



Sacramento River Group Summary

May 14, 2026

Participants

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW): Travis Agpar, Tracy Grimes, Sheena Holley, Mike Memeo, Erica Meyers, Ryan Revnak, Crystal Rigby, Jason Roberts, Gary Zhao
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR): Mike Ford, Ryon Kurth, Kevin Reece
- Contra Costa Water District: Deanna Sereno
- Friends of the River: Devon Pearse
- MBK Engineers: Lee Bergfeld, Catherine Morales-Sandoval
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): Miles Daniels, Kyra Fitz
- Northern California Power Agency: Kevin Howard
- Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC): Jamie Chelberg
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB): Matthew Holland, Jeff Laird, Diane Riddle, Craig Williams
- Sacramento River Settlement Contractors (SRSC): Thaddeus Bettner
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR): Emelia Barnum, Jo Anna Beck, Lisa Elliot, Randi Field, Josh Israel, Andrea Hamilton, Mandy Migura, Mechele Pacheco, Tom Patton
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): Craig Anderson, Kaitlin Dunham, Bill Poytress, Bob Null
- Westlands Water District (WWD): Bradley Cavallo
- Western Area Power Administration (WAPA): Erik Mork
- Yurok Tribe: Chris Laskodi
- Kearns & West (K&W): Terra Alpaugh, Jackson Gould, Mia Schiappi

- Other: James Gilbert (UCSC); Mike Deas (Watercourse Inc.)

Summary of Actions

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Purpose

Mia Schiappi, Kearns & West, welcomed all participants.

Hydrology Update

Tom Patton, Reclamation, provided the latest forecast and implications for the Sacramento River system, and reported on current hydrologic conditions and dam operations as related to the preparation of the final Sacramento River Temperature Management Plan.

Current Storage, Releases, Water Temperatures, and Current Operations: Daily CVP Water Supply as of May 14, 2026.

- Reservoir Releases:
 - Whiskeytown Dam releases are currently 200 cfs and will increase to 550 cfs on 5/18 for the first spring pulse flow.
 - Keswick Dam releases to the Sacramento River are approximately 9,000 cfs and will increase to 9,500 cfs on 5/18 and again to 10,000 cfs later on 5/18 to maintain diversions and downstream flows into the Delta.
- CVP Storage and Inflow:
 - Trinity Reservoir storage is 126% of the 15-year average.
 - Shasta Reservoir storage is 113% of the 15-year average. Storage peaked 5/5/2026 at 4.16 MAF and is expected to fall below 4 MAF by the end of the month.
 - Folsom Reservoir storage is 122% of the 15-year average.
 - New Melones Reservoir storage is 122% of the 15-year average.
 - Accumulated inflow is good. Trinity has 1.006 MF, which is 115% of the 15-year average. Shasta has 3.97 MAF, which is 104% of the average. Folsom's accumulated inflow is 104% of the average and New Melones is 91% of the average.
- Temperature Management:
 - One of the middle gates on the Shasta Temperature Control Device (TCD) was opened on May 10th to reduce temperatures following an exceedance of the 58°F temperature target at CCR.
 - Shasta operations have been managing to 58°F at CCR although temperatures have recently been as high at 58.3°F.

- Temperature modeling runs for temperature management were shared with two modeled scenarios. The first model run shows extending the 58°F temperature management target through June 15th and the second extending the 58°F temperature management target through June 1st. The longer you wait to meet the 53.5°F temperature compliance allows for a later opening of the side gates. The model shows no benefit to delaying 53.5°F temperature management until mid-September through December where there appears to be a small benefit.
- Temperature profile data is being collected and is anticipated to be available the week of May 18th.
- Clear Creek is maintaining a daily average of 55°F. Reclamation is working to keep Clear Creek temperatures below 58°F through the beginning of May before transitioning temperature management mid-May.

Questions and Discussion

- USFWS asked Reclamation whether the CCR temperature of 58.3°F represented a daily average or maximum value.
 - Reclamation clarified that the daily average was 58.3°F before the cooler water brought temperatures down. Average temperatures remain in the 55-56°F range at CCR.
- The SWRCB asked Reclamation whether the modeled alternative temperature compliance changes would have a different outcome using the updated temperature profiles. This model run does not seem to suggest delay beginning temperature management as an effective tool to preserve cold water for later in the year
 - Reclamation responded that the new temperature profile would likely not influence the modeling of alternate temperature management scenarios based on preliminary forecasting data. From an operations standpoint, a delay in temperature management would not provide much benefit at the end of the season.
- CDFW shared they continue to struggle with the Action 5 Bin year classification. Verbal conversations with Reclamation indicated that there would be no substantial change with regard to Shasta operations. CDFW asked for clarification about how Reclamation decided that this was a Bin 2 year given water year type and Shasta conditions.
 - Reclamation noted that to be categorized as a Bin 1 year, both end of April and end of September conditions would need to be met. Given that Reclamation expects a low drawdown of Shasta during Water Year 2026 and because of unseasonably warm reservoir conditions Reclamation feels the

criteria for a Bin 1 year has not been met. When this year's guidance document is issued, it should help clear up process questions like that.

