

Water Operations Management Team Notes

Ad Hoc Meeting

Water Year 2025 – March 25, 2025

Members Attending

- Reclamation: Present
- USFWS: Present
- CDFW: Present
- NMFS: Present
- DWR: Present
- SWRCB: Present

Purpose of Ad Hoc Meeting

To review information and SaMT assessments for a Director's decision for operations due to exceeding the 100% winter-run hatchery threshold per the 2024 ITP and PA. An assessment was provided by Reclamation for SWP and CVP operations. The assessment included an evaluation of the natural winter-run weekly loss exceedance.

Discussion Items

For clarity, the notes on the discussion at WOMT are sub-divided into two separate areas:

- (1) Current implementation of protective measures and water project operations for hatchery and natural-origin winter-run (WR) salmon.
- (2) Future implementation of protective measures and water project operations for annual loss thresholds of both natural and hatchery winter-run (WR) salmon.

Current implementation of protective measures and water project operations for hatchery and natural-origin winter-run (WR) salmon

The loss of hatchery winter-run chinook salmon (WR) exceeded the 50% annual loss threshold on Tuesday, March 18th. By the end of the weekend of March 22-23, the annual loss of hatchery WR had exceeded the 100% annual loss threshold. Upon exceeding the 100% annual loss threshold, the SWP ITP requires DWR, in coordination with Reclamation, to immediately convene SaMT to review fish distribution information and operations and provide advice regarding future planned SWP and CVP operations to minimize subsequent loss during that year.

- The water projects have been operating to an OMRI no more negative than -3,500 cfs on a 7-day averaged basis beginning March 21st, based on exceeding the weekly loss threshold for natural WR. The action is scheduled as a 7-day action ending Thursday March 27th.

Future implementation of protective measures and water project operations for annual loss thresholds of both natural and hatchery winter-run (WR) salmon

Reclamation distributed an assessment on 3/24/25 that concluded that operating to an OMRI more positive than -5,000 cfs is unlikely to reduce loss at export facilities or change population level export effects on winter-run salmon.

Per the 3/25/25 SaMT meeting notes: CDFW recommends an OMRI no more negative than -3,500 cfs, but ideally no more negative than -2,500 cfs given updated modeling runs and recent loss data.

Per the 3/25/25 SaMT meeting notes: NMFS recommends an OMRI no more negative than -3,500 cfs based on the understanding that more positive OMRI's provide more protection for fish. The recommended operation would be for a week, to be reassessed at the 4/2 WOMT meeting.

CDFW agreed with NMFS's recommendation to reassess operations to minimize loss to hatchery-origin WR at the 4/2 WOMT meeting.

Reclamation advocated the immediate relief from an OMRI no more negative than -3,500 cfs to an OMRI no more negative than -5,000 cfs, with full recognition that delays in scheduling federal export changes would be subject to power scheduling.

- DWR believes that operating to an OMR more positive than -5,000 cfs would not reduce the risk of WR from entering the Delta. DWR subsequently provided further clarification on 3/26 that an assessment is only allowed for hatchery WR because of the 100% exceedance of the annual loss threshold per the ITP and PA.

Action Items

None

Elevation Items

WOMT did not reach consensus on what the appropriate OMRI constraints for water project operations after Thursday, March 27th should be and is requesting that the Directors meet to resolve this issue as soon as it can be scheduled.