke, and Hanover. (See figure 1). The present outlet to Massachusetts Bay was formed during the gale of 1898, 3 miles to the north of the old opening. It is here that the adult alewife begins its journey towards its spawning grounds in Furnace and Oldham Ponds.

Indian Head River receives its water from a series of ponds- Maquan, Indian Head, and Wampatuck in Hanson, and Mill Pond bordering Hanover and Rockland. Fish passage to these ponds is blocked by a series of dams, built between 1694 and 1920. Some time after 1920, a fish ladder was built at the old Clapp Rubber Factory dam located on the Pembroke-Hanover line on Elm Street. Another herring type called the shad tend to favor the still waters upstream of the dam and a small annual shad run continues to this day.

Alewives turn south along Barker River through one of the most pristine valleys in New England. The major part of the valley is bordered by West Elm Street to the west, Washington Street (Route 53) to the east, and Barker Street (Route 14) to the south, and contains an incredible variety of wildlife and fauna (See figure 2). Joining Barker River in the middle of the valley are Swamp Brook to the west, and Pudding Brook to the east. It is possible that some alewives may venture up Swamp Brook and Pudding Brook and eventually spawn in the eddies and pockets of still water in the marshes, however, there is no evidence presently to support this. It is believed that the majority of alewives continue movement towards

their exact place of birth in Furnace and Oldham ponds.

Most of the valley is impenetrable by foot due to the dense growth and water laden marshes, however, there are several high ground dry land entry points that allow penetration into the valley. The Wildlands Trusts of Southeastern Massachusetts built public access trails in 1999 through Willow Brook and Fleetwood Farms that includes an observation tower and boardwalk connecting Willow Brook Farm to the Misty Meadows Conservation area. Also, a dry trail in Misty Meadows leads directly to Barker River. In 1976, the local boy scouts cut a trail along a hill off of Littles Avenue. It ends where dense marsh begins. There is a canoe landing at Curtis Crossing off of Elm Street on the Hanover side of the Indian Head River. Barker River is accessible by canoe or small boat year round up to the intersection of Swamp and Pudding Brooks, however, any further penetration south is tight and almost impossible due to overgrowth. People have been known to make it all the way by canoe to Herring Run Park off of Barker Street, but usually not in the summer months when the volume of water flow is too low.

South of Herring Run Park, Barker River's name changes to Herring Brook after it crosses under Barker Street. Some of the brook along this stretch opens into marshy areas but most of it is narrow and bordered on both sides by dense trees and brush. The valley is still noticeable but less defined in this area. Mountain Avenue (don't let the street name fool you) provides a good sense of the topography of this valley with the low point at the center of Mountain Avenue. Between Mountain Avenue and Hobomock Street lies two small ponds named Upper Mill and Lower Mill Ponds both of which have a small fish

