

Delta Monitoring Workgroup

Meeting Record 03/26/2024

Working Group Members in Attendance

- USBR: Randi Field, Erika Kegel, Cat Pien, Brian Mahardja, Kristi Arend, Elissa Buttermore, Grace Easterbrook, Chase Ehlo
- USFWS: Leif Goude
- NMFS: Not in attendance
- CDFW: Erica Meyers
- DWR: Brian Schreier
- SWRCB: Matt Holland
- Water Contractors: Shawn Acuña (MWD), Darcy Ausin (SWC), Heidi Williams (Valley Water), Tom Boardman (WWD), Cindy Meyer (SLDMWA), Scott Petersen (SLDMWA), Yuan Liu (CCWD), Jennifer Buckman (ARSC)

Review Operations Outlook (USBR, DWR)

- Effective 3/11/2024, CVP and SWP operations are limited to an OMRI of no more negative than -500 cfs to protect steelhead as decided from the 3/7 Director's meeting.
- USBR and DWR propose to operate within the range of OMRI no more negative than -500 cfs to -2500 cfs this week, in accordance with the direction provided by the LTO Governance process.
- On the Sacramento River, Keswick releases are trending downward to reach 4,000 cfs at the end of March for ACID Dam installation and will increase again once activities conclude.
- On the American River, a 3/29/2024 change order will decrease flows to 4,000 cfs for storage conservation.
- On the Stanislaus River, we are currently at 1500 cfs, with a 3/28/2024 change order for flows to decrease to 800 cfs and a spring pulse flow schedule is anticipated in the near future.
- Freeport daily average flows yesterday were approx. 39,750 cfs.
- Vernalis daily average flows yesterday were approx. 5,500 cfs.
- Inflows into the Delta are generally decreasing from the Sacramento River, and generally holding from the San Joaquin River due to flood space management.
- JPP exports today (3/26/2024) are 1,800 cfs; anticipate that USBR will not alter exports until after March.

- The SWP has increased exports to target an OMRI of no more negative than -1,500 cfs as of the Director's meeting today (3/26/2024).
- Refer to the Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook for more information.

Additional Questions or Comments

- No additional questions or comments.

Review PA Assessment (USBR)

USBR then provided the PA Assessment update. For more information, please refer to the PA Assessment document.

Additional Questions or Comments

- **Question:** To clarify, we are at 65% of ITS threshold?
 - **Answer:** Yes, we are at 65% of incidental take limit for Length-at-Date winter-run Chinook Salmon.
- **Question:** Is it typical or likely that winter –run Chinook Salmon outmigration tapers off in April?
 - **Answer:** Typically, the peak for genetic winter-run is around March and tapers off in April and there are no detections of genetic winter- run in the Delta past May 1st. This is different than Length-at-Date, which we can see until late May.

Review ITP Risk Assessment (DWR)

DWR provided the LFS update. For more information, please refer to the ITP Risk Assessment document.

Additional Questions or Comments

- **Question:** DWR put in a change of order to operate to an OMRI of no more negative than -1,500 cfs, but CDFW recommends an OMRI of no more negative than -500 cfs. Can you explain the conflicting recommendations?
 - **Answer:** There was an off-cycle WOMT meeting on Monday (3/25) to discuss steelhead and winter-run actions. Subsequently, the Agency Directors held a meeting to assess the current situation and authorized project operations under an OMRI of no more negative than -1,500 cfs for the remainder of March.
- **Question:** Is there an update about the acoustic steelhead study happening right now?
 - **Answer:** No steelhead arrived near or at the salvage facilities; a few were detected moving around the interior of the Delta and some may have moved up to the North Delta, but the majority of the fish so far seem to have been detected past Benicia XX.

- **Question:** Will exceedance limits be reset on April 1st? Does exceedance carry over beyond March 20th until now?
 - **Answer:** The only exceedance that resets is for steelhead; in the late season there is a separate limit. There is no reset for winter-run.

Acronyms

- CVP – Central Valley Project
- DCC – Delta Cross Channel
- DOI – Delta Outflow Index
- DWR – California Department of Water Resources
- DCI – Delta Mendota Canal – California Aqueduct Intertie
- DS – Delta Smelt
- FNU – Formazin Nephelometric Unit
- I:E – Inflow to Export
- IOP – Interim Operations Plan
- ITP – Incidental Take Permit
- ITL – Incidental Take Limit
- JPE – Juvenile Production Estimate
- LFS – Longfin Smelt
- NTU – Nephelometric Turbidity Unit
- OBI – Old River Bacon Island Station
- OMR – Old and Middle River Tidally Averaged Flow
- PA – Proposed Action (Federal)
- PTM – Particle Tracking Model
- SaMT – Salmon Monitoring Team
- SLS – Smelt Larval Survey
- SMT – Smelt Monitoring Team
- SWP – State Water Project
- SWRCB – State Water Resources Control Board
- TFCF – Tracy Fish Collection Facility
- TUCP – Temporary Urgency Change Petition
- TUCO – Temporary Urgency Change Order
- USBR – United States Bureau of Reclamation
- WCS – Winter Run Chinook Salmon
- WOMT – Water Operations Management Team
- WQ – Water Quality
- YOY – Young of Year