

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 3/2/2021 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. Final versions of the Meeting Notes, Proposed Action Assessment, and Fish and Water Operations Outlook 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 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 natural-origin Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of length-at-date natural-origin 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. The ITP hatchery-origin Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of length-at-date

¹ The IEP Winter-run Chinook Salmon Project Work Team JPE Subteam finalized a winter-run JPE on 1/15/2021, a final letter was issued by NMFS to Reclamation on 1/25/2021, and a final letter was issued by CDFW to DWR on 1/26/2021.

hatchery-origin winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.12% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE². If 50% of either 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 either 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 3/1/21 - 3/31/21, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.3 of the ITP. The ITP Daily Loss Threshold for March is loss of older juvenile Chinook salmon from CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.0146% (of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE¹). 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) 3/4/21.

The SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions as addressed within the Operations Outlook and updated accordingly.

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 document, available on [Reclamation’s Salmon Monitoring Team](#) webpage.

Location	Yet to Enter Delta	In the Delta	Exited the Delta (Past Chipps Island)
Young-of-year (YOY) winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 5-15% Last week: 5-20%	Current: 75-90% Last week: 75-94%	Current: 5-10% Last week: 1-5%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 40-45% Last week: 45-50%	Current: 55-60% Last week: 50-55%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 75-85% Last week: 85-90%	Current: 15-25% Last week: 10-15%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 40-50% Last week: 45-55%	Current: 35-50% Last week: 35-50%	Current: 10-15% Last week: 5-10%

Agenda Item 3. Open Discussion on Species Status

SaMT members expressed concern regarding survival of hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon given a lack of clarity as to where they are in the Delta system. Fish were released at a smaller size than cohorts in previous years and, in combination with thiamine-related issues, SaMT is concerned about their status and viability. Overall detection numbers of acoustic tagged hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon are low with corresponding low estimates of survival from the release location downstream to the Sacramento area receiver locations.

No wild winter-run Chinook salmon have been seen in salvage. There is not currently a good measure for estimating the abundance of these fish just prior to entering the Delta. This persistent knowledge

² The single-year loss threshold and loss tracking for hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon does not include releases into Battle Creek.

gap may require some evaluation of the JPE calculation methods but is outside the scope of the SaMT.

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 3/4/21. 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 by CDFW via email by COB 3/3/21 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB Thursday, 3/4/21. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday, 3/5/21 and can be found at [CDFW's Water Project Operations webpage](#).

Agenda Item 5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

The SaMT addressed the following items:

- Geographic boundaries in Fish Distribution table: pending resolution.
- Life stage specificity: resolved with guidance to confine life stages in the PA Assessment to those within the Delta.
- Significant digits and rounding: resolved with guidance to use commonly accepted rounding rules and significant digits.

No additional considerations for WOMT were noted.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 3/9/21, at 9 a.m.