



Weekly Assessment of CVP and SWP Delta Operations on ESA-listed Species

January 30, 2024

Executive Summary

Operational Conditions

See Weekly Fish and Water Operation Outlook document for January 30 – February 5.

Winter-run Chinook Salmon

Loss of natural winter-run Chinook Salmon (by length at date, LAD) has occurred in the past week at the State and Federal fish salvage facilities. Loss of genetically confirmed winter-run Chinook Salmon occurred on 1/16/2024. Loss of natural winter-run Chinook Salmon at the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) fish collection facilities is likely to occur over the next week. 55-65 of juvenile natural winter-run Chinook Salmon from brood year (BY) 2023 are estimated to be present in the Delta.

Spring-run Chinook Salmon

No loss of natural YOY spring-run Chinook Salmon (by length at date, LAD) has occurred in the past week at the State or Federal fish salvage facilities. 20-35% of juvenile natural YOY spring-run Chinook Salmon was estimated in the Delta. CV spring-run Chinook Salmon adults have completed spawning and eggs are in gravel and are emerging. Fry are migrating downstream. Loss of genetically confirmed yearling spring-run Chinook Salmon for WY 2024 occurred in January.

Central Valley Steelhead

Loss of natural California CV (CCV) steelhead has occurred in the past week at the State and Federal fish salvage facilities. Loss of CCV steelhead at the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) fish collection facilities is likely to occur over the next week. 15-20% of CCV steelhead were estimated in the Delta.

DCC gates recommendation

The DCC gates were closed for the OMR Season on 11/27/2023.

Delta Smelt

Based on recent detection data and distribution patterns over the past decade, Delta Smelt are likely undergoing their population-level spawning migration and distributed throughout the Delta. Five marked and one unmarked Delta Smelt have been detected in the Lower Sacramento, Suisun Marsh, and Sacramento Deep Water Shipping Channel since 1/16/2024. One marked Delta Smelt was detected at the CVP (salvage) on 1/27/2024. Based on the detection of a DS in salvage, historical salvage timing, active migration (based on environmental conditions and historical patterns), and suitable spawning temperatures, risk of entrainment in the OMR corridor has increased from low to moderate. Risk remains low for fish outside of the OMR corridor. The implementation of IEWPP (triggered 1/21/2024 and implemented from 01/23/2024 through 2/5/2024) and current low daily turbidity in portions of the OMR Corridor are expected to reduce the chance that migrating Delta Smelt will move into areas with a high likelihood of entrainment.

Monitoring Teams summary

There were no non-consensus issues to report from the Salmon Monitoring Team or Smelt Monitoring Team.

Operational and Regulatory Conditions

See current Weekly Fish and Water Operation Outlook document.

Biology, Distribution, and Evaluation Winter-run Chinook salmon, Spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley Steelhead

Population Status

Winter-run Chinook Salmon

- Delta Life Stages:
 - Juveniles, Adults
- Brood Year 2023 Productivity:
 - Natural winter-run Chinook salmon: The Final WR JPE for BY 2023 is 234,896.
 - Mean cumulative weekly passage of winter-run Chinook salmon through January 14th at Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD) for the last 21 years of passage data is 98.4% (one SD of 1.9%). By 1/28/2024, 1,088,520 winter-run Chinook salmon were estimated to have passed RBDD compared to the total cumulative passage for WY 2023 of 240,059 winter-run Chinook salmon.
 - Hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon:

- One release of Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery CWT tagged winter-run Chinook salmon occurred on 12/28/23.
- The second release of LSNFH CWT tagged winter-run Chinook salmon occurred on 1/19/24.
- There will be additional releases of winter-run Chinook salmon in February and March. The final release of winter-run Chinook salmon is anticipated to be acoustically tagged.

Spring-run Chinook Salmon

- Delta Life Stages:
 - Young-of-year (YOY) and Yearlings
- Brood Year 2023 Productivity:
 - Natural spring-run Chinook salmon: No JPE has been established for spring-run Chinook salmon.
 - Hatchery spring-run Chinook salmon surrogates associated with the Proposed Action (PA 4.10.5.10.2 Additional Real-Time OMR Restrictions and Performance Objectives):
 - Approximately 60,764 brood year 2023 late-fall Chinook salmon were released on December 22, 2023 into Battle Creek at the Coleman NFH. This group is 100% marked with an adipose-fin clip and coded-wire tagged.
 - Approximately 71,049 Coleman NFH brood year 2023 late-fall Chinook Salmon were released on December 29, 2023 into Battle Creek at Coleman NFH. This group is 100% marked (with an adipose-fin clip and CWT) and has an overall estimated average fork length of 145 mm.
 - Approximately 67,018 Coleman NFH brood year 2023 late-fall Chinook Salmon were released on January 11, 2024 into Battle Creek at Coleman NFH. This group is 100% marked (with an adipose-fin clip and CWT) and has an overall estimated average fork length of 145 mm.
 - Loss has occurred for release group 1, release group 2, and release group 3 of the hatchery spring-run surrogates.

Central Valley Steelhead

- Delta Life Stages:
 - Spawning Adults, Kelts, Juveniles
- Brood Year 2023 Productivity:

- Spawner abundance: There is limited information about the adult steelhead population. It is estimated to be small, contributing to the limited productivity of the population.
- Natural steelhead: No JPE has been established for steelhead. Data are limited.
- Hatchery steelhead: Reclamation’s Proposed Action has no hatchery steelhead triggers.

