



Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 11/18/25 at 10:00 a.m.

Objective

Provide information to the Water Operations Management Team (WOMT), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on measures to reduce adverse effects from Delta operations of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SWP) on salmonids and green sturgeon. Final versions of the Proposed Action Assessment, and Fish and Water Operations Outlook will be posted to Reclamation's Delta Monitoring Work Group webpage, while final version of the Meeting Notes will be posted to Reclamation's Salmon Monitoring Team webpage. Meeting participants include representatives from: California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), DWR, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Reclamation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Participants

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- Kearns & West (K&W)

Announcements

- N/A

Meeting Summary

Part 1. Updates on Water Operations and Biological Conditions

Biological Context

SaMT agreed to add clarifying language: Migrating LAD Winter-run Chinook salmon in the Biological Context section. This is supported by the DCC Gate Action.

Relevant Actions & Triggers

- **Delta Cross Channel (DCC) Gate operations (PA 4.10.5.3):** Gates are currently closed.
- **OMR Management Season (PA 4.10.5.10.1, COA 8.3):** OMR Management for WY 2026 may begin in November, December, or January depending on what biological triggers are met.
- **SWP ITP Natural-origin Winter-run Chinook Salmon Early Season Weekly Loss Thresholds (COA 8.2.1):** DWR will operate OMRI consistent with 8.2.1 of the ITP. These values are based on the November 1 – November 30 threshold of a 7-day rolling sum of 98.10. Loss will be tracked 6 days prior to this COA being in effect and be included in the 7-day rolling sum. If the threshold is exceeded, a 7-day average OMR index of -5,000 cfs will be operated for 7 days.
- **SWP ITP Winter-run Chinook Salmon Annual Loss Thresholds (COA 8.4.3):** DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.4.3 of the ITP. These values will be based on the BY 2025 juvenile production estimate (JPE), which will be finalized in January 2026.
 - The natural-origin Winter-run Chinook salmon Annual Loss Threshold for this year is based on the initial length-at-date (LAD) identification of natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon and the thresholds described above. If genetic analysis of natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon observed in salvage at the SWP or CVP subsequently confirms that any given Chinook salmon is not genetically identified as a CHNWR that fish will not count towards the loss threshold. This threshold is loss of natural-origin winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.5% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE (loss threshold = TBD). If cumulative loss of natural-origin CHNWR in a brood year exceeds 50% of the annual loss threshold (loss > TBD), then Permittee shall, in coordination with Reclamation, adjust south Delta exports to achieve a 7-day average of the OMR index no more negative than -3,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days. If a CHNWR is salvaged during the 7-day action, the action will be extended for another seven days. At the conclusion of the action, Permittee, in coordination with Reclamation shall revert to the weekly distributed loss threshold until the 75% threshold is reached or throughout the end of the OMR Management season. If the 75% loss threshold (loss > TBD) is exceeded AND the Winter-Run Chinook salmon

Machine Learning Model predicts that an OMR index of -2,500 cfs would shift the model output to a classification of CHNWR absence with a minimum probability of absence prediction of 0.559 for 1 of 30 sub-models for any of the 7 most recent prediction days, then a 7-day average OMRI index of -2,500 cfs will be operated to for 7 consecutive days. Thereafter, each winter-run observed in salvage will trigger a 7-day OMR index of -2,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days IF the Winter-Run Chinook salmon Machine Learning Model predicts that an OMR index of -2,500 cfs would shift the model output to a classification of CHNWR absence with a minimum probability of absence prediction of 0.559 for 1 of 30 sub-models for any of the 7 most recent prediction days.

- The hatchery-origin Chinook salmon Annual Loss Threshold for WY 2026 is loss of both LSNFH and Battle Creek clipped CWT winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.12% of the winter-run Chinook salmon hatchery-origin JPE (loss \geq TBD and loss $>$ TBD, respectively). If the 50% and 75% thresholds are exceeded, the same process will occur as what occurs for the natural-origin winter-run Chinook salmon (as discussed in above bullet).
- **SWP ITP Spring-run Chinook Salmon Protection Action and Surrogate Annual Loss Thresholds (COA 8.4.5):** From 10/1/2025–6/30/2026, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.4.5 of the ITP. The ITP Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold for WY 2026 will include three late fall-run release groups from Coleman National Fish Hatchery (CNFH), six spring-run release groups from either Feather River Fish Hatchery (FRFH) or CNFH. If cumulative loss from CVP and SWP is greater than 0.25% for any release group, the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the COA, that would be required to reach an OMRI of -5,000 cfs for 7 consecutive days in November and December, or an OMRI of -3,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days if the action is exceeded from January-June.

Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, Current Operations

- SaMT reviewed and updated the Fish and Water Operations Outlook document.
 - Sacramento River releases at Keswick Dam are currently 4,000 cfs.
 - Feather River flows are currently at 2,450 cfs and will be maintained at this level for the rest of the week.
 - American River releases at Nimbus Dam are 1,000 cfs.
 - Stanislaus River releases at Goodwin Dam are currently 200 cfs.
 - Freeport flows are currently at 15,000 cfs and the anticipated range for the rest of this week will be between 11,000 cfs - 16,500 cfs.

- Vernalis flows are 1,600 cfs and the anticipated range for the rest of this week will be between 1,600 cfs - 3,500 cfs.
- Delta outflow is at 20,600 cfs and the anticipated range for the rest of this week will be between 5,500 cfs – 25,000 cfs.
- JPP exports are at 3,500 cfs and will be maintained at this level for the next several weeks.
- CCF exports are at 5,000 cfs and the range for the rest of this week will be between 3,000 to 5,000 cfs.
- QWEST flow rate is at 4,943 cfs and seven-day average is -792 cfs.
- San Luis storage is 1.106 MAF. SWP's share is 795 TAF and CVP's is 320 TAF.
- Expected Daily OMR Index is -6,600 cfs; five-day average OMR index is -6,400; 14-day average OMR index is -5,300.

Questions/Discussion on Operations

- Revised the measure of winter-run Chinook salmon quantity in the Sacramento River from a specific percentage to the general term 'most.'
- CDFW asked why SWP pumping levels dropped to zero.
 - DWR explained that the reduction was due to maintenance work at the Jones Pumping Plant.
 - Rotary screw trap cones were removed at Knights Landing due to high flows.
 - The goal is to reinstall the cones by 11/19/25, pending debris conditions.

Part 2. Open Species Discussion

Salvage Update

- CDFW provided 11/16/25 salvage updates, which included two green sturgeons, zero salmonids, and no operational deviances.

Yuba River Update

- Mia Schiappi provided the update on behalf of DWR for the Yuba River. Please reach out to Jeff Jenkins, DWR with any questions.
- Spring-run Chinook salmon juveniles are beginning to out-migrate to the Yuba River.
- Two spring-run Chinook juvenile salmon were caught on 11/14/25 and 15 spring-run Chinook juveniles on 11/15/25 in the Yuba River traps.
- Feather River traps are operational, but no spring-run Chinook salmon has been caught. It is expected for spring-run Chinook salmon to be seen in the Feather river soon.

Spring Run Project Team Update

- CDFW provided an update on the spring-run project.
- The first salmon was caught in Clear Creek, arriving even earlier than the typically early migration window.
- Battle Creek Hatchery anticipates seeing some of the first spring-run Chinook salmon in traps based on the early migration.
- CDFW shared that USFWS also expects to see more spring-run Chinook salmon.
- Positive indications included:
 - One yearling was caught two weeks ago at Deer Creek.
 - Delta monitoring programs are seeing more winter-run sized fish.

Questions on Open Species Discussion

- NMFS asked about the typical holding period for green sturgeons at salvage facilities.
 - No answer was provided at the meeting. Action item assigned to Mia Schiappi to follow up with CDFW.

Part 3. Live Edit Assessments

Proposed Action Assessment

- Reclamation shared the most recent Proposed Action Assessment. Key points included:
 - KLCI and SCI exceedances continue to occur intermittently; however, overall, Delta salinity remains low. The storm surge resulted in salinity increases at several locations, but levels stayed below threshold. Chloride concentrations are now within acceptable ranges.
 - Winter-run Chinook salmon emerged later than normal. As of 11/11/25 an estimated 2.3 million fry passed RBDD, followed by a gradual decline.

Questions on Proposed Action Assessment

- No questions

Spring Run Assessment

- DWR shared an updated version of the Spring-run Chinook Assessment document.

Part 4. Additional Considerations/Discussion

- Reclamation asked DWR for the specific date when the Yolo Bypass opened.
 - DWR is still confirming the exact Yolo Bypass opening date; the information isn't being posted consistently yet, but they will share it once verified.

- Reclamation suggested that SacPAS has not registered the opening.
- DWR mentioned that a test was run and there were informal reports of activation, but the official update hasn't appeared.
- Reclamation said the USGS STARS app has not been updated due to the government shutdown, but it should come back online soon. Until then, bypass information can still be found on SacPAS.
- CDFW expressed appreciation for the group's quick turnaround on the surrogate release group email request.

Next SaMT Meeting

- The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 11/25/25.

Action Items

- Mia Schiappi will follow up with Walter K. Griffiths (CDFW) to confirm green sturgeon holding periods.
- DWR will track down official source reporting bypass operations and verify opening date.