

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 1/5/2021 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. Positive impacts include preventing routing of listed fish through the DCC into the interior Delta.

OMR Management Season: Onset of OMR Management season began on 1/1/21. OMR flows cannot be more negative than -5,000 cfs on a 14-day average. Additional restrictions and changes to operations may be required per the Proposed Action (PA) and the CDFW Incidental Take Permit (ITP).

ITP Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold: DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.1 of the ITP. The ITP Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of length-at-date winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 1.17% of the winter-run Chinook salmon juvenile production estimate (JPE)¹. If 50% of 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 a 14-day average OMR of -3,500 cfs. If 75% of this 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 a 14-day average OMR of -2,500 cfs.

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.

ITP Daily Loss Threshold: From 1/1/21-1/31/21, 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)². 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) 1/7/21.

Planned construction efforts on the DCC gates are ongoing. No updates were reported on the call.

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 (12/28/20 - 1/3/21).

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

Monitoring Survey	Status (as of 1/5/21)
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 1/5/21
Bay Study	Only sampled 2 days in Dec.
DJFMP- Chipps and Sacramento Trawls	Chipps Island trawl ongoing 5 days a week, resumed 12/27/20; Sacramento Trawls ongoing, sampling 5 days a week
DJFMP- Seines	Suspended with the exception of the seine locations that inform the SCI; an additional site (Clarksburg) was added to collect Chinook salmon DNA for DWR (This additional site is not included in SCI numbers).
EDSM	Only 2 crews for 12/28/20- 1/1/21
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
Feather River	

² The Winter-run Project Work Team JPE Subteam finalized an interim winter-run JPE on December 29, 20. 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 1/5/21)
Feather River screw trap	Suspended indefinitely
San Joaquin River	
SJRRP CDFW Field Monitoring	Suspended indefinitely
SJRRP USFWS and USBR Field Monitoring	Ongoing since 8/31/20

SaMT Estimates of Fish Distribution

SaMT estimates of the current distribution of listed Chinook salmon and CCV steelhead, as a percentage of each 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 [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: 55-85% Last week: 65-90%	Current: 15-45 % Last week: 10-35%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 91-94% Last week: 93-96%	Current: 6-9% Last week: 4-7 %	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: 94-95% Last week: 96-97%	Current: 5-6% Last week: 3-4%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%

The LTO Coordination Team didn't meet last week and may address the question of Delta boundary definitions raised in last week's SaMT call on Wednesday, 1/6/21.

Agenda Item 3. Open Discussion on Species Status

No additional items were noted.

Agenda Item 4. Live edit Assessments

Proposed Action Assessment

SaMT reviewed and updated the Proposed Action Assessment document. The updated Proposed Action Assessment will be distributed to the SaMT via email by COB 1/7/21. The final assessment will be posted to [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 1/6/21 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB (Thursday) 1/7/21. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday, 1/8/21 and can be found at [CDFW's Water Project Operations webpage](#).

Agenda Item 5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

- Spring run surrogate release plan: Due to the lack of rain events, the release of the production late fall-run Chinook salmon from Coleman National Fish Hatchery (CNFH) did not occur in December. The release of the hatchery production late fall-run Chinook salmon from CNFH occurred on Monday (1/4/21). The first release of late fall-run yearling spring-run surrogates is scheduled for Friday (1/8/21; 4 days after the production release of late fall-run Chinook salmon). The planned schedule was for the first release to occur ~3 days after the production release. The second and third releases of yearling spring-run surrogates will occur later in January and potentially into February, but no later than February 12. These releases are planned to occur approximately 3-7

days prior to a precipitation event and at least a week after the previous release of surrogate fish. SaMT members noted that releasing fish without significant rain event dates was not ideal, there is a need to make room in the rearing ponds at CNFH for fall-run Chinook salmon production, and holding fish longer than necessary isn't optimal, thus the need to be flexible in the release schedules.

- SaMT members indicated that a clarification in Delta boundary definition should be brought up at the next LTO Coordination Meeting.
- SaMT participants discussed the need for consistency in how many significant digits should be included after a decimal in all tables within the Outlook and Assessment documents. The group agreed to elevate the inquiry to the LTO Coordination Team for consideration.
- SaMT addressed the need for clarification regarding the "Trend" column heading in Table 2 within the Outlook document. Participants noted that "Trend" refers to triggers on loss and salvage and agreed that Farida Islam, DWR, and Brett Harvey, DWR, will propose a modification to the heading for inclusion in the following week's Outlook document.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 1/12/21, at 9 a.m.