Distribution

Winter-run Chinook Salmon

Current Distribution:

- For winter-run Chinook Salmon observations reported to SaMT since previous meeting, see Table 1.
- For SaMT distribution estimates, see Table 2.
- As of 1/29/2024, 1 genetic natural winter-run Chinook Salmon has been identified at the SWP facility. As of 1/29/2024, no genetic natural winter-run Chinook Salmon have been identified at the CVP facility.
- Under the 2023 IOP Reclamation will be operating to the COA 8.6.3 Mid- and Late-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Daily Loss Threshold:
 - January 1 – January 31: $0.0000635 * 234,896 = 14.92$
 - February 1 – February 28: $0.0000991 * 234,896 = 23.28$
 - March 1 – March 31: $0.000146 * 234,896 = 34.29$
 - April 1 – April 30: $0.0000507 * 234,896 = 11.91$
 - May 1 – May 31: $0.000077 * 234,896 = 18.09$

Historical Trends

- For historical winter-run Chinook salmon trends in salvage, see Table 3.
- Loss of natural winter-run Chinook salmon at the CVP and SWP fish collection facilities is likely to occur over the next week based on hydrology. Based on historic trends in salvage winter-run Chinook salmon loss may increase over the next week.

Forecasted Distribution within Central Valley and Delta regions

- The STARS model projects route-specific proportion of entrainment, survival, and travel times (Table 5). This model does not estimate entrainment into the lower Sacramento River sloughs (i.e., Three-Mile Slough).

Spring-run Chinook salmon

Current Distribution

- For spring-run Chinook salmon observations reported to SaMT since previous meeting, see Table 1.
- For SaMT distribution estimates, see Table 2.

Historical Trends

- For historical spring-run Chinook salmon trends in salvage, see Table 3. Based on historic trends in salvage YOY spring-run Chinook salmon loss may increase over the next week.

Forecasted Distribution within Central Valley and Delta regions

- YOY spring-run Chinook are migrating into the Delta.

Central Valley Steelhead

Current Distribution

- For CCV Steelhead observations reported to SaMT since previous meeting, see Table 1.
- For SaMT distribution estimates, see Table 2.
- As of 1/29/2024, 24 unclipped CCV steelhead have been identified at the CVP or SWP facilities.

Historical Trends

- For historical CCV steelhead trends in salvage, see Table 2. Based on historic trends in salvage, juvenile CCV steelhead loss may occur over the next week.

Forecasted Distribution within Central Valley and Delta regions

- The entrainment tool estimates of CCV steelhead loss to be low (Table 6, Fig. 1).

Table 1. Fish observation reported since the previous SaMT meeting. NAs represent no data reported. See Operations Outlook for notes on interruptions in any surveys.

Locations	Reporting Period	SR Chinook	WR Chinook	LFR Chinook	Steelhead (Wild)	Green Sturgeon
Butte Creek RST	12/11-1/1	1685	0	0	0	0
Tisdale RST	1/24-1/28	3	39	0	1	0
Knights Landing RST	1/22-1/28	15	26	0	0	0
Lower Sacramento RST	1/15-1/21	37	18	0	0	0
Beach Seines	1/22-1/26	7	8	0	0	0
Sac. Trawl	1/22-1/26	0	4	0	1	0

Locations	Reporting Period	SR Chinook	WR Chinook	LFR Chinook	Steelhead (Wild)	Green Sturgeon
Chippis Island Midwater Trawl	1/22-1/26	0	1	1	1	0
Mossdale Kodiak Trawl	1/22-1/26	0	1	1	0	0
EDSM	1/22-1/25	0	1	0	0	0
Feather River Herring RST	1/8-1/21	0	0	0	0	0
Feather River Eye Side RST	1/8-1/21	0	0	0	0	0
Lower Feather River	1/22-1/28	6	0	1	0	0

Table 2. Salmonid distribution estimates

Location	Yet to Enter Delta (%)	In the Delta (%)	Exited Delta past Chippis Island (%)
Young-of-year (YOY) winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 30-44% Last Week: 35-50%	Current: 55-65% Last Week: 50-60	Current: 1-5 % Last Week: 0-5%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 65-80% Last Week: 65-80%	Current: 20-35% Last Week: 20-35%	Current: 0% Last Week: 0%
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: % Last Week: 100%	Current: 0% Last Week: 0%	Current: 0% Last Week: 0%
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 75-84 % Last Week: 80-89%	Current: 15-20% Last Week: 10-15%	Current: 1-5% Last Week: 0%

Table 3. Historic migration and salvage patterns. Last updated 01/29/2023.

