

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 6/8/2021 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. Reclamation informed SaMT that the DCC gates were opened on Friday, 6/4 through Monday, 6/7. DCC gates are now closed and 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 associated with gate closure 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 by that date. 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 began evaluating the criteria for the OMR management season offramps on 6/1/21 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). As of the 6/8/21 meeting, OMR management season offramp was met for salmonids, as detailed within Table 2 of the Outlook document for the PA and Table 3 for the ITP.

For the PA, water temperatures at Mossdale exceeded 71.6°F for seven days in June which offramps OMR management for all salmonids. Additionally, the fish distribution criterion for offramping OMR management (>95% having exited the Delta) was satisfied for natural origin winter-run Chinook salmon and natural origin YOY spring-run Chinook salmon.

For the ITP, water temperatures at Mossdale and Prisoner's Point exceeded 71.6°F for seven days in June and the percentage of hatchery and natural origin winter-run Chinook salmon and natural origin spring-run Chinook salmon exiting the Delta exceeded 95%.

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)¹. 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 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 Spring-run Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold: From 3/1/21 – 6/30/21 or the end of OMR management for salmonids, 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 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) 6/8/21.

Bryant Giorgi, DWR, noted that current challenges associated with outflow and salinity in the Delta are requiring significant modifications to achieve additional flow. These actions are part of an effort to get Delta outflow to meet a 14-day average of 3,000 cfs.

Randi Field, Reclamation, indicated that meeting EC compliance at Jersey Point is difficult, as well as long-term EC goals for the Old River corridor. EC at Three Mile Slough is increasing as well.

Bryant Giorgi, DWR, explained that increasing flows out of New Melones are expected to increase QWEST and Delta outflow.

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.

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
Young-of-year (YOY) winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 0% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 0-1% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 99-100% Last week: 98-100%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 0-1% Last week: 0-5%	Current: 0-1% Last week: 5-15%	Current: 98-100% Last week: 80-95%
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon ³	Current: 0% Last week: 0%	Current: 0% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 100% Last week: 99-100%
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 0-1% Last week: 0-5%	Current: 0-5% Last week: 5-10%	Current: 94-100% Last week: 85-95%

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 6/8/21. 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 6/8/21 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB Thursday, 6/10/21. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday, 6/11/21 and can be found at [CDFW’s Water Project Operations webpage](#).

Agenda Item 5. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

The OMR management season for salmonids has ended, but SaMT members noted that OMR management is still be in effect for Delta smelt or longfin smelt. Next week’s meeting will be used as a discussion of the season in preparation for producing the water year 2021 OMR flow management seasonal report.

No additional considerations for WOMT were noted.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 6/15/21, 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 .