

Smelt Monitoring Team – Tuesday, July 12th, 2022

PARTICIPANTS

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Kearns & West (KW)

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss topics related to Smelt Monitoring Team (SMT) logistics and governance.
- Debrief water year 2022 season.
- Suggest improvements for water year 2023 season.

ACTION ITEMS

- SMT members to propose meeting format and schedule changes to their Long-Term Operations (LTO) group representative:
 - Joint SMT and Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) operations update at 9:00 a.m.
 - Move Delta Monitoring Workgroup (DMW) meetings to Wednesday mornings.
- CDFW to lead conversion of Incidental Take Permit (ITP) Risk Assessment sections 1-A and 1-B to a tabular format.
- SMT to consider the use of a document sharing platform, e.g., Microsoft Teams, to allow members to view assessments during meetings.
- CDFW to include identification status information and track seasonal catch totals in survey update emails.
- CDFW to support development of sub-group to identify abiotic and biotic factors indicating Delta Smelt (DS) may move into areas at high risk of entrainment in the absence of a first flush.
 - Sub-group to meet in August or September and report back to the SMT in the fall.

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Schedule and Format

Consider Switching times for SMT and SaMT

After consideration, it is unlikely that SMT and SaMT could switch times due to pre-existing arrangements across agency calendars. However, the same operations staff attend each meeting providing an opportunity for operations updates to be consolidated into a 15-minute session for SaMT and SMT members at 9:00 a.m. prior to the beginning of the SaMT meeting. SMT and SaMT members can then pose targeted operations questions at the beginning of their respective meetings.

Streamline SMT Meetings

The SMT discussed approaches to streamline meetings:

- Leverage email templates to transmit more information online and verbally report only necessary content during meetings.
- Remain vigilant that questions and conversations are relevant to pertinent decisions.
- Consolidate meeting sections (e.g., shared operations update between SaMT and SMT; see additional suggestions for agenda streamlining below).
- Clarify at the beginning of the meeting whether there is potential for the SMT to make a recommendation and prioritize subsequent discussions accordingly.
- Continue to develop tools to help guide risk assessment and streamline discussions, such as Longfin Smelt (LFS) entrainment modeling and conceptual models.

The SMT proposed the following adjustments to the agenda, with the goal of streamlining meetings:

- Part 1: Update Water Operations and Biological Conditions
 - Relevant Actions and Triggers: Focus discussion on what is active and triggered and forgo reading content directly from the Preferred Action (PA) and ITP action summary tables.
 - Current Operations & Outlook: Consolidate the operations report to a 15-minute update at 9:00 a.m. with the SaMT. Use SMT meeting time for clarifying questions.
 - Review of Environmental Conditions and Survey Updates: Report only necessary information on survey updates and distribute the remainder via standardized emails.
- Part 2: Open discussion on species status (Structured-Unstructured Time)
 - Continue updates on pertinent biotic and abiotic conditions, triggers, and focusing on any PTM results or needs.
- Part 3: Live edit Assessments
 - PA Assessment: Keep the same.
 - ITP Risk Assessment: Reformat Sections 1-A and 1-B into tables.
 - Incorporate longer break for reviewing live edited language.
- Part 4: Additional Considerations/Next Meeting
 - No edits.

Assessment/Notes

Live Editing

Carrying over language from the previous week's assessments sometimes led to outdated information persisting through multiple assessments. The SMT supported CDFW's suggestion to convert sections 1-A and 1-B of the ITP Risk Assessment into a table. The SMT also recommended utilizing a skeleton outline of the assessment as a starting point for developing new language while keeping text from the previous assessment available to pull from when appropriate. A 10 to 15-minute break near the end of SMT meetings could be used to review live edited language and which may reduce the overall time the SMT spends wordsmithing content for the PA Assessment and ITP Risk Assessment. Additionally, a document hosting platform such as Microsoft Teams may prove useful to allow SMT members to view the documents on their own devices during live editing. CDFW pointed out that agencies may not be able to

use SharePoint or other document sharing platforms for live editing due to concerns around tracking versions of document but these platforms could be used for document sharing.

The SMT also noted it could be helpful to develop a list of standard phrases to support more efficient drafting of text during meetings.

Survey Updates

The SMT agreed the reporting template USFWS developed for EDSM Phase 2 survey updates was effective and easy to reference. CDFW will incorporate elements of these reports into their survey updates, e.g., tracking identification status (primary, QC'd, confirmed) in catch tables and noting seasonal catch totals (primary and confirmed) in the body of update emails. USBR will consider how to clarify identification status in the PA Assessment. CDFW will also explore if salvage updates can be formatted in a way that allows them to be copied directly into the week's assessments.