Species	Red Bluff Diversion Dam	Tisdale Rst	Knights Landing Rst	Sac Trawl Sherwood Catch Index	Chippis Island Trawl Catch Index	Salvage
Chinook, Winter-run, Unclipped	98.5%(97.6%,99.4%) BY: 2014 - 2022	86.3%(73.6%,99.1%) BY: 2014 - 2022	82.8%(63.0%,102.5%) BY: 2014 - 2022	40.7%(14.2%,67.3%) BY: 2014 - 2022	5.8%(-1.9%,13.6%) BY: 2014 - 2022	30.1%(8.0%,52.3%) WY: 2014 - 2023
Chinook, Spring-run, Unclipped	15.8%(4.7%,26.9%) BY: 2014 - 2022	22.2%(5.8%,38.6%) BY: 2014 - 2022	31.4%(8.6%,54.2%) BY: 2014 - 2022	5.9%(-2.8%,14.5%) BY: 2014 - 2022	0.0%(0.0%,0.0%) BY: 2014 - 2022	0.0%(-0.0%,0.0%) WY: 2014 - 2023

Species	Red Bluff Diversion Dam	Tisdale Rst	Knights Landing Rst	Sac Trawl Sherwood Catch Index	Chipps Island Trawl Catch Index	Salvage
Steelhead, Unclipped (January-December)	0.9%(-0.4%,2.1%) BY: 2014 - 2023	23.4%(4.8%,41.9%) BY: 2014 - 2023	23.6%(6.2%,40.9%) BY: 2014 - 2023	5.2%(-3.9%,14.2%) BY: 2014 - 2023	5.9%(-0.7%,12.5%) BY: 2014 - 2023	N/A
Steelhead, Unclipped (December-March)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	15.6%(-0.2%,31.3%) WY: 2014 - 2023
Steelhead, Unclipped (April-June)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4. Mean daily flow and percent change (Wilkins Slough, Deer Creek, Mill Creek; cfs from CDEC) and temperature and percent change (Knights Landing; °F from RST).

Date	Mill Creek (MLM): mean daily flow (cfs)	Mill Creek (MLM): flow percent change	Mill Creek (MLM): Alert	Deer Creek (DCV): mean daily flow (cfs)	Deer Creek (DCV): flow percent change	Deer Creek (DCV): Alert	Wilkins Slough (WLK): mean daily flow (cfs)	Knights Landing RST: water temperature (f)	Alert Triggered
1/28/2024	475.6	4.3%	Flow>95cfs	460.9	-3.7%	Flow>95cfs	20,632.0	N/A	N/A
1/27/2024	456.0	-14.7%	Flow>95cfs	478.5	-19.5%	Flow>95cfs	23,151.5	N/A	N/A
1/26/2024	534.3	-28.2%	Flow>95cfs	594.5	-22.0%	Flow>95cfs	24,129.5	N/A	N/A
1/25/2024	744.0	8.0%	Flow>95cfs	762.6	9.5%	Flow>95cfs	23,708.7	N/A	N/A
1/24/2024	688.7	-6.2%	Flow>95cfs	696.6	-9.4%	Flow>95cfs	24,716.8	N/A	N/A
1/23/2024	734.0	-57.2%	Flow>95cfs	769.2	-53.7%	Flow>95cfs	24,402.1	N/A	N/A
1/22/2024	1,713.6	52.5%	Flow>95cfs Change>50%	1,660.8	47.6%	Flow>95cfs	21,493.5	N/A	N/A

Table 5. STARS model simulations for route-specific entrainment, travel times, and survival. Travel time is calculated in days.

Stock	Date	Route	Median Travel Time	Survival	Routing Probability
Winter Chinook	2024-01-28	Overall	5.38	0.64	N/A
Winter Chinook	2024-01-28	Sacramento River	4.99	0.69	0.64
Winter Chinook	2024-01-28	Yolo Bypass	9.58	0.66	0.00
Winter Chinook	2024-01-28	Sutter Slough	5.03	0.58	0.13
Winter Chinook	2024-01-28	Steamboat Slough	4.96	0.70	0.12
Winter Chinook	2024-01-28	Interior Delta	8.28	0.37	0.12
Late-fall Chinook	2024-01-28	Overall	6.19	0.60	N/A
Late-fall Chinook	2024-01-28	Delta Cross Channel	N/A	N/A	0.00
Late-fall Chinook	2024-01-28	Georgiana Slough	9.54	0.32	0.19
Late-fall Chinook	2024-01-28	Sacramento River	5.31	0.68	0.47
Late-fall Chinook	2024-01-28	Sutter and Steamboat Slough	6.00	0.66	0.33

The entrainment tool estimates a median and maximum loss of winter-run Chinook Salmon and juvenile CCV Steelhead each week (Table 6a).

Table 6a-b. WY 2024 loss and salvage predictor data: Environmental details, current and forecast. Model results from 1/29/2024.

a) WY 2024 loss and salvage predictor data: Predicted weekly loss of winter-run Chinook salmon and steelhead at CVP and SWP facilities.

Parameter	Modeled Current Week	Modeled Next Week
Predicted Steelhead, Median %	17	29
Predicted Steelhead, High %	108	116
Predicted Chinook Winter Run, Median %	17	17
Predicted Chinook Winter Run, High %	109	109

b) Environmental details, current and forecast.

Parameter	Data	Forecast
Temperature (Mallard Island, C)	10.7	10.7
Precipitation (5-d running sum, inches)	1.54	1.54
Old and Middle River Flows (cfs)	-2396	-2396
Sacramento River Flow (Freeport, cfs)	38436	38436
DCC Gates	closed	closed
San Joaquin River Flow (Vernalis, cfs)	3234	3234
Export	4187	4187

