



Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 2/11/25 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 Proposed Action Assessment, and Fish and Water Operations Outlook will be posted to Reclamation's [Delta Monitoring Work Group](#) webpage, while final version of the Meeting Notes 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).

Participants

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
- NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Kearns & West (K&W)

Announcements

- SaMT will review the Storm Flex Assessment on 2/11/25.
- DWR will be conducting the spring-run assessment instead of CDFW. This assessment will either be added to a current document utilized by SaMT or exist as a separate document. A template is currently being reviewed at the Sub-Director level.

Relevant Actions & Triggers

- **Delta Cross Channel (DCC) Gate operations (PA 4.10.5.3):** See Outlook and Assessment for more information.
- **SWP ITP/CVP PA Winter-run Chinook Salmon Annual Loss Thresholds (COA 8.4.3/PA 3.7.4.5.3):** DWR and Reclamation will operate Banks Pumping Plant and Jones Pumping Plant consistent with COA 8.4.3/PA 3.7.4.5.3 of the SWP ITP/SWP and CVP PA. These values are based on the final juvenile production estimate (JPE).
 - The natural-origin Winter-run Chinook salmon Annual Loss Threshold for this year is based on the initial length-at-date (LAD) identification of natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon and the thresholds described above. If genetic analysis of natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon observed in salvage at the SWP or CVP subsequently confirms that any given Chinook salmon is not genetically identified as a CHNWR that fish will not count towards the loss threshold. This threshold is loss of natural-origin winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.5% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE (loss threshold = $98,893 \times 0.5\% = 494.47$). If cumulative loss of natural-origin CHNWR in a brood year exceeds 50% of the annual loss threshold (loss > 247.24), then Permittee shall, in coordination with Reclamation, adjust south Delta exports to achieve a 7-day average of the OMR index no more negative than -3,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days. If a CHNWR is salvaged during the 7-day action, the action will be extended for another seven days. At the conclusion of the action, Permittee, in coordination with Reclamation shall revert to the weekly distributed loss threshold until the 75% threshold is reached or throughout the end of the OMR Management season. If the 75% loss threshold (loss > 370.85) is exceeded AND the Winter-Run Chinook salmon Machine Learning Model predicts that an OMR index of -2,500 cfs would shift the model output to a classification of CHNWR absence with a minimum probability of absence prediction of 0.559 for 1 of 30 sub-models for any of the 7 most recent prediction days, then a 7-day average OMRI index of -2,500 cfs will be operated to for 7 consecutive days. Thereafter, each winter-run observed in salvage will trigger a 7-day OMR index of -2,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days IF the Winter-Run Chinook salmon Machine Learning Model predicts that an OMR index of -2,500 cfs would shift the model output to a classification of CHNWR absence with a minimum probability of absence prediction of 0.559 for 1 of 30 sub-models for any of the 7 most recent prediction days. The JPE has not yet been calculated for WY 2025; therefore, threshold values are not yet available but natural-origin winter-run loss is still being tracked until these thresholds are determined.
 - The hatchery-origin Chinook salmon Annual Loss Threshold for this year is loss of both LSNFH and Battle Creek clipped CWT 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 (loss ≥ 162.41 and loss > 3.44, respectively). If the 50% and 75% thresholds are exceeded, the same process will occur as what occurs for the natural-origin winter-run Chinook salmon (as discussed in above bullet).

- The final JPE was distributed on 1/10/25 for WY 2025. Hatchery-origin winter-run Chinook salmon have not been released yet in WY 2025.
- **SWP ITP/SWP and CVP PA Winter-run Weekly Loss Thresholds (COA 8.4.4/PA 3.7.4.5.4):**
 - DWR and Reclamation will operate Banks Pumping Plant and Jones Pumping Plant consistent with COA 8.4.4/PA 3.7.4.5.4 of the SWP ITP/CVP PA. These values are based on the product of the weekly percentage of natural-origin CHNWR present in the Delta, scaled to 100% (Table 4, Column E of the SWP ITP), and 50% of the natural-origin CHNWR annual loss threshold (COA 8.4.3/PA 3.7.4.5.3). The final JPE Memo was issued on 1/10/25. The weekly thresholds for the previous week and the upcoming weeks are provided below:
 - 2/5/25 - 2/11/25: 32.46
 - 2/12/25 - 2/18/25: 36.74
 - 2/19/25 - 2/25/25: 36.07
 - If the 7-day rolling sum of loss exceeds the above thresholds in any given week, the required response is to reduce SWP and CVP exports to reach an average OMR index of no more negative than -3,500 cfs for seven consecutive days. DWR and Reclamation shall restrict exports in response to initial LAD identification of natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon. If genetic analysis of an individual natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon observed in salvage at the SWP or CVP indicates that it is not a winter-run, that individual shall not count toward the loss threshold and continued export restrictions under the PA or COA are not required if the weekly loss threshold has consequently not been met.

Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, Current Operations

- SaMT reviewed and updated the Outlook document. The updated Outlook document will be shared with SaMT via SharePoint link by close of business (COB) 2/12/25. Additional details and operations context shared at the 2/11/25 meeting include:
 - Feather River releases will decrease on 2/11/25 from 30,000 cfs down to 25,000 cfs and will likely decrease further near the end of week as inflows also decrease.
 - Sacramento River releases at Keswick Dam will start ramping down from the current 60,000 cfs to approximately 40,000 cfs as of 2/11/25.
 - Sacramento River flows at Freeport were 77,400 cfs on 2/10/25 and are expected to remain stable with additional flow running down the Yolo Bypass. Flows are expected to decrease over the week.
 - Nimbus Dam on the American River is getting close to the allowable storage. Releases may be increased from the current 2,500 cfs to manage storage levels.

