



# Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 11/25/25 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 releases are currently at 2,400 cfs and will be maintained at this level for the remainder 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 15,023 cfs and will range between 12,500 cfs to 15,500 cfs.

- Vernalis flows are currently at 1,670 cfs and will range between 1,100 cfs to 1,600 cfs.
- Delta Outflow is at 8,500 cfs and will decrease to levels between 5,000 cfs to 8,500 cfs.
- JPP exports are at 1,900 cfs and will range between 1,800 cfs to 2,700 cfs.
  - CCF exports are scheduled to reach 6,680 cfs and will range between 5,500 cfs to 6,680 cfs.
  - Rio Vista flows are at 12,400 cfs and will range between 9,000 cfs to 12,500 cfs the following week.
  - QWEST flow rate is at -5,212 cfs and seven-day average is 86 cfs.
  - San Luis storage is 1.224 TAF. SWP's share is 859 TAF and CVP's is 358 TAF.
  - Expected Daily OMR Index is -8,800 cfs; five-day average OMR index is -8,400 cfs; 14-day average OMR index is -71 cfs.
- On November 21, the USGS Expected Daily OMR Index was -8,300 cfs, with an expected 14-day average of -6,600 cfs.
- On November 22, the Expected Daily OMR Index was -8,100 cfs, and the expected 14-day average is -7,200 cfs.

### ***Questions/Discussion on Operations***

- No questions asked.

## **Part 2. Open Species Discussion**

### ***Distribution/Survey Updates***

- CDFW provided survey updates and noted a significant increase in salmon presence.
  - Tisdale RST observed 128 winter-run and 29 spring-run Chinook salmon.
  - Butte RST recorded 19 spring-run Chinook salmon.
  - Knight's Landing RST observed 237 winter-run and 128 spring-run Chinook salmon.
  - DJFMP has reported a recent increase in detections of winter/spring-run Chinook salmon.
  - Beach seine surveys recorded 199 winter-run and 111 spring-run Chinook salmon.
  - Sacramento trawl recorded 248 winter-run and 87 spring-run Chinook salmon.

### ***Questions on Open Species Discussion***

- CDFW mentioned that DJFMP staff suspect that a significant number of the identified spring-run Chinook salmon may be winter-run due to overlap in sizes.
- DWR noted that this period of the season typically represents only about 10 percent of the expected winter-run Chinook salmon passage. However, Sacramento trawl data show that more winter-run Chinook salmon have been detected to date than in most years over the past two decades, indicating unusually early and strong Delta entry.
  - CDFW added that the most recent dataset represents a substantial pulse.
- DWR asked if there were any reports on prevalence of thiamine deficiency this year noting that it has been an important issue for the past several years.
  - CDFW mentioned that there have been no reports of thiamine deficiency, and no thiamine testing has been conducted because it has not been an issue. CDFW will follow up to confirm whether any information on thiamine deficiency has emerged.
  - DWR asked whether take limits apply per trap site or to the program, and whether operations at Tisdale could be paused if needed to allow Knight's Landing to continue without exceeding the permitted threshold.
  - DWR confirmed that Tisdale, Knights Landing, Delta Entry, and the Feather River trap share a combined take limit.
  - DWR mentioned that NOAA has approved continued sampling, but crews are fishing very conservatively and actively monitoring traps to reduce risk.
  - DWR clarified that permits reset December 31 and the team is already more than halfway to the Winter-run mortality take limit and still below the handling-only limit.
  - DWR asked if early salmon movement into the Delta this year means Winter-run might start showing up in salvage earlier than normal, or if detections should still be expected later in winter.
  - DWR mentioned that early salvage would not be surprising, anticipating that salvage threshold numbers to be just over 200 after the December 1 update.

### **Part 3. Live Edit Assessments**

#### ***Proposed Action Assessment***

- Reclamation provided an update on the last DCC gate assessment for the season.

#### ***Spring Run Assessment***

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

## **Next SaMT Meeting**

- The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 12/02/25.

### **Action Items**

- CDFW will follow up to confirm whether any new information or testing results related to thiamine deficiency are available.