

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 1/19/2021 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)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.

No outages or reductions in fish salvage counts were reported for this past week (1/11/21 - 1/18/21).

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

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	In the Delta	Exited the Delta (Past Chipps Island)
YOY winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 40-70% Last week: 45-80%	Current: 30-60% Last week: 20-55%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 80-90% Last week: 86-89%	Current: 10-20% Last week: 11-14%	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: 80-90% Last week: 84-90%	Current: 10-20% Last week: 10-16%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%

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 1/21/21. The final assessment will be posted to [Reclamation’s Salmon Monitoring Team](#) webpage.

¹ The IEP Winter-run Chinook Salmon Project Work Team JPE Subteam finalized a winter-run JPE on January 15, 2021. The interim winter-run JPE will be used to calculate the daily loss threshold for the month of January until the official winter-run JPE letter is formally finalized by NMFS and CDFW and distributed.

ITP Risk Assessment

SaMT discussed the ITP Risk Assessment document. The updated draft ITP Assessment will be distributed via email by COB 1/20/21 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB Thursday, 1/21/21. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday, 1/22/21 and can be found at [CDFW's Water Project Operations webpage](#).

Agenda Item 5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

- The SaMT noted that it needs clarification from WOMT as to when to start operating to the final JPE. The winter-run Chinook salmon Project Work Team JPE subteam letter for the final JPE was released on 1/15/21, but it may be a couple weeks before the official letter from NMFS and CDFW is issued.
- Paired releases of acoustically and CWT tagged fish allow for Rotary Screw Trap (RST) efficiency testing at low-flows. CDFW requests any interested SaMT members contact Ken Kundargi.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 1/26/21, at 9 a.m.