



Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 1/16/24 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. Next Meeting

Agenda Item 2. Housekeeping

- N/A

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 were at 18,000 cfs on 1/15/24 and could potentially peak to 20,000 cfs with the precipitation expected for 1/16/24. After the 16th, flows are expected to decrease before additional rain forecasted over the weekend could increase flows up to 30,000 cfs.

- Stanislaus River flows from Goodwin Dam are at 1,000 cfs for flood control management.
- Clifton Court Forebay (CCF) exports are targeting 1,800 cfs and are not expected to vary greatly in order to target the proportional share of an OMRI of -3,500 cfs in order to be in compliance with the SWP's ITP COA 8.4.2.
- Net Delta Outflow Index is approximately 16,000 cfs and will likely increase on 1/17 due to anticipated precipitation before decreasing again.
- QWEST was approximately +1,500 cfs on 1/15/24 and may stay in the positive range with anticipated precipitation. With the expected rain, levels could reach +5,000 cfs; without rain, levels could potentially drop to -600 cfs.
- Rio Vista flows are approximately 15,000 cfs and are expected to increase with anticipated precipitation on 1/16/24 and over the weekend.
- 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 2/28/2023 and in effect until 3/31/2024 or until the Court issues a ruling on the 2024 IOP. 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 Threshold¹, including ITP minor amendment no. 6 signed on 1/20/2023
 - 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.

¹ The SWP ITP was amended for WY 2024 on 12/22/2023 which modifies the winter-run daily loss threshold calculations for COA 8.6.3. and furthermore lowers the daily loss thresholds that were originally agreed upon in the 2023 IOP extension. Because this new amendment was not part of the original 2023 IOP Extension agreed to by Reclamation and the State and ordered by the Court on 2/28/2023, it is not included in the current operation of the 2023 IOP Extension. Operating the CVP to this new amendment would be inconsistent with the current court order; therefore, CVP will operate to COA 8.6.3, excluding the 12/22/2023 amendment, in to maintain operations under the 2023 IOP Extension.

- **ITP Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold (COA 8.6.1):** DWR 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). An interim JPE has been estimated at 204,808. The final JPE will be determined later this month. The below thresholds are based on the interim JPE.
 - The ITP natural-origin Winter-run Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of unclipped length-at-date 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 is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the coordinated operations agreement (COA), that would be required 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 is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the COA, that would be required to reach a 14-day average OMR of -2,000 cfs.
 - The ITP hatchery-origin Chinook salmon Single-year Loss Threshold for this year is loss of clipped length-at-date 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 \geq 232.30). If 50% of the threshold is exceeded (loss \geq 116.15), the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the coordinated operations agreement (COA), that would be required to reach a 14-day average OMR of -3,500 cfs. If 75% of this threshold is exceeded (loss \geq 174.23), the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the COA, that would be required to reach a 14-day average OMR of -2,000 cfs.
- **ITP Mid- and Late-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Daily Loss Threshold (COA 8.6.3):** From 1/1/24 – 1/31/24, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with Condition of Approval 8.6.3 of the ITP. The ITP Daily Loss Threshold for January is loss of older juvenile Chinook salmon from CVP and SWP greater than 0.00124% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE. If the threshold is exceeded (loss $>$ 2.91), the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the COA, that would be required to reach an OMR of no more negative than -3,500 cfs for five consecutive days. DWR shall restrict exports in response to the initial length-at-date identification of natural older juvenile Chinook salmon and the thresholds described above. If genetic analysis of an individual natural older juvenile Chinook salmon observed in salvage at the SWP or CVP indicates that it is not CHNWR, that individual shall not count toward the daily loss threshold and continued export restrictions under this COA are not required if the daily loss threshold has consequently not been met.

- SaMT reviewed and updated the Outlook document. The updated Outlook document will be distributed to the SaMT via email by close of business (COB) 1/17/24.
- SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions as addressed within the Operations Outlook and updated accordingly.

SaMT Estimates of Fish Distribution

- SaMT estimates of the current distribution of listed Chinook salmon and CCV steelhead, as a percentage of each population, are based on recent monitoring data and historical migration timing patterns. Estimates this week are based on YOY winter-run and YOY spring-run as well as natural origin steelhead at the real-time monitoring locations. These estimates are reported in the final Assessment document, available on the [Delta Monitoring Workgroup](#) webpage.

| Location | Yet to Enter Delta | In the Delta | Exited the Delta past Chipps Island |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Young-of-year (YOY) winter-run Chinook salmon | Current: 55-65% Last week: 60-70% | Current: 35-45% Last week: 30-40% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% |
| YOY spring-run Chinook salmon | Current: 70-85% Last week: 75-85% | Current: 15-30% Last week: 15-25% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% |
| YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon | Current: 80-95% Last week: 100% | Current: 5-20% Last week: 0% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% |
| Natural-origin steelhead | Current: 90-95% Last week: 95-99% | Current: 5-10% Last week: 1-5% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% |

Agenda Item 4. Open Discussion on Species Status

Salvage Update for 1/8/24 – 1/14/24

- Salvage and loss totals are detailed in the Salvage update shared via email. Please refer to the email for specific figures.
- Older juvenile wild Chinook salmon were observed during the reporting period.
- Fish from the experimental releases on 12/29/23 were observed.
- Both clipped and non-clipped Steelhead were observed.
- A white sturgeon (measuring over 300 mm TL) was collected at the state facility.
- No operational variances were reported.

Agenda Item 5. Live edit Assessments

Proposed Action Assessment

- SaMT reviewed and updated the current week’s Proposed Action Assessment document. The updated Proposed Action Assessment will be distributed to the SaMT via email by COB 1/17/24. The final assessment will be posted to [Reclamation’s Delta Monitoring Workgroup](#) webpage.

ITP Risk Assessment

- The draft ITP Risk Assessment will be distributed on 1/16/24 with comments due COB Thursday (1/18/24). 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. Next Meeting

- The next SaMT meeting will be held on Tuesday, 1/23/24 on Microsoft Teams.