

Delta Monitoring Workgroup

Meeting Record 02/27/2024

Working Group Members in Attendance

- USBR: Elissa Buttermore, Randi Field, Erika Kegel
- USFWS: Not in attendance
- NMFS: Not in attendance
- CDFW: Crystal Rigby
- DWR: Mike Ford, Katie Osborn, Farida Islam, Brian Schreier
- SWRCB: Matt Holland
- Water Contractors: Shawn Acuña (MWD), Chandra Chilmakuri (SWC), Darcy Austin (SWC), Heidi Williams (Valley Water), Sarah Piramoon (Valley Water), Tom Boardman (WWD), Jose Rangel (WWD), Cindy Meyer (SLDMWA), Yuan Liu (CCWD)

Review Operations Outlook (USBR, DWR)

- Water operations are currently limited to a 14-day average OMRI of no more negative than -2,500 cfs due to the exceedance of 75% loss threshold for Steelhead; OMRI is currently the most constraining factor.
- Currently waiting for operational decisions from WOMT in response to the 100% exceedance for Steelhead.
- Whiskeytown Dam is resuming operational releases today through the outlet facility (not the spillway) at 200 cfs into Clear Creek after recent spill events.
- Keswick Dam is releasing 30,000 cfs today into the Sacramento River, 25,000 cfs tomorrow (2/28/2024), 22,000 cfs on Thursday (2/29/2024), and 19,000 cfs on Friday (3/1/2024) for storage conservation.
- On the San Joaquin, a winter instability flow at New Melones dropped flows to 1,000 cfs (2/25/2024), rose to 2,500 cfs yesterday (2/26/2024), and back down to 1,000 cfs today.
- Freeport daily average flows yesterday were just below 67,000 cfs.
- Vernalis daily average flows yesterday were 8,400 cfs; due to uncertainty with the coming storm event and dynamics from releases on the Stanislas systems, Vernalis five-day flow projections are between 7,500 cfs-8,500 cfs and ten-day flow projections are about 9,500 cfs.
- Net Delta Outflow Index was 124,000 cfs yesterday (2/26/24).
- Exports at JPP yesterday (2/26/2024) were 4,600 cfs.
- Salinity is favorable throughout the system.

- Releases on the Feather River at Oroville were at 12,000 cfs yesterday (2/26/2024) and increasing to 14,000 cfs tomorrow (2/28/2024) and anticipating releases will remain there for a few days.
- Clifton Court exports are at 2,400 cfs today and will likely remain at this level for the next few days.
- Refer to the Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook for more information.

Additional Questions or Comments

- **Question:** Do we know what the March X2 requirements are and whether we have credit?
 - **Answer:**
 - GROSS X2 REQUIREMENTS IN MARCH
 - 27 days at Port Chicago
 - 31 days at Chipps Island
 - 31 days at Collinsville
 - CREDITS CARRIED OVER FROM FEBRUARY
 - 29 days in February
 - 1 day at Chipps Island
 - 0 days at Collinsville
 - NET X2 REQUIREMENTS IN MARCH AFTER CREDITS
 - 0 days at Port Chicago
 - 30 days at Chipps Island
 - 31 days at Collinsville

Review PA Assessment (CDFW and DWR, on behalf of SaMT and SMT, for USBR)

CDFW and DWR then provided the PA Assessment update. For more information, please refer to the PA Assessment document.

Note: The PA Assessment contains a new table (Table 6C, page 10): *Salvage predictor estimates for Central Valley Steelhead from model developed in Tillotson et al. (2022) across multiple OMR flow scenarios represented within a range of percentiles*.

Additional Questions or Comments

- **Question:** Is there an understanding of how many Steelhead are upstream of the Delta?
 - **Answer:** Table 2 of PA assessment indicates that the agencies in salmon monitoring team estimate that 30-45 percent have yet to enter the Delta for the season.

- **Answer:** They are currently taking genetics on all the Steelhead so they can determine San Joaquin or Sacramento origin. By the end of the season, we hope to better understand the population we saw this season.

Review ITP Risk Assessment (DWR)

DWR provided the LFS update. For more information, please refer to the ITP Risk Assessment document.

Additional Questions or Comments

- **Question:** What happens when the 100% exceedance for Steelhead trigger is reached and how is the outcome informed? It would be helpful if something meaningful from the WOMT meetings could be relayed in a timely manner so appropriate action could be taken.
 - **Answer (Facilitator):** Historically, if a decision coming from WOMT is relevant and time sensitive for this group, an email update will be distributed promptly.
 - **Answer:** Tomorrow (Wednesday) WOMT will meet to consider what, if any, changes to current operations should be made to address the ongoing rates of Steelhead salvage. The Facilitators will be informed of WOMT's decision and can inform DMW through e-mail. In the event WOMT cannot reach agreement on what action should be taken, the issue could be elevated to the Directors for resolution as early as Thursday. In either scenario, the DMW group will be informed.
- **Question:** Is the salvage between the Federal and State facilities disproportionate? Is one "taking" more than others?
 - **Answer:** Salvage has been different at the Federal and State facilities over time this year with no clear spatial trends between them.
 - **Comment:** I've been tracking the numbers every day and have noticed the numbers go both ways; I don't know the season total numbers, though.

Acronyms

- CVP – Central Valley Project
- DCC – Delta Cross Channel
- DOI – Delta Outflow Index
- DWR – California Department of Water Resources
- DCI – Delta Mendota Canal – California Aqueduct Intertie
- DS – Delta Smelt
- FNU – Formazin Nephelometric Unit
- I:E – Inflow to Export
- IOP – Interim Operations Plan
- ITP – Incidental Take Permit

- JPE – Juvenile Production Estimate
- LFS – Longfin Smelt
- NTU – Nephelometric Turbidity Unit
- OBI – Old River Bacon Island Station
- OMR – Old and Middle River Tidally Averaged Flow
- PA – Proposed Action (Federal)
- PTM – Particle Tracking Model
- SaMT – Salmon Monitoring Team
- SLS – Smelt Larval Survey
- SMT – Smelt Monitoring Team
- SWP – State Water Project
- SWRCB – State Water Resources Control Board
- TFCF – Tracy Fish Collection Facility
- TUCP – Temporary Urgency Change Petition
- TUCO – Temporary Urgency Change Order
- USBR – United States Bureau of Reclamation
- WCS – Winter Run Chinook Salmon
- WOMT – Water Operations Management Team
- WQ – Water Quality
- YOY – Young of Year