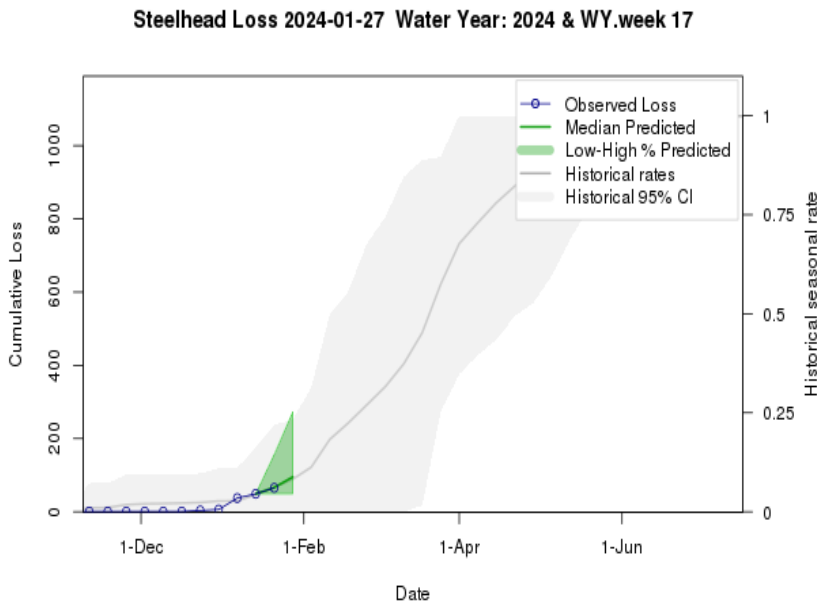
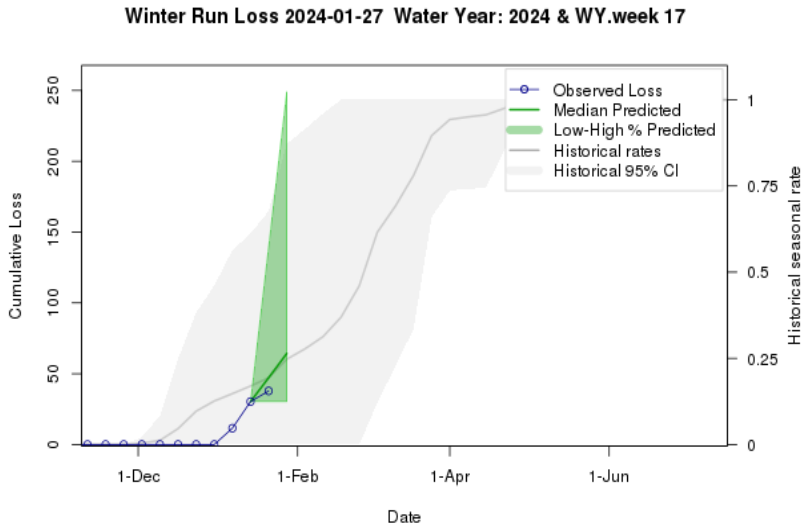


Figure 1. Predicted weekly loss of steelhead and winter-run Chinook salmon at the CVP and SWP facilities

Figure 1 is two-line graphs of the predicted weekly loss of steelhead and winter-run Chinook salmon for water year 2024 beginning on December 1, 2023. The first line graph shows the cumulative loss of winter-run Chinook salmon comparing the predicted loss of over 80 and the observed loss of 70. The second line graph shows the cumulative loss of

Steelhead salmon comparing the predicted loss of about 90 and the observed loss of about 75.

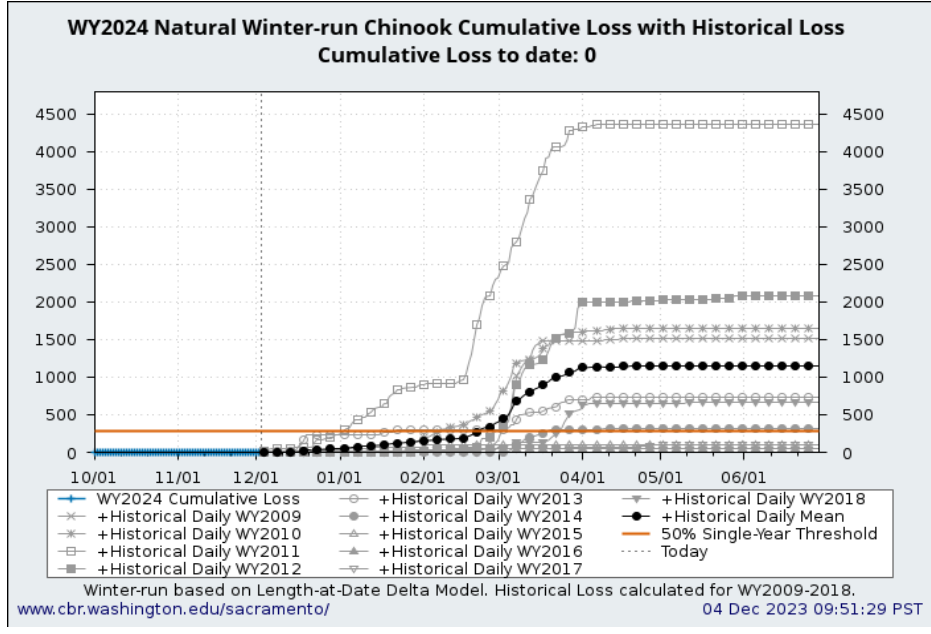
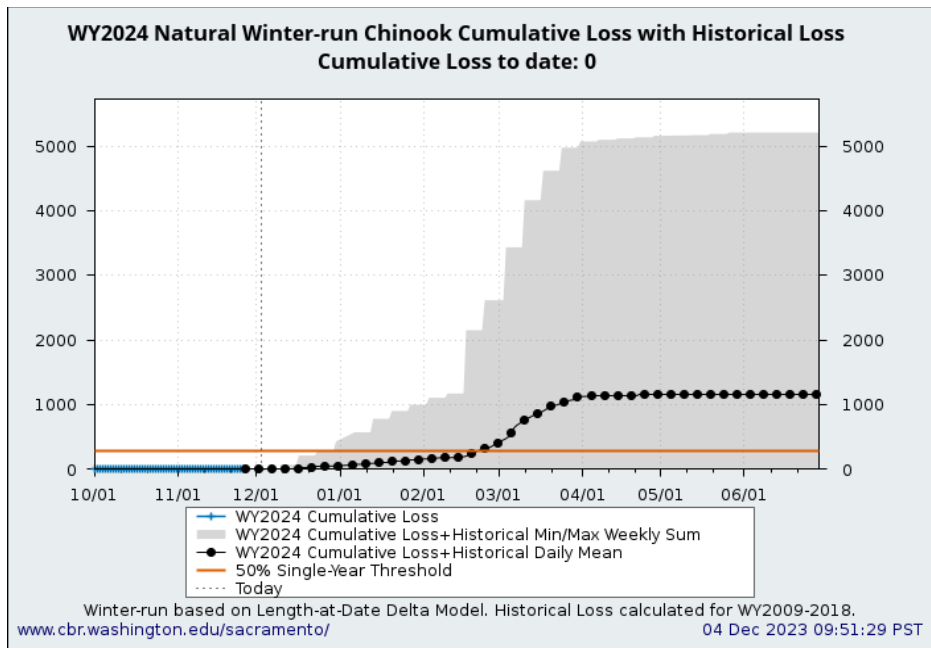


