

# Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

**Conference call: 5/17/2022 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

Sacramento River releases out of Keswick Dam are currently 3,500 cfs and will likely remain steady until temperatures increase. Temperature control gates will likely be opened on 5/17/2022.

Sacramento River flows at Freeport are currently at 8,000 cfs and should remain within the 7,000 cfs to 8,000 cfs range.

American River releases out of Nimbus Dam are currently at 1,500 cfs with no anticipated changes.

Feather River releases out of Oroville Dam are currently at 2,200 cfs with no anticipated changes. Decreases may occur at the end of this week or next week if conditions allow.

San Joaquin River flows at Vernalis are currently at 712 cfs with no anticipated changes.

Stanislaus River releases out of Goodwin Dam are currently at 500 cfs. An increase may be necessary to meet Vernalis D-1641 flow requirements.

Delta exports at Jones Pumping Plant are at 900 cfs with no anticipated changes.

Clifton Court Forebay exports are currently 600 cfs. Banks Pumping Plant will be offline from 5/15/2022 to 5/20/2022 for maintenance during which time fish salvage at Skinner Fish Facility will not occur. Exports into Clifton Court Forebay and from Jones Pumping Plant will continue. By the end of the day on 5/19/2022, there will be 0.0 ft elevation at Clifton Court, and it may be difficult to get water in on 5/20/2022.

Combined Delta outflow on 5/16/2022 was 4,800 cfs and is expected to increase today to approximately 5,500 cfs.

QWEST was at +100 cfs on 5/16/2022 and could fluctuate between -500 cfs and +500 cfs throughout the week.

A strong spring tide is anticipated to increase salinity at Emmaton.

Construction on Middle River agriculture barriers began on 5/10/2022 and is expected to close on 5/16/2022. The Old River Tracy barrier was open on 5/11/2022 and is anticipated to close on 5/27/2022. Grant Line is anticipated to begin today with closure of the weir occurring between 6/1/2022 and 6/4/2022. The closure of Grant Line is based on changes to the OMR index.

For 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

- The Temporary Urgency Change Order (TUCO) was approved on 4/4/2022 and will be in effect until 6/30/2022. The TUCO approves the changes described below:
  - Reduces the Delta outflow requirement as measured by the Net Delta Outflow Index (NDOI) from a minimum of 7,100 cubic-feet per second (cfs) on a 3-day running average to 4,000 cfs on a 14-day running average. From May 1 – June 30, unmodified D-1641 includes an offramp to a minimum average flow of 4,000 cfs if the Sacramento River Index is less than 8.1 MAF at the 90% exceedance level.
  - Moves the Western Delta agricultural salinity compliance point on the Sacramento River at Emmaton 2.5 to 3 miles upstream at Threemile Slough.
  - Limits the maximum export rate to 1,500 cfs whenever unmodified D-1641 requirements are not being met.

- Reduces the minimum monthly average flow requirement on the San Joaquin River at Airport Way Bridge, Vernalis from 710-1,140 cfs (April 1-14 and May 16-June 30) and 3,110-3,540 cfs (April 15 – May 15) to a minimum monthly average of 710 cfs. Pursuant to the NMFS (2019) Biological Opinion on the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, Reclamation proposes to operate New Melones Reservoir on the Stanislaus River in accordance with Stepped Release Plan, which includes a spring pulse flow (approximately April 15 – May 15). Reclamation proposes to increase New Melones Reservoir releases and Stanislaus River flows, if necessary, to meet the proposed Vernalis base flow of 710 cfs.
- The Interim Operations Plan (IOP) is currently in effect resulting from a court order on 3/11/2022 and will determine operations for the remainder of WY 2022. Federal and State management are discussing how the IOP will affect the SaMT's weekly requirements. Reclamation shall adopt the following provisions of the SWP ITP:
  - 8.5.2 Larval and Juvenile Delta Smelt Protection
  - 8.6.1 Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold
  - 8.6.2 Early-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Discrete Daily Loss Threshold
  - 8.6.3 Mid- and Late-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Daily Loss Threshold
  - 8.6.4 Daily Spring-run Chinook Salmon Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold
  - 8.7 OMR Flexibility During Delta Excess Conditions
  - 8.8 End of OMR Management
- DCC Gate operations (PA 4.10.5.3): The DCC gates were closed on 11/30/2021 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 1/01/2022 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 5/1/2022 – 5/31/2022, 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 older juvenile Chinook salmon from CVP and SWP greater than 0.0077% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE. If the threshold is exceeded (loss >9.63), 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.
- ITP Daily Spring-Run Chinook Salmon Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold (COA 8.6.4): From 3/1/2022 – 6/30/2022, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.4 of the ITP. The ITP Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold for WY 2022 includes four fall-run release groups from Coleman National Fish Hatchery (CNFH) and one spring-run release groups from Feather River Fish Hatchery (FRFH). If cumulative loss from CVP and SWP is greater than 0.25% for any release group (CNFH Group 1: loss >1,799.60; CNFH Group 2: loss >1,873.42; CNFH Group 3: loss >2,646.10, CNFH Group 4: loss >847.74, FRFH Group 1: loss >1823.00), 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) 5/17/2022.

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. SaMT provides distribution estimates in five percent increments when feasible. These estimates are reported in the final Assessment document, available on [Reclamation's Salmon Monitoring Team](#) webpage.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Yet to Enter Delta</b>	<b>In the Delta</b>	<b>Exited the Delta</b>
Young-of-year (YOY) winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 0% Last week: 0-1%	Current: 5-10% Last week: 4-20%	Current: 90-95% Last week: 80-95%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 1-5% Last week: 1-10%	Current: 5-29% Last week: 10-39%	Current: 70-90% Last week: 60-80%
YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 0% Last week: 0%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%	Current: 100% Last week: 100%
Natural origin steelhead	Current: 1-5% Last week: 1-5%	Current: 10-25% Last week: 15-30%	Current: 70-89% Last week: 65-84%

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

None.

### **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 5/17/2022. 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 5/17/2022 for review by SaMT members with comments due COB Thursday 5/19/2022. The ITP Risk Assessment will be finalized by Friday 5/20/2022 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.

SaMT discussed whether to delineate between the upper and lower areas of the Feather River when referring to forecasted distribution within Central Valley and Delta regions given the addition of rotary screw traps (RST's). The lower Feather River (geographically) starts downstream of the fish barrier dam. However, when referring to RSTs, CDFW traps are considered the lower Feather River traps in relation to DWR traps that are located upstream (Herringer Riffle and Eye Side channel).

### **Agenda Item 6. Next Meeting**

The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 5/24/2022, at 9 a.m.