

# Smelt Monitoring Team – Tuesday, November 3, 2020

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## Participants

- CDFW
- DWR
- SWRCB
- USBR
- USFWS
- Kearns & West

## Actions Items

- Kearns & West to share proposed process and timeline for sharing meeting materials.
- SMT members to email Kearns & West re: preference for 60- or 90-minute meetings.
- Kearns & West to follow up with DWR re: X2 tool.
- CDFW to share final FMWT tally for Delta Smelt and Longfin Smelt with USBR and CDFW.

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Introductions & Agenda Review

The facilitator lead introductions and reviewed meeting logistics.

- The meeting agenda and deliverables will follow the OMR Guidance Document from February 2020 until a revised version of the OMR Guidance Document is finalized (ETA November 19).

The facilitator reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda.

- CDFW noted that the ITP Risk Assessment needs to bin and define risk (i.e. high or low with an explanation of what each level means). CDFW emphasized that the ITP Risk Assessment is a product of the SMT and not solely a CDFW decision. The primary goal of the ITP Risk Assessment is to provide clear advice to WOMT or a description of any disagreement.

### 2. SMT Logistics, Timelines, Expectations

The facilitator reviewed the meeting materials and explained when they would be circulated to the group.

- OMR Guidance Document
- Operations Outlook
  - USBR circulates on Monday afternoon/evening; then live edits during SMT call.
- Assessment
  - Previous week's Assessment will be circulated on Monday afternoon/evening; then live edited during SMT call to reflect changes that occurred over the last week.
- ITP Risk Assessment

- CDFW circulates on Tuesday night/Wednesday mornings based on SMT call. Group to share feedback by 4 pm Thursday, and CDFW will finalize on Friday.
- Meeting Notes
  - Kearns & West circulates on Tuesday evening for feedback by Thursday afternoon. Kearns & West and USBR will finalize on Fridays so the notes can be posted on Mondays.
  - Notes will focus on discussion and other items not captured in the Assessment or Outlook.
- All documents will be shared via email. Comments should be provided via redline edits; agencies should compile all comments into a single response.
- USFWS indicated their support for the proposed process and timeline for sharing documents, acknowledging that the revised Guidance Document may result in a modified process.

The facilitator noted some SMT members expressed interest in extending the meetings to 90 minutes and asked for feedback via email.

USFWS expressed interest in integrating time for discussion earlier in the agenda (i.e. prior to completing the Assessment).

### 3. Relevant Actions & Triggers

USBR stated that there are currently no relevant actions or triggers for Delta Smelt. The first one will be integrated first flush, which begins on December 1.

CDFW outlined the conditions of approval described in the ITP, most of which also begin on December 1. CDFW also briefly described condition of approval 8.1.5.2 which tasks the SMT with conducting weekly risk assessments from November through the end of OMR management for both Delta Smelt and Longfin Smelt.

### 4. Current Operations & Outlook

USBR and DWR shared operations updates.

- USFWS asked for values for San Luis storage.
  - DWR shared that the overall storage is 931,000 AF, and the SWP share is 531,000 AF.

The group discussed the statement on the state of Delta Smelt included in the Delta section of the Outlook.

- The group clarified that the geographic presence of Delta Smelt is likely focused downstream of the confluence. They also reflected that, given the current limited distribution data, their understanding of smelt life history is informing their judgement of smelt behavior at this time of year.
- USFWS suggested using X2 to help interpolate where Delta Smelt might be located and noted DWR produced a spreadsheet to assist with this last year.

### 5. Review of Environmental Conditions and Survey Updates

CDFW shared survey updates.

- The final FMWT tally should be available later this week.

USFWS reported on EDSM.

- Phase 3 (juvenile/subadult) began in late June and continues through the end of November.
- Phase 1 (adult) begins in December and will involve sampling in the Cache Slough/Liberty Island, Sacramento River Shipping Channel, Lower Sacramento, Lower San Joaquin, Southern Delta, Suisun Bay, Suisun Marsh, and Western Delta strata.

CDFW provided a salvage update.

- No salvage to report.

USBR asked if any of the planned sampling would be cancelled this season due to COVID or air quality.

- No changes at this time.

USBR shared water quality data and the seven-day weather forecast for Antioch.

## 6. Risk Assessment Questions for Weekly Evaluation of Delta Smelt

CDFW recommended conveying to WOMT that there is a low risk of entrainment for Delta Smelt across all potential OMR levels for the next week.

- USFWS asked for clarification on how ITP recommendations would be documented.
  - CDFW explained that they will document any discussion relevant to the ITP and circulate to the group for comment. CDFW is looking for consensus from the SMT that the advice to WOMT is accurate or a description of any disagreement. The final ITP Risk Assessment will be shared on Fridays. The CDFW Water Branch is in the process of creating a website where the ITP Risk Assessments will be posted.

USBR and CDFW agreed that the executive summary for the Assessment should match the ITP Risk Assessment recommendation to WOMT with the caveat that the ITP risk assessment will also cover Longfin Smelt

## 7. Barker Slough Operations

CDFW reported that conditions for approval are not in effect and will start on January 15 for Longfin Smelt.

## 8. ITP Longfin Risk Assessment

CDFW explained they view developing the ITP Longfin Smelt Risk Assessment as a collaborative process.

Currently, there is very little distribution data for Longfin Smelt. Historically, adult Longfin Smelt entrainment in early November is very low. CDFW recommended communicating to WOMT that Longfin Smelt are at low risk of entrainment and there is no need for advice at this time.

- DWR agreed.
- USFWS agreed there is no evidence for a high risk of entrainment, and suggested the group avoid type II errors (i.e. absence of evidence is not evidence of absence).
  - CDFW agreed, and noted the lack of distribution data for both species will require looking to publications and conceptual models to inform the ITP Risk Assessment.

## 9. Additional Considerations/Discussion

USBR shared a proposed executive summary statement and asked the group for feedback.

- The group discussed suggested changing, “present” to “prevalent”, changing “life history” to “recent distribution patterns” and clarifying that “recent distribution patterns” referred to only the last decade, using language that reflects the detection capabilities, referencing the current environmental conditions, and noting first flush is not anticipated within the next week.

The facilitator asked if there were any additional items the group would like to discuss.

- USFWS emphasized the importance of sharing meteorological conditions, as precipitation and wind can both affect turbidity.
- USFWS suggested discussing both species together then turning to the risk assessments for both species.