

# Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 11/17/2020 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 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. 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

## Agenda Items:

1. Introductions
2. Relevant Actions and Triggers
3. Outlook, Current Operations
4. Fish Abundance and Distribution
5. Fish Exposure and Behavioural 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 will be closed again beginning November 16 and will remain closed through the Thanksgiving Holiday. Reclamation may decide to open the gates for the weekend following the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Delta water quality is still controlling export levels.

#### *Early-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Discrete Daily Loss*

From November 1 to November 30, the Department of Water Resources will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.2. The Incidental Take Permit (ITP) daily discrete loss threshold for November 1 – 30 is 6 older juvenile Chinook salmon. If the threshold is exceeded, the response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share (COA 8.10) to reach an OMR of -5,000 cfs.

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

#### *Project Operations*

SaMT reviewed and updated the Outlook document. The updated Outlook document will be distributed via email by close of business (COB) 11/18 and also will be posted to [Reclamation's Salmon Monitoring webpage](#).

## Agenda Item 4. Fish Abundance and Distribution

### *Fish Monitoring: Salvage*

Salvage and loss of ESA-listed species are reported in the Outlook and Assessment documents. No listed species were salvaged this past week at either fish collection facility. No outages or reductions in fish salvage counts were reported for this past week.

### *SaMT Estimates of Fish Distribution*

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

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

## 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 COB 11/18 and will be posted to [Reclamation's Salmon Monitoring webpage](#).

### *IITP Risk Assessment*

SaMT reviewed and updated the IITP Risk Assessment document. The updated draft Assessment will be distributed via email by EOD 11/18 for review and comment by SaMT members and will be finalized by Friday (11/20)

## Agenda Item 6. Other Topics

- Spring-run Chinook salmon Surrogate Release Timing – Coleman National Fish Hatchery is requesting input on the release timing for hatchery produced late fall-run Chinook salmon (i.e., yearling spring-run Chinook salmon surrogates) for the current water year. The current release schedule is proposed as follows:
  - Release of hatchery production late-fall run Chinook salmon: targeting early December, in conjunction with a significant precipitation event in the Sacramento Valley.
  - 1st surrogate release: ~3 days after the production release, regardless of precipitation events.
  - 2nd surrogate release: Late December, ideally preceding (by ~3-7 days) a precipitation event and at least a week after the previous surrogate release.
  - 3rd surrogate release: Mid-January, ideally preceding (by ~3-7 days) a precipitation event and at least a week after the previous surrogate release.

SaMT did not identify a reason to change the proposed release schedule. The current schedule would not interfere with ITP implementation. Reclamation and NMFS will discuss and reach a decision on who will communicate with Kevin Niemela (Coleman NFH) on the proposed schedule of releases.

2. Process for Editing SaMT Meeting Notes – Reclamation asks if the group would like to utilize a process similar to WOMT, whereby agencies review the notes in a set sequence. Might begin with NMFS and move on to CDFW and then to other agencies.
  - The process will remain the same as currently practiced due to turn-around times for review, the number of agencies that need to provide feedback, and problems with the ability for different agencies to use the SaMT share drive and live editing functions of MS Teams.
3. Website – Reclamation noted that the SaMT webpage has been going through a process of updating, including reorganizing documents by water year. The process has been time-consuming but all meeting notes, Assessments and Outlook documents eventually will be posted to the website. The process will not likely be completed for another several weeks.
  - CDFW is working on posting the ITP Risk Assessment to its website and will provide relevant information once complete.

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

No additional considerations for WOMT were noted

### **Agenda Item 8.**

Next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 24, at 9am