

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 12/29/2020 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. Roll Call
2. Updates on Water Operations and Biological Conditions
3. Open Discussion on species status
4. Live-edit Assessments (Proposed Action Assessment and ITP Risk Assessment)
5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics
6. Next Meeting

Agenda Item 2. Updates on Water Operations and Biological Conditions Relevant Actions and Triggers

Delta Cross Channel (DCC) Gate operations: The DCC gates were closed on 12/1/20 and are expected to remain closed through mid-May 2021. A positive impact of the DCC gate closure is to prevent entrainment through the DCC route of any juvenile CCV steelhead, juvenile winter-run Chinook salmon, and young-of-year (YOY) or yearling spring-run Chinook salmon into the Delta interior from the Sacramento River Basin.

Onset of the OMR Management Season: The OMR Management season begins when one or more conditions have occurred. With more than 5% of juvenile winter-run Chinook salmon (by length at date, LAD) estimated to be present in the Delta, one of the criteria has been met and OMR Management season will begin 1/1/2021.

Incidental Take Permit (ITP) Daily Loss Threshold: From 12/1/2020-12/31/2020, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.2 of the ITP. The ITP Daily Discrete Loss Threshold for December is loss of 26 older juvenile Chinook salmon from CVP and SWP. If the threshold is exceeded, the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the Coordinated Operation Agreement (COA), that would be required to reach an OMR of -5,000 cfs for five consecutive days.

ITP Daily Loss Threshold: From 1/1/2021-1/31/2021, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.3 of the ITP. The ITP Daily Loss Threshold for January is

loss of older juvenile Chinook salmon from CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.00635% of the winter-run Chinook salmon juvenile production estimate (JPE)¹. If the threshold is exceeded, the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the COA, that would be required to reach an OMR of -3,500 cfs for five consecutive days.

Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, Current Operations

SaMT reviewed and updated the Outlook document. The updated Outlook document will be distributed to the SaMT via email by close of business (COB) 12/31/2020.

It was noted that precipitation is likely to occur 12/30/20 as well as on 1/2/2021 through the end of the forecast.

Fish Monitoring: Salvage

Salvage and loss of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species are reported in the Outlook and Assessment documents. No ESA-listed species were salvaged during this past week at either of the Delta fish collection facilities. No outages or reductions in fish salvage counts were reported for this past week (12/21/2020 - 12/27/2020).

Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions: COVID-19 or air quality impacts.

Monitoring Survey	Status (as of 12/29/20)
Delta	
SWP regular counts, CWT reading, and larval sampling	Ongoing
CVP regular counts, CWT reading, and larval sampling	Ongoing
Smelt Larval Survey	Ongoing
20mm Survey	Begins in March
Spring Kodiak Trawl	Begins 1/4/2021
Bay Study	Only sampled 2 days in Dec.
DJFMP- Chipps and Sacramento Trawls	Chipps Island trawl resumed sampling 5 days a week on 12/27/2020; Sacramento Trawls ongoing, sampling 5 days a week
DJFMP- Seines	Suspended with the exception of the seine locations that inform the SCI
EDSM	Ongoing Fog Cancellation 12/21-22/2020
EMP	December surveys canceled
Mossdale	Next sampling date scheduled TBD
USGS Flow monitoring	Continuous monitoring continues
Sacramento River	
Red Bluff Diversion Dam screw trap	Ongoing
Knights Landing screw trap	Ongoing through modified staffing
Tisdale screw trap	Ongoing through modified staffing
Redd dewatering and stranding surveys	Ongoing
Sacramento Carcass and Redd Surveys	Continuing

¹ The Winter-run Project Work Team JPE Subteam finalized an interim winter-run JPE on December 29, 2020. The interim winter-run JPE will be used to calculate the daily loss threshold for the month of January until a final winter-run JPE is distributed.

Monitoring Survey	Status (as of 12/29/20)
Feather River	
Feather River screw trap	Suspended indefinitely
San Joaquin River	
SJRRP CDFW Field Monitoring	Suspended indefinitely
SJRRP USFWS and USBR Field Monitoring	Ongoing since 8/31/2020

SaMT Estimates of Fish Distribution

SaMT estimates of the current distribution of listed Chinook salmon and CCV 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. This document is available on the [Reclamation’s Salmon Monitoring Team](#) webpage.

Location	Yet to Enter Delta (Upstream of Knights Landing)	In the Delta	Exited the Delta (Past Chipps Island)
YOY winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 65-90% Last week: 75-95%	Current: 10-35% Last week: 5-25%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 93-96% Last week: 95-97%	Current: 4-7 % Last week: 3-5%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: N/A Last week: N/A	Current: N/A Last week: N/A	Current: N/A Last week: N/A
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 96-97% Last week: 97-98%	Current: 3-4% Last week: 2-3%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%

SaMT began discussing the Delta boundaries to help provide guidance for estimates of fish distribution. One proposed change was to modify the definition of the upstream boundary of “Yet to Enter Delta” from Knights Landing to Sherwood Harbor or the I Street Bridge in Sacramento for Sacramento River origin winter-run Chinook salmon, spring-run Chinook salmon, and steelhead. As well as modifying the definition for San Joaquin River origin steelhead to appropriately reflect the San Joaquin upstream boundary. However, Sherwood Harbor doesn’t consistently sample (only samples three days a week) and Knights Landing serves as the last sampling station above the I Street Bridge.

Participants noted the importance of ensuring that the definition reflect the legal boundary for the Delta as described with regulatory documents such as the ITP and NMFS biological opinion. For the Sacramento River, this boundary is the I Street Bridge and for the San Joaquin River it is the Airport Way Bridge at Vernalis. As such, participants discussed adding footnotes to the definition of “Yet to Enter Delta” as follows: [1] Sacramento River origin winter-run Chinook salmon, spring-run Chinook salmon, and steelhead: “Upstream of the I Street Bridge on the Sacramento River” and [2] San Joaquin River origin steelhead: “Upstream of the Airport Way Bridge (at Vernalis) on the San Joaquin River.”

SaMT members indicated that a clarification in definition should be brought up at the next LTO Coordination Meeting before any modification is made given potential implications for the start and end of OMR management season.

Agenda Item 3. Open Discussion on Species Status

No discussion items were noted on the call.

Agenda Item 4. Live edit Assessments

Proposed Action Assessment

SaMT reviewed and updated the Assessment document. The updated Assessment will be distributed to the SaMT via email by COB 12/31/2020. The final assessment will be posted to the [Reclamation's Salmon Monitoring Team](#) webpage.

ITP Risk Assessment

SaMT discussed the ITP Risk Assessment document. The updated draft ITP Assessment will be distributed via email by COB 12/30/2020 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB (Monday) 1/4/2021. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Tuesday, 1/5/2021 and can be found at [CDFW's Water Project Operations webpage](#).

Agenda Item 5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

No additional considerations for WOMT were noted.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 1/5/20, at 9 a.m.