Figure 2. Cumulative natural winter-run Chinook salmon loss for the year (blue) and 2009 – 2018 historic cumulative loss (gray, different symbols). Historic daily mean plotted in black circles.

Figure 2 is two line graphs showing the natural winter-run Chinook salmon cumulative loss for water year 2024 beginning on October 1, 2023, ending on June 30, 2024. Both

graphs combine observed Chinook salmon loss with historical loss calculated for water year 2009 through 2018.

The first line graph shows water year 2024 cumulative loss combined with the historical minimum and maximum weekly sum and water year 2024 cumulative loss combined with the historical daily mean. Water year 2024 cumulative loss combined with the historical daily minimum and maximum weekly sum reaches the 50 percent single-year threshold on January 1, 2024. Water year 2024 cumulative loss combined with the historical daily mean reaches the 50 percent single-year threshold on February 20, 2024.

The second line graph shows water year 2024 cumulative loss combined with historical daily water years from 2009 – 2018. Water year 2024 cumulative loss combined with historical daily water year loss exceeds the 50 percent single-year threshold for water years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. Water year 2024 cumulative loss combined with historical daily water year loss does not exceed the 50 percent single-year threshold for water years 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

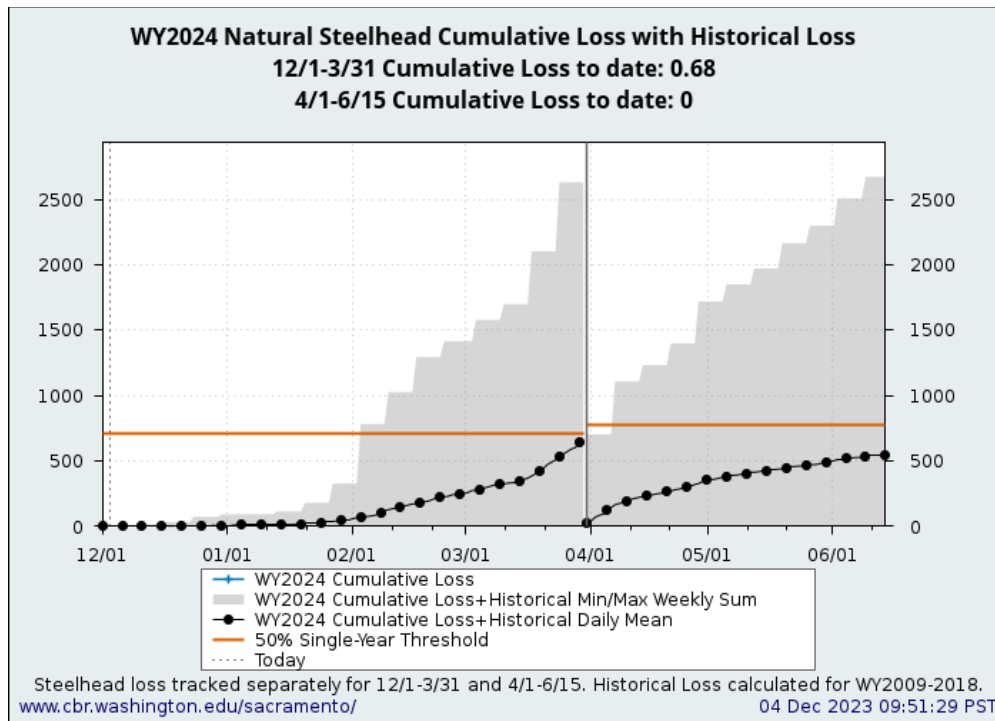


Figure 3. Cumulative natural steelhead loss for the year (blue) and 2009 – 2018 historic cumulative loss (gray). Historic daily mean plotted in black circles.