- CDFW sought additional clarification about elevated Shasta releases through summer and a substantial range of exports between the 50% and 90% exceedance forecasts.
- Reclamation noted conversations about how forecasts influence releases and exports and tradeoffs were occurring in the FAWOG group. Exports will not be at maximum capacity for the year, but that there are other concerns in the Delta that would require higher releases.
- CDFW shared that their technical position is in disagreement with how the Shasta Framework is being implemented. CDFW feels they should be a Bin 1 year and that operations should match that. It was not CDFW's understanding that this is what implementation would look like when the agencies were collaboratively developing the Shasta Framework.
- CDFW asked about whether the new WTMP modeling results have been compared with the outputs of the old models.
 - Reclamation noted that they have not released results but have compared the outputs which seem quite similar and thus increase their confidence.
- USFWS asked Reclamation about what the rationale is for the shaping of the flows in the summer given the significant drops in flows rather than ramping down.
 - Reclamation responded that would be partially addressed in the May forecast, but this is a balancing act for conditions in the Delta with Folsom storage as well. The intent was partially to preserve storage in Shasta, which is part of the rationale. This will be in the Temperature Management Plan.
- NMFS noted that there would be a concern with delaying spawning and wanting to move to 53.5°F sooner. Thinking about targeting coldest water for emergence time given oxygen needs and wanting to help those fish spawn with colder water.

Sacramento River Fish Monitoring Update

Jason Roberts, CDFW, provided a brief overview of the recent carcass surveys.

PSMFC forecasted 4,500 age 3 winter-run Chinook in the ocean pre-fishing in 2025 which are currently spawning today. As of May 11th, 22 winter-run carcasses have been detected in surveys beginning on April 30. The majority of the carcasses are pre-spawn mortalities with all but two observed above Highway 44. Literature suggests that spawn timing is influenced by water temperatures where water temperatures are warmer. Current water temperatures are similar to 2021 temperatures where only 9% of winter-run spawned in May, and it is believed that only early spawning fish successfully reproduced.

CDFW reiterated their technical concerns that there could be a repeat of the errors of 2015 when warmer temperatures had impacts on pre-spawn mortality.

Questions and Discussion

- USFWS asked CDFW whether there was any pre-spawn mortality observed in the survey period.
 - CDFW and PSMFC responded that there were two observed pre-spawn mortalities, both males, and there was an additional fish found early in the season where there was uncertainty whether the fish was a late fall-run. Some of the mortalities have been marked as otter chews.
- USFWS asked USFWS Livingstone Stone hatchery staff whether any winter-run Chinook spawning had begun to occur at the hatchery and what the water temperature is currently.
 - USFWS responded that there have been no spawns yet and water temperatures are around 50°F. Noted that there could be value in considering a middle of the road approach with 56°F temperature management for releases for a week and USFWS expressed no recommendation for temperature management timing changes.

Temperature-Dependent Mortality Updates

Miles Daniels, NMFS, provided an update on temperature-dependent mortality (TDM) estimates for the 2026 that were requested by the SWRCB. Following the May 2026 meeting of the SRG, SWRCB staff requested additional modeling and analysis from the SWFSC to support their review of the draft TMP and TDM. The analysis assesses reservoir release temperature uncertainty, meteorological uncertainty, redd distribution uncertainty, and evaluation of reduced reservoir release scenarios to align with a Bin 1B year.

Across all redd years, mean TDM was about 16% but varied substantially between 8-40% with substantial drops depending on the scenario.

Questions and Discussion

- Reclamation asked SWFSC to speak to the assumption of using ariel redd surveys rather than carcass surveys. Carcass surveys are typically used for the life-cycle models considering that the ariel surveys typically only look at 10-50% of the redds observed because most redds are observed above ACID.
 - SWFSC noted that the carcass surveys are typically a better accounting for population although given one of the models was calibrated using ariel redd surveys, the team felt that would be a good dataset to use.
 - The real limiting factor here for using carcass surveys was that there wasn't enough time to include that dataset in this analysis.
- Reclamation asked that the analysis include an acknowledgement of the following point.

- PSMFC noted that the ariel surveys are typically used to document redds below Balls Ferry although that hasn't been the case in a while. Including both datasets would be beneficial.
- SWFSC agreed to combine all the suggested changes into the analysis for future conversations.
- CDFW, NMFS, and SWRCB technical staff shared their preference that Reclamation switch to managing for 53.5°F at CRR.
 - USFWS technical staff suggested a possible middle ground approach to balance cold water pool management with winter-run Chinook needs.
 - Reclamation agreed to make a change to manage temperatures for 53.5°F at CRR beginning on May 15th.

Additional Announcement & Review Action Items

The next SRG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, from 1:00-3:00 pm PT.

Adjourn