

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 6/1/2021 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).

Jeff Stuart and Kristin Begun from NMFS will be out the week of 6/7/21. Barb Bryne, Katrina Poremba and Page Vick will be on the call for NMFS and available for questions as needed.

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. Reclamation informed SaMT that the DCC gates will remain closed until further notice in an effort to address salinity intrusion into the lower Sacramento River due to the ongoing drought conditions and to maintain water quality standards at Three Mile Slough per the TUCP request. Positive impacts include preventing routing of listed fish through the DCC into the interior Delta.

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). SaMT will begin evaluating the criteria for the OMR management season offramps for both the PA and ITP. SaMT tracks the percentage of listed salmonid groups (Chinook and steelhead) that have exited the Delta past Chipps Island, as well as water temperatures at key compliance locations in the Delta (i.e., Prisoners Point and Mossdale) beginning 6/1/21.

IIP Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold: DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.1 of the IIP. The IIP 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)¹. The IIP 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 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.

IIP 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 IIP. The IIP Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold includes five release groups, including three 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 both the 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) 6/1/21.

A SaMT member asked if the DCC gates might be opened in the event that the Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) is granted and Emmaton is moved to Three-Mile Slough as a means of facilitating water quality improvement. Randi Field, Reclamation, indicated that if using the DCC gates would help water quality, they may be used, however, there is too much uncertainty to answer that question at this time.

The SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions as addressed within the Operations Outlook and updated accordingly. CDFW noted that water temperatures at the Tisdale RST reached 73° last weekend and as such the trap has been raised and monitoring is suspended for the season. Knights Landing RST is still operating.

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: 0-1% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 98-100% Last week: 98-100%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 0-5% Last week: 0-5%	Current: 5-15% Last week: 20-30%	Current: 80-95% Last week: 65-80%

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.

² 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
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon ³	Current: 0% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 0-1% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 99-100% Last week: 98-100%
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 0-5% Last week: 5%	Current: 5-10% Last week: 5-20%	Current: 85-95% Last week: 75-90%

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 6/1/21. 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 6/1/21 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB Thursday, 6/3/21. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday, 6/4/21 and can be found at [CDFW's Water Project Operations webpage](#).

Agenda Item 5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

Bryant Giorgi, DWR, confirmed the planned outage at Banks Pumping Plant associated with maintenance activities from 5/31/21 to 6/4/21. No salvage of fish will occur at the Skinner Delta Fish Protection Facilities during this time period. He also noted that Grant Line Canal was closed on 5/27/21 resulting in a change in the OMR equation on that day to slightly more negative.

No additional considerations for WOMT were noted.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 6/8/21, at 9 a.m.

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