Figure 3 is a line graph that shows cumulative natural steelhead loss for WY2024 compared with 2009-2018 historic cumulative natural steelhead loss beginning on December 1, 2023 and finishing in June 15, 2023. The line graph shows the WY2024 cumulative loss and historical daily mean begin to approach the 50% single-year threshold at the end of January 2023, falling just short of the 50% single-year threshold at the end of March, 2023. The WY2024 cumulative loss and historical daily mean begins to approach the 50% single-year threshold at the start of April, 2023 and reaches just above 500 on June 15, 2023.

Evaluation

1. After January 1, are more than 5% of juveniles from one or more salmonid species present in the Delta?

Greater than 5% of all salmonid species are estimated to be present in the Delta.

2. Does the operational outlook’s ranges impact fish movement and change the potential distribution of fish?

Potential effects within the 7 days (near-term) in the operations outlook.

OMR flow is expected to remain at or more positive than -5,000 cfs this upcoming week. OMR flows more positive than -5,000 cfs are hypothesized to have a less negative impact on movement and distribution of salmonids in the South Delta (NMFS 2009, SST 2017, Perry et al. 2016).

Potential effects longer than the 7 days (longer-term) in the operations outlook.

Not applicable, see response above to (2) (i).

3. What is the likelihood of increased loss exceeding the next annual loss threshold (50%, 75% or 90% of threshold) resulting in OMR management actions based on population distribution, abundance, and behavior of fish in the Delta?

Winter-run Chinook salmon

Total juvenile natural winter-run Chinook salmon (LAD) loss is 64.47 fish (as of 01/28/2024). Loss of juvenile winter-run Chinook salmon (LAD) has occurred in the past week at the CVP and SWP fish salvage facilities. Final JPE calculations have been established for brood year (BY) 2023 winter-run Chinook salmon.

Central Valley Steelhead

Total natural juvenile steelhead loss is 89.29 fish (as of 01/28/2024). Loss of natural juvenile steelhead has occurred in the past week at the CVP fish salvage facilities. The agencies in the SaMT assessed the likelihood of exceeding the next annual loss threshold and believe that loss occurring in the next week is unlikely to lead to exceedance of the 50% single-year loss threshold.

4. If an annual loss threshold has been exceeded, do continued OMR restrictions benefit fish movement and survival based on real-time information?

Winter-run Chinook salmon

The annual loss threshold for winter-run Chinook salmon has not been exceeded in WY 2024.

Central Valley Steelhead

The annual loss threshold for steelhead (December 1 – March 31) has not been exceeded in WY 2024.

5. If OMR is more negative than -5,000 cfs, are there changes in spawning, rearing, foraging, sheltering, or migration behavior beyond those anticipated to occur under OMR management at -5,000 cfs?

Expected OMR flows are -1,500 to -2,500 cfs for the next week. Under OMR flows more negative than -5,000 cfs the SaMT expects impacts to rearing, foraging, sheltering, or migration of salmonids present in the south Delta. Salmonid presence in the south Delta is difficult to assess because of limited observations and there is uncertainty in how much of the population might be impacted.

Biology Distribution and Evaluation of Green Sturgeon

Population Status

- Delta Life Stages:
 - Adults and Juveniles

Distribution

Current Distribution

- Adults: Most abundant during spring spawning migration period of March through May, and post spawning out-migration periods May through June; October through January depending on first winter storm event resulting in significant Sacramento River flow increases. Adult presence year-round to a lesser extent mainly in San Pablo Bay.
- Juveniles: Age-1 through Age-3 juveniles present year-round and widely distributed. Juveniles tagged with acoustic tags in the main channel Sacramento River near Sherman Island detected in the Sacramento River as far upstream as the Cache Slough complex, in the San Joaquin River at the Antioch Bridge, in Threemile, Horseshoe Bend, and Montezuma Sloughs. Seasonal abundance at the primary sampling site (near Sherman Island) appears to be highest during summer in based on capture and telemetry data. Residence time at the primary sampling site for individual fish ranges from one day to over one year but telemetry data show outmigration from the primary sampling site to the Pacific Ocean ranges from 27 to 552 days. Recent capture data shows diurnal depth preference in the main channel of the Sacramento River. No recent documentation of shallow water habitat presence or foraging.

Historical Trends

- Juvenile and adult green sturgeon are historically present in the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers and Delta.

Forecasted Distribution within Central Valley and Delta regions

- Juvenile and adult green sturgeon are likely present in the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers and Delta during the next week.

Evaluation

1. Is there likely to be salvage that may exceed the annual loss limit?

Green sturgeon salvage is 0 fish (as of 1/29/2024). The agencies in the SaMT assessed the likelihood of salvage occurring in the next week is unlikely to occur.

Biology, Distribution, and Evaluation of Delta Smelt

Population Status

- Delta Smelt Life Stages:
 - Subadults, Adults
- Brood Year 2023:
- Abundance estimate:
 - The most recent non-zero abundance estimate for Delta Smelt is from the week of January 22, 2024 and is 6,135 (95% CI: 1,783 to 15,556).
- Biological Conditions:
 - Adult and subadult Delta Smelt are expected to be present in Suisun Marsh, lower Sacramento River, Sacramento Deep Water Shipping Channel, and the South Delta. Delta Smelt are likely undergoing their population-level, upstream spawning migration in response to increases in turbidity and flow (i.e., “first flush”) conditions, which were met on 1/21/2024 (Grimaldo, et al. 2009; Sommer et al. 2011). The Smelt Monitoring Team discussed the most recent monitoring data (TABLE 7) and considered published literature and professional judgement on the historical trends in regional distribution.