- San Joaquin River at Vernalis flows are currently 1,300 cfs and will stay relatively stable with the possibility of a slight increase with the anticipated storm this week.
- Clifton Court Forebay (CCF) is currently exporting 1,800 cfs.
- Delta Outflow was slightly under 200,000 cfs on 2/10/25 and is expected to decrease through the week.
- X2 is currently west of Martinez, less than 56 km.
- QWEST was +9,000 cfs on 2/10/25 and will likely decrease this week.
- Rio Vista flows are approximately 190,000 cfs as of 2/11/25 and are decreasing through the week.
- OMRI increased to -5,000 cfs on 2/10/25 from a previous level of -6,250 cfs.
- CVP share of San Luis Reservoir storage is approximately 660 TAF.
- Total storage of the San Luis Reservoir is approximately 1.59 MAF.
- Questions:
 - Reclamation asked if DWR has the 7-day average calculated yet for QWEST.
 - DWR responded that the 7-day average is +11,300 cfs.
 - CDFW asked about predicted levels of precipitation for the upcoming storm.
 - DWR responded that the storm looks to be mid-range [i.e., not extreme] and noted that the storm's temperature is colder than the previous storm events this season, and therefore not expected to generate significant reservoir inflow. It is also expected to stretch over a larger area in comparison to previous events. Oroville may receive 20-25,000 cfs of inflow, compared with the previously 100,000+ cfs received with another recent storm.
 - CDFW asked if DWR expects to request Storm Flex (COA 8.5) for the upcoming weather event.
 - DWR responded that if OSJ drops below 12, requesting Storm Flex is a possibility.

Part 2: Open Discussion on Species Status

- N/A

Part 3. Live Edit Assessments

Natural Spring-Run Weekly Risk Assessment

- SaMT reviewed a preliminary version of the Natural-origin Spring-Run Weekly Risk Assessment developed by DWR.
- DWR noted that the length, format, and use of this assessment is still under discussion at the subdirector level.

Part 4. Additional Considerations/Discussion

Discussion on Placement of the DWR-Developed Assessment

- DWR shared the following details of their assessment:
 - The current assessment template that is being reviewed before being shared is approximately 2 pages long.
 - This assessment is something that would likely be shared with WOMT but details of where it would be sent and the frequency is still being decided.
 - The assessment could be treated as part of the Weekly Fish & Water Operations Outlook (Outlook) or could become a separate document.
- DWR asked if the Outlook document is sent to WOMT each week.
 - Kearns & West noted that they send the Outlook to WOMT each Tuesday.
- DWR suggested that the assessment data could be added to the Outlook on Mondays, when applicable. It could then be discussed at the end of Tuesdays' Operations meetings.
 - CDFW noted the Outlook document is a roughly 14 page document and suggested that the assessment be made into a separate document when submitted to WOMT for ease of review by WOMT.
- DWR noted that the exact, intended use for this assessment was not clearly stated in the ITP (e.g., weekly versus as-needed discussions). Their preference would be for as-needed discussions.
 - Some CDFW staff noted a preference for a weekly review of the assessment.
 - Other CDFW staff relayed the ITP language with SaMT, acknowledging the need to adhere to any federal requirements rather than individual preferences. To summarize:
 - Real-time monitoring data combined with new science gained from ongoing efforts will be used to develop a spring-run JPE and life cycle model to inform weekly risk assessments from October through June.
 - If the risk assessment identifies that a more positive OMRI flow requirement is needed to minimize the take of natural-origin juvenile

spring-run Chinook salmon, then WOMT may consider a more positive OMRI flow requirement.

- The ITP does not specifically state a need to send a risk assessment to WOMT on a weekly basis, only to send it if there is a recommendation by SaMT to do so.
- Reclamation and DWR subdirectors are assumed to be in discussions about this assessment, but it is noted that there may be different interpretations of the ITP language within the subdirector level as well.
- Kearns & West asked SaMT members if there is anything specific to be noted to WOMT regarding the ITP language and the assessment.
 - Some CDFW staff stated that their interpretation of the language is a stop-gap measure until there is a spring-run JPE.
- CDFW speculated that in meetings going forward, SaMT would be pulling relevant data from the real-time monitoring datasets and put into an assessment. It could potentially fit into a couple of paragraphs in the document and not require an extensive amount of time.
- DWR suggested including a table in the assessment that outlines low, medium, and high risk as a way to clearly communicate that data.
 - CDFW mentioned that there is language in the assessment that was conducted by CDFW in weeks prior that outlines how low, medium, and high risk are defined. CDFW offered to re-share the language used for that as a starting point if DWR would like to have that information in the assessment moving forward.

Items to Raise to WOMT

- N/A

Next SaMT Meeting

- The next Weekly Operations Meeting will be on Tuesday, 2/18/25. If needed, SaMT will meet at the conclusion of the Operations meeting.

Action Items

- Brett Harvey, DWR, to send the Natural Spring-Run Weekly Risk Assessment to Mia Schiappi, Kearns & West, to be sent to WOMT along with the Outlook.