



Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 6/18/24 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).

Agenda Items

1. Introductions
2. Housekeeping
3. Updates on Water Operations and Biological Conditions
4. Open Discussion on Species Status
5. Live-edit Assessments (Proposed Action Assessment and ITP Risk Assessment)
6. Additional Considerations/Other Topics
7. Items to Raise to WOMT
8. Wrap-Up Meeting

Agenda Item 2. Housekeeping

WY 2024 Wrap-Up Meeting

- SaMT members expressed no opposition to adding the seasonal wrap-up meeting to the regularly scheduled 6/18/24 meeting rather than adding an additional meeting on 6/25/24.

Agenda Item 3. Updates on Water Operations and Biological Conditions

- The Fish and Water Operations Outlook document was reviewed. Please refer to the Operations Outlook, PA Assessment, and ITP Risk Assessment documents. All flows and releases, unless otherwise noted, are reported as approximated daily averages.
- Sacramento River flows at Freeport are currently 15,410 cfs.
- Clifton Court Forebay (CCF) exports are scheduled to increase on 6/19/24 from 800 cfs to 1,500 cfs. Additional increases are expected later in the week depending on the daily or 14-day average electrical conductivity (EC) for Chipps Island or the 3-day average for NDOI to above 11,400 cfs.
- San Joaquin River flows at Vernalis are currently 2,471 cfs.
- The Delta outflow index is currently at 12,400 cfs.
- QWEST flow values were +1,202 cfs on 6/17/24 and are expected to range between +500 cfs to +4,500 cfs.
- Questions
 - NMFS asked about the estimated OMR Index Values. Why weren't those capped at -5,000 cfs if the smelt requirements are no longer in effect? They show that they're going down to -6,000 cfs.
 - DWR responded that the water temperature CCF offramp for Smelt reached the 3 consecutive days of the temperature threshold, so the OMRI constraints are over for both salmon and smelt.
 - NMFS inquired about the D-1641 June flow target for Vernalis.
 - Reclamation responded that it is 2,990 cfs.
 - CDFW asked for clarification on the large range of exports at CCF.
 - DWR responded that it's due to the X2 requirements per D-1641.
 - CDFW asked about the timing of upcoming aquatic weed management at CCF.
 - DWR responded that this is scheduled to occur 6/28 – 6/30/24.
- For details on salvage that occurred in the past week please refer to the Operations Outlook, PA Assessment, and ITP Risk Assessment documents. Additionally, all salvage information can be found online at <https://filelib.wildlife.ca.gov/Public/salvage/>.

Actions Currently in Effect

- The Interim Operations Plan (IOP) is currently in effect resulting from a court order issued on 4/1/2024 and in effect until 12/20/2024. Reclamation shall adopt the following provisions of the SWP ITP:
 - 8.5.2 Larval and Juvenile Delta Smelt Protection
 - 8.6.1 Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold

- 8.6.2 Early-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Discrete Daily Loss Threshold
- 8.6.3 Mid- and Late-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Daily Loss Threshold
- 8.6.4 Daily Spring-run Chinook Salmon Hatchery Surrogate Loss Threshold
- 8.7 OMR Flexibility During Delta Excess Conditions
- 8.8 End of OMR Management
- **Delta Cross Channel (DCC) Gate operations (PA 4.10.5.3):** See Outlook and Assessment for more information.
- **ITP Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold (COA 8.6.1):** DWR and Reclamation will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.1 of the ITP. These values are based on the juvenile production estimate (JPE). The final JPE for brood year 2023 natural-origin winter-run Chinook salmon has been estimated at 234,896. The thresholds below are based on the final JPE.
 - The ITP natural-origin Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of unclipped length-at-date (LAD) winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 1.17% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE (loss $\geq 2,748.28$). If 50% of the threshold is exceeded (loss $\geq 1,374.14$), the required response would be to reach a 14-day average OMR of -3,500 cfs. If 75% of this threshold is exceeded (loss $\geq 2,061.21$), the required response would be to reach a 14-day average OMR of -2,500 cfs. If 100% of this threshold is exceeded (loss $\geq 2,748.28$), the required response is to immediately convene SaMT to review recent fish distribution information and operations and provide advice regarding future planned Project operations to minimize subsequent loss during that year.
 - The ITP hatchery-origin Chinook salmon Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of clipped LAD 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 ≥ 232.30). If 50% of the threshold is exceeded (loss ≥ 116.15), the required response would be to reach a 14-day average OMR of -3,500 cfs. If 75% of this threshold is exceeded (loss ≥ 174.23), the required response would be to reach a 14-day average OMR of -2,500 cfs.

Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, Current Operations

- SaMT reviewed and updated the Outlook document. The updated Outlook document will be distributed to the SaMT via email by close of business (COB) 6/20/24.
- SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions as addressed within the Operations Outlook and updated accordingly.

SaMT Estimates of Fish Distribution

- Fish distribution percentages were updated as needed in the Fish and Water Operations Outlook for 6/18/24.

Agenda Item 4. Open Discussion on Species Status

Salvage Update for 6/10 – 6/16/24

- No report was run for salvage and loss totals.
- CDFW shared that total loss for wild steelhead from 4/1 - 6/15/24 measured 1,919.44 fish. This represents 63% of the Incidental Take Limit (ITL).
- The WY 2024 (through 6/15/24) total for natural steelhead loss measured 5,294.25 fish.

Operations

- N/A

Agenda Item 5. Live-Edit Assessments

Proposed Action Assessment

- There was no Proposed Action Assessment for the week of 6/16 – 6/22/24.

ITP Risk Assessment

- An end-of-season ITP Risk Assessment will be distributed this week. Past ITP Risk Assessments can be found at [CDFW's Water Project Operations](#) webpage.

Agenda Item 6. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

- N/A

Agenda Item 7. Items to Raise to WOMT

- N/A

Agenda Item 8. Wrap-Up Meeting

- This meeting concludes the WY 2024 monitoring season. Weekly Water Operations and SaMT Weekly Meetings will reconvene starting in October for the WY 2025 season.
- SaMT members shared the following expected updates and future requests:
 - Reclamation management have discussed methods for improving the SaMT guidance documents, including the development of a Statement of Purpose from the LTO group to assist the various monitoring teams. This would consist of a concise statement that includes each team's purpose, objectives, and responsibility with the intention of helping the teams operate more efficiently.
 - NMFS is currently writing a new Biological Opinion (BiOp) based on the recent Biological Assessment (BA). The new BiOp mentions that team membership roles and processes will be described in team charters. This new set of specifications may be in effect by January 2025 depending on the timing and completion of the new BiOp.
 - CDFW asked the group for any feedback on the weekly salvage reports. SaMT members may email salvage-related comments to Kyle Griffiths (walter.griffiths@wildlife.ca.gov) to be considered for WY 2025.

- Thuy Washburn, USBR, will cover federal operations updates in place of Randi Field, USBR, beginning in WY 2025.
- NMFS suggested streamlining the editing process for the weekly meeting notes by adding the document to the SaMT SharePoint site to allow for collaborative editing.
- Kearns & West invited SaMT members to submit comments intended to improve upcoming monitoring seasons to Mia Schiappi (mschiappi@kearnswest.com). Comments can be kept anonymous.