

# Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 11/10/2020 at 9:00 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 potential effects from Delta operations of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SWP) on salmonids and green sturgeon. 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

## Agenda Items:

1. Introductions
2. Relevant Actions and Triggers
3. Outlook, Current Operations, and Weather Forecast
4. Fish Abundance and Distribution
5. Fish Exposure and Behavioral Cues
6. Other Topics
7. Additional Considerations for WOMT
8. Next SaMT Meeting

## Agenda Item 2. Relevant Actions and Triggers Review

### Delta Cross Channel (DCC) Gate Operations

From October 1 to November 30, Reclamation proposes to operate the DCC gates consistent with past operations. See Reclamation's Proposed Action (PA), Section 4.10.5.3 (page 4-55).

The DCC gates are scheduled to be cycled open during the weekends and closed during the week during the month of November (closed: November 2 to November 6; open: November 7 and November 8; closed: November 9 to November 13). Any juvenile CCV steelhead and winter-run Chinook salmon migrating past the DCC during the closure would benefit from the closure.

The DCC gates may be closed on November 16, due to precipitation, with potential to remain closed for the remainder of month. There is uncertainty as to the effects of precipitation in the system, but Reclamation will be monitoring, making adjustments and will update the SaMT as needed.

## Agenda Item 3. Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, Current Operations and Weather Forecast Project Operations

SaMT reviewed and updated the Outlook document. The updated Outlook document will be distributed via email by EOD 11/11.

It was noted that there has been some freshening within the system with potential for another storm event at the end of the week.

## Agenda Item 4. Fish Abundance and Distribution

### Fish Monitoring: Salvage

Salvage and loss of ESA-list species are reported in the Outlook and Assessment documents. No listed species were salvaged this past week.

**SaMT Estimates of Fish Distribution**

SaMT estimates of the current distribution of listed Chinook salmon, as a percentage of the population, are based on recent monitoring data and historical migration timing patterns and are reported in the Assessment.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Yet to Enter Delta (Upstream of Knights Landing)</b>	<b>In the Delta</b>	<b>Exited the Delta (Past Chipps Island)</b>
<i>Young-of-year (YOY) winter-run Chinook salmon</i>	98-100% Last week: 99-100%	0-2% Last week: 0-1%	0% Last week: 0%
<i>YOY spring-run Chinook salmon</i>	99-100% Last week: 99-100%	0-1% Last week: 0-1%	0% Last week: 0%
<i>YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon</i>	N/A Last week: N/A	N/A Last week: N/A	N/A Last week: N/A
<i>Natural origin steelhead</i>	99-100% Last week: 99-100%	0-1% Last week: 0-1%	0% Last week: 0%

Starting in 2016, the Knights Landing rotary screw traps sampled prior to October 1, and 25-50% of the juvenile winter-run Chinook salmon catch occurred before 11/1. We are seeing lower numbers relative to previous years. There is a possibility that something is contributing to a decrease in population this year. Turbidities are currently lower at Knights Landing for this year for the same relative flow, so it is possible that we may actually have 2% of the population passing this location even though we aren't observing them in the traps.

**Fish monitoring disruptions in Assessment:**

State facility shut down exports and Clifton Court inflow for several days last week for maintenance and switching of pumps (11/2-11/8). Herbicide treatment was conducted in Clifton Court Forebay last week during the maintenance work.

In light of recent surge of COVID-19 cases, do agencies have contingency plans in the event of closures? CDFW notes that smelt larval surveys are beginning in December and will only be running in the south and central Delta, monitoring at 12 stations for that month. This allows for more time and less contact. Have additional contingency plans from last year that can be put into motion as needed.

**Agenda Item 5. Fish Exposure and Behavioral Cues, Current Conditions, Sensitivity to Operational Actions**

SaMT reviewed and updated the Assessment document. The updated Assessment will be distributed via email by EOD 11/11.

It is noted that for the Feather River Hatchery, there is a report that a larger than historical number of spring-run Chinook salmon tagged in the spring that appear to be spawning in the river and not

returning to the hatchery in the fall and thus aren't contributing to the mitigation goal. Another issue is potential thiamine effects on gamete development in males. Both of these observations may contribute to the decrease in adult returns to the hatchery and the decrease in smolt production. This may impact the future surrogate hatchery releases for the spring-run criteria under the ITP.

SaMT discussed the ITP Risk Assessment. This assessment will be distributed by email to the SaMT on 11/11 and finalized on 11/13. CDFW requests that the ITP Risk Assessment have its own standing agenda item in future meetings.

### **Agenda Item 6. Other Topics**

Reclamation would like to continue developing the salmon monitoring page on SacPAS so the data is more accessible and is looking to work with a small team from SaMT to support this. Reach out to Suzanne Manugian and Elissa Buttermore if interested or provide feedback via email.

### **Agenda Item 7. Additional Considerations for WOMT**

No additional considerations for WOMT were noted.

### **Agenda Item 8.**

Next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 11/17 at 9:00 a.m. Upcoming meetings will run 90 minutes to accommodate additional activity and the need to live-edit the Weekly Assessment and Outlook documents.