

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Conference call: 3/8/2022 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 U.S. 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

Feather River releases from Oroville are currently 5,200 cfs and will decrease once the number of Chipps days are determined. The forecast update will be released on 3/8 with updated number of Chipps days.

Sacramento River releases at Freeport were 12,700 cfs yesterday and will remain stable until the number of X2 days are reached.

Clifton Court Forebay may have potential for higher exports during the transition from the 11,400 cfs to 7,100 cfs Delta outflow. Clifton Court exports will range from 300-800 cfs this week.

QWEST was approximately 1,900 cfs and will decrease later in the week once the updated Chipps day and the transition to increase exports occurs.

X2 is currently 74 km and should increase with the strong neap cycle.

Releases on the American River are 2,000 cfs and operators are anticipating an opportunity to reduce later in the week.

Stanislaus River releases are currently 700 cfs and will decrease to 600 cfs on 3/9 and to 500 cfs on 3/10 to meet the D-1641 Vernalis flow requirements.

For more details on salvage that occurred in the past week please refer to the Operations Outlook, PA Assessment, and ITP Risk Assessment documents. Additionally, all salvage information can be found online at [CDFW's Public Data Library](#).

Actions Currently in Effect

- Delta Cross Channel (DCC) Gate operations (PA 4.10.5.3): The DCC gates were closed on 11/30/21 and are expected to remain closed through mid-May 2022. Positive impacts include preventing routing of listed fish through the DCC into the interior Delta. From February 1 to May 20, the DCC gates will be closed consistent with D-1641. From May 21 to June 15, the DCC gates will be closed for a total of 14 days, consistent with D-1641.
- OMR Management Season (PA 4.10.5.10.1; COA 8.3.2): Onset of OMR Management season began on 1/1/22 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 PA and the SWP Incidental Take Permit (ITP)
- ITP Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold (COA 8.6.1): 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 unclipped 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). If 50% of the threshold is exceeded (loss >731.47), 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 (loss >1,097.21), 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.
 - The ITP hatchery-origin Chinook salmon Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of clipped length-at-date winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.12% of the winter-run Chinook salmon hatchery-origin JPE. If 50% of the threshold is exceeded (loss > 90.93), 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 (loss > 136.39), 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 Older Juvenile Daily Loss Threshold (COA 8.6.3): From 3/1/22 - 3/31/22, 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 0.00146% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE. If the threshold is exceeded (loss >18.26), 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 no more negative than -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) 3/8/22.

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: 0-15% Last week: 1-15%	Current: 80-90% Last week: 80-89%	Current: 5-10% Last week: 5-10%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 20-35% Last week: 22-35%	Current: 65-80% Last week: 65-78%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 94-98% Last week: 95-99%	Current: 2-6% Last week: 1-5%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 38-57% Last week: 38-57%	Current: 28-42% Last week: 28-42%	Current: 15-20% Last week: 15-20%

Agenda Item 3. Open Discussion on Species Status

The SaMT expressed concern that the number of winter run Chinook salmon detected at monitoring locations seems low given the precipitation events that occurred early in Water Year 2022 (October and December 2021). Due to the low detections at monitoring locations, historical timing has been relied upon to portray where fish are at in the system.

Agenda Item 4. Live edit Assessments

Proposed Action Assessment

SaMT reviewed and updated the current week’s PA Assessment document. The updated PA Assessment will be distributed to the SaMT via email by COB 3/8/22. 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 via email by COB 3/8/22 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB Thursday 3/10/22. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday 3/11/22 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.

Ken Kundargi is no longer serving as CDFW's SaMT representative and Crystal Rigby will be the lead will be taking over as the CDFW SaMT representative. Please send any questions for CDFW to Crystal Rigby at crystal.rigby@wildlife.ca.gov.

A subgroup of SaMT remained on after the main meeting concluded to discuss how weekly fish distribution estimates are decided. The group had differing opinions on whether the "Yet to Enter Delta" section of the distribution table was mathematically correctly calculated this week (0-15% or 1-14%). The group concluded that the ranges in the fish distribution table are to incorporate a difference of opinions as well as uncertainty and should be informed by real-time monitoring data and historical timing. Further, the group agreed upon a continuation of how SaMT, and previously DOSS, has historically estimated ranges including rules that fish should not move upstream (e.g., the distribution percentage must always be moved from upstream to downstream), and that the total percentage across all three columns should equal 100%.

Agenda Item 6.

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 3/15/22, at 9 a.m.