Distribution

Current Distribution

- Real time detection data are currently limited to EDSM, Chipps Island Trawl and SLS. Bay Study provides data as available.
- Eleven Delta Smelt have been detected this water year. Seven of these have been from experimental releases.
- Five marked and one unmarked adult Delta Smelt have been detected by surveys in the lower Sacramento River, Suisun Marsh, Sacramento Deep Water Shipping Channel between 1/16/2024-1/25/2024.

- One marked Delta Smelt was detected in salvage at the CVP on 1/27/2024. Cumulative seasonal salvage is 4.
- Larval sampling at the Skinner Fish Facility (SFF) and the Tracy Fish Collection Facility (TFCF) has not yet been initiated this year.
- COA 8.5.2: Not yet relevant (see environmental conditions).

Table 7. Summary of newly reported detections of Delta Smelt by Region and Salvage Facilities since the last assessment. Regions are those defined by EDSM sampling. Delta Smelt >58mm FL are considered adults. Subadult fish are considered by the SMT to be fish from the previous year’s cohort based on size and timing of collection. Young of year are considered juveniles and larvae. Salvage values reflect pre-expansion salvage.

Life Stage	North	South	West	Far West	Salvage
Adult	2	0	1	0	1
Subadult	0	0	0	0	0
Larvae/Juvenile	0	0	0	0	0

Table 8. Summary of recent Delta Smelt detections reported since last assessment and the total detections for the current water year. Notes reflect latest information on reported detections or completion of survey for the water year and include both larval and adult detections. Total Fish counts do not distinguish between hatchery origin and wild Delta Smelt. Table indicates new detections and previously reported detections that have undergone preliminary ID, QA/QC, and genetic confirmation. Numbers are updated as QA/QC and genetic confirmation become available. Tracy and Skinner facility counts reflect pre-expansion salvage.

Sampling Method	Frequency	New Detections	Preliminary Detections	QA/QC Detections	Genetically Confirmed to Date	Total WY2024	Notes
EDSM	Weekly	3	N/A	10	N/A	10	Phase 1 began 12/4/2023
SKT	Monthly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	not occurring this year
SLS	Biweekly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Began 12/11/2023

Sampling Method	Frequency	New Detections	Preliminary Detections	QA/QC Detections	Genetically Confirmed to Date	Total WY2024	Notes
20-mm	Biweekly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Begins: 3/18/2024
Summer Townet	Biweekly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Begins:
Bay Study	Monthly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Ongoing
FMWT	Monthly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Complete
Chippis Island Trawl	Weekly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Ongoing
FCCL Brood Stock Collections	Weekly	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Began: 11/27/2023 Ends: 1/26/2024
LEPS	As available	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Began 1/2/2024
FRP	Daily	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Ongoing
Tracy Fish Collection Facility (CVP)	Daily	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	Ongoing
Skinner Fish Facility (SWP)	Daily	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	Ongoing
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11	Sum of all Delta Smelt observed during the water year

Cultured Delta Smelt Experimental Releases

- Experimental releases completed in Water Year 2024 include:
 - Release 1: 14,104 fish released at Sacramento River at Rio Vista (truck release)
 - Release 2: 13,089 fish released at Sacramento River at Rio Vista (hard and soft releases)

- Release 3: 12,691 fish released at Sacramento River at Rio Vista (hard carboy and trailer release)
- Release 4: 25,649 fish released at Sacramento River at Rio Vista (truck release)
- Release 5: 12,778 fish released at Sacramento River at Rio Vista (hard and soft releases)
- Other experimental releases for Water Year 2024 are planned for:
 - Release 6: 1/30-1/31/2024 (dockside hard and soft release)
- See additional details at: [SacPAS: Central Valley Prediction & Assessment of Salmon](#)

Table 9. Weekly summary of the origin of Delta Smelt. These identifications are considered tentative and additional genetic testing will confirm the identity of individuals. Individuals with no tags are provided alive to the FCCL as potential additions to the FCCL Broodstock.

Date	Survey	Stratum/Station	Total Caught	Ad. Clipped	VIE	No Tag
1/24/2024	EDSM	Deep Water Shipping Channel	1	X	N/A	N/A
1/24/2024	EDSM	Suisun Marsh	1	X	N/A	N/A
1/25/2024	EDSM	Lower Sacramento	1	N/A	X	N/A
1/27/2024	Salvage	Southern Delta	1	X	N/A	N/A

Historical Trends

- Upstream migration for Delta Smelt occurs between September and December and in response to “first flush” conditions (Sommer et al. 2011, Grimaldo et al. 2009). Migration typically ranges one to four weeks after flow and turbidity increases, based on salvage data (Sommer et al. 2011).
- Historically, detections of ripe Delta Smelt began in January and peaked in February and March and the majority of Delta Smelt spawning occurs within a temperature range of 9-18°C (Damon et al. 2016).
- Based on historical monitoring data from the past few years (<https://github.com/Delta-Stewardship-Council/deltafish>), first detection of larvae in the Central and South Delta has typically occurred by mid to late March. (https://www.cbr.washington.edu/sacramento/tmp/hrtsalvage_1676407207_694.html).

