

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 1/12/2021 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. There is a possibility that the DCC gates could be opened before Jan 31st to prevent exceeding D-1641 water quality criteria if drought conditions are observed between December 1 and January 31, and modeling indicates that water quality concern levels are exceeded during this period if the gates remain closed. If these conditions are present, Reclamation and DWR will consider opening the DCC gates for up to five days for up to two events within this period to avoid D-1641 water quality exceedances following a risk assessment of this action. During a DCC gates opening between December 1 and January 31, the CVP and SWP will divert at Health and Safety pumping levels.

OMR Management Season: Onset of OMR Management season began on 1/1/21 due to the exceedance of the 5% threshold for the winter-run Chinook salmon population presence within the Delta. Old and Middle River (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 coordinated operations agreement (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.

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) 1/14/21.

Planned construction efforts on the DCC gates are ongoing. No updates regarding the progress of the construction actions were reported on the call.

Fish Monitoring: Salvage

Salvage and loss of Endangered Species Act (ESA)/California Endangered Species Act (CESA)-listed species are reported in the Outlook and Assessment documents for the prior week. No ESA/CESA-listed species were salvaged during this past week at either of the Delta fish collection facilities (1/4/21 - 1/10/21). No outages or reductions in fish salvage counts were reported for this past week (1/4/21 - 1/10/21).

However, the first CCV steelhead salvaged of WY 2021 was salvaged on 1/11/2021 and reported just prior to the SaMT call (after the end of this week's weekly salvage report).

The SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions: COVID-19 or air quality impacts as addressed within Attachment A of the Assessment.

A SaMT member noted that no Glen-Colusa Irrigation District (GCID) data were available for several days last week and asked for additional details. Duane Linander, CDFW, indicated that he would inquire regarding the status of GCID operations and data on those days. After the SaMT call, GCID staff confirmed that the cone was lifted on 1/4/21 due to the production release of late fall-run Chinook salmon from Coleman National Fish Hatchery and anticipation of the environmental conditions (e.g., high flows and massive debris accumulation) typically associated with hatchery releases. The cone was lowered and fishing resumed on 1/9/21.

SaMT Estimates of Fish Distribution

^{1,2} 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.

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	In the Delta	Exited the Delta (Past Chipps Island)
YOY winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 45-80% Last week: 55-85%	Current: 20-55% Last week: 15-45%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 86-89% Last week: 91-94%	Current: 11-14% Last week: 6-9%	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: 84-90% Last week: 94-95%	Current: 10-16% Last week: 5-6%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%

Results from genetic testing of tissue samples collected during the Chipps Island trawls in November and December for the past several years are available. Findings show that genetic winter-run Chinook salmon are present in the samples from the Chipps Island trawls during these months. These data will be distributed to SaMT soon.

Agenda Item 3. Open Discussion on Species Status

No discussion items were noted.

Agenda Item 4. Live edit Assessments

Proposed Action Assessment

SaMT reviewed and updated the PA Assessment document. The updated PA Assessment will be distributed to the SaMT via email by COB 1/14/21. 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 1/13/21 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB (Thursday) 1/14/21. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday, 1/15/21 and can be found at [CDFW’s Water Project Operations webpage](#).

Agenda Item 5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

- SaMT participants discussed the precision of Delta performance thresholds as they relate to the number of significant digits used in the variables required in the calculations of these thresholds. A collaborative draft document with additional proposed detail regarding significant digits and rounding rules was shared, however SaMT participants agreed to shelve the discussion with the LTO group until a final JPE letter for winter-run Chinook salmon is produced.
- A SaMT member noted that Geir Aasen’s weekly salvage report shows no State Water Project daily exports at Clifton Court Outflow for 1/8/2021 and 1/9/2021. Another SaMT member provided the correct numbers noting that actual daily exports were pretty close to the projected figures.

- 1/18/21 is a Federal and State holiday which may impact the ability to deliver the weekly Assessment and Outlook documents. Reclamation will consult and provide a plan for timely delivery of data and documents prior to the 1/19/21 meeting.
- Rafi Silberblatt noted a request from Reclamation that a 5-minute break be included within meetings running longer than 1.5 hours. For the near-term, Rafi will attempt to keep calls under 1.5 hours, but if we are consistently running over, the 5 minute break will be provided.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 1/19/21, at 9 a.m.