

# Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

**Conference call: 5/11/2021 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. Construction on the DCC Gates is now complete and the gates are ready for normal operation after successful testing last week. A final date for gate-opening has not yet been determined. Reclamation is monitoring salinity predictions which will inform a decision regarding gate opening and has been in talks with the SWRCB regarding “emergency needs” of the system associated with extreme drought conditions.

OMR Management Season: Onset of Old and Middle River (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. 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 natural winter-run Chinook salmon juvenile production estimate

(JPE)<sup>1</sup>. The ITP hatchery-origin Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of length-at-date hatchery-origin winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.12% of the hatchery production winter-run Chinook salmon JPE<sup>2</sup>. 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 5/1/21-5/30/21, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.3 of the ITP. The ITP Daily Loss Threshold for May is loss of natural older juvenile Chinook salmon from CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.0077% of the natural winter-run Chinook salmon JPE<sup>1</sup>. 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.

ITP Spring-run Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold: From 3/1/21 – 6/30/21, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.4 of the ITP. The ITP Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold includes five release groups, including two release groups of fall-run Chinook salmon from Coleman National Fish Hatchery and two release groups of spring-run Chinook salmon from Feather River Fish Hatchery. If cumulative loss from CVP and SWP is greater than 0.25% for any release group, 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) 5/11/21.

DWR noted that dam safety inspections of the levee surrounding Clifton Court Forebay is currently scheduled to occur on May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The forebay will be drawn down on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the inspection will occur on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Additional maintenance work will occur at the Banks Pumping Plant through May 21<sup>st</sup>. These actions will affect operations of the fish salvage facilities and pumping plant.

The SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions as addressed within the Operations Outlook and updated accordingly. Sacramento trawls and Bay seines have resumed, and CDFW has assumed monitoring at Mossdale.

*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
Young-of-year (YOY) winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 0-1% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 5-10% Last week: 5-20%	Current: 89-95% Last week: 79-95%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 0-5%	Current: 40-50%	Current: 45-60%

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

Location	Yet to Enter Delta	In the Delta	Exited the Delta
	Last week: 0-5%	Last week: 50-60 %	Last week: 35-50%
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon <sup>3</sup>	Current: 0-1% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 5% Last week: 5-10%	Current: 94-95% Last week: 89-95%
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 5% Last week: 5-10%	Current: 20-35% Last week: 30-45%	Current: 60-75% Last week: 50-60%

### Agenda Item 3. Open Discussion on Species Status

NMFS noted that several adipose clipped Chinook salmon in the spring-run and fall-run LAD size classification have been observed at the Tracy Fish Collection Facilities over the past several weeks that do not have CWTs. NMFS and CDFW will inquire to their contacts as to the status and potential identification of these fish and report back to SaMT.

NMFS also noted that there were 10 Chinook salmon identified as acoustic tagged study fish in the Chippis Island Trawl during the previous week, which is an unusually high number. After the close of the call, USFWS reported via email notification that these fish had been mis-identified in the DAT email and were adipose clipped fish from a special study and were not acoustic tagged fish.

### 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 5/11/21. 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 5/11/21 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB Thursday, 5/13/21. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday, 5/14/21 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, 5/18/21, at 9 a.m.

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<sup>3</sup> Estimation of YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook Salmon distribution is complicated by multiple releases over a prolonged period of time .