- Salvage data as presented on SacPas indicates that adult Delta Smelt salvage in recent years has reached the 50th percentile at the end of February – beginning of March.
- Historically, the highest peak in salvage is in May and the second highest is in June (Grimaldo et al 2009).

Forecasted Distribution within Central Valley and Delta regions

- Predicting the distribution of Delta Smelt is currently difficult because detection data is limited to a few wild individuals and historic patterns may not be representative of the low population levels.
- The SMT uses turbidity as a surrogate for Delta Smelt presence and in making assessments of the likelihood of entrainment for larval Delta Smelt after spawning begins.
- The potential of experimentally released Delta Smelt to distribute from their release site is unknown at this time and SMT cannot predict their distribution beyond the original release site and subsequent recaptures. There is a high degree of uncertainty regarding the response of cultured fish to environmental cues typically applied to wild Delta Smelt.

Abiotic Conditions

Turbidity

- Precipitation (up to 1.5 inches) expected on Wednesday, with showers Thursday through Monday. In Stockton, SE winds 9-26 mph with gusts up to 40 mph at night. In Antioch, SE winds 6-22 mph, with gusts up to 30 mph.
- Turbidity is below 12 FNU at OBI and at other stations in the central and south Delta. Turbidity may increase with expected precipitation this week.

Table 10. Relevant Environmental Factors to the current management actions for Delta Smelt.

Date Reported	FPT 3-day Running Average Flow (cfs)	FPT 3-day Running Average Turbidity (FNU)	OBI Daily Average Turbidity (FNU)	SJJ 3-day Average Water temperature (°C/°F)	SLS 2 (1/22/2024) 12-station average Secchi Depth (m)
1/29/2024	41938	49.4	3.20	11.6/52.9	1.18

X2 Conditions

- As of 1/29/2024, X2 was estimated to be around 61 km and is expected to decrease with the additional precipitation.

Other Environmental Conditions

- The Fish and Water Operation Outlook OMR Index values are expected to range between -1,800 to -2,200 cfs this week.
- QWEST was +7800 cfs as of 1/29/2024 and is estimated to range between +5,000 to over +10,000 cfs this week, depending on precipitation levels. Real time tracking of environmental conditions, relevant thresholds and Delta Smelt catch data are updated daily at: [SacPAS: Central Valley Prediction & Assessment of Salmon](#)
- Water temperature at Rio Vista was 12.1°C and 11.8°C at Antioch as of 1/29/2024.
- Anticipated Vernalis Flows: 2,500 to 6,000 cfs

Evaluation

USBR and DWR Proposed Operations:

- Implementation of the “Integrated Early Winter Pulse Protection” action began 1/23. The Projects will coordinate their combined exports for 14 consecutive days so that the 14-day averaged OMRI for the period shall not be more negative than –2,000 cfs through 2/5.

1. Between December 1 and January 31, has any first flush condition been exceeded?

First flush conditions were exceeded on 1/21/2024. Integrated Early Winter Pulse Protection (IEWPP) will be implemented from 01/23/2024 through 2/5/2024.

2. Do DSM have a high risk of migration and dispersal into areas at high risk of future entrainment? (December 1- January 31)

Based on distribution patterns over the past decade, “first flush” flow and turbidity conditions, and recent Delta Smelt detections across the Delta, Delta Smelt are likely undergoing their population-level, upstream spawning migration. Water temperatures are conducive for spawning. A fifth experimental release of hatchery Delta Smelt occurred last week at Rio Vista and a sixth experimental release is occurring this week at Rio Vista. Information regarding their behavior post-release is limited and catch will be monitored.

While turbidity remains low at some stations in the OMR Corridor (Daily average turbidity = 2.75 NTU at Holland Cut and 3.20 FNU at Old River at Bacon Island), turbidity has increased at other stations (11.63 NTU at Old River at Franks Tract, 14.4 NTU at Clifton Court Forebay). It is uncertain how precipitation and wind this week will affect turbidity conditions in the OMR Corridor. One Delta Smelt was salvaged at the CVP on 1/27/2024.

Based on the detection of a DS in salvage, historical salvage timing, active migration (based on environmental conditions and historical patterns), and suitable spawning temperatures, risk of entrainment in the OMR corridor has increased

from low to moderate. However, the implementation of IEWPP (OMR between -1800 to -2200 cfs this week) and current low daily turbidity in portions of the OMR Corridor are expected to reduce the chance that migrating Delta Smelt will move into areas with a high likelihood of entrainment.

3. Has a spent female been collected?

This question is not applicable until February 1.

4. If OMR of -2000 cfs does not reduce OBI turbidity below 12NTU/FNU, what OMR target is deemed protective between -2000 and -5000 cfs?

This question is not applicable until February 1.

5. If OBI is 12 NTU/FNU, what do other station locations show?

This question is not applicable until February 1.

6. If OBI is 12 NTU/FNU, is a turbidity bridge avoidance action not warranted? What is the supporting information?

This question is not applicable until February 1.

7. After March 15 and if QWEST is negative, are larval or juvenile DSM within the entrainment zone of the CVP and SWP pumps based on surveys?

This question is not applicable until after March 15.

8. Based on real-time spatial distribution of Delta Smelt and currently available turbidity information, should OMR be managed to no more negative than -3,500?

This question is not applicable until March 15.

9. What do hydrodynamic models, informed by EDSM or other relevant data, suggest the estimated percentage of larval and juvenile DSM that could be entrained may be?

This question is not applicable until March 15.

Delta Smelt References

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