



Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 1/23/24 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 1. Introductions

- Shay Richardson, State Water Resources Control Board, joined SaMT as of 1/22/24.

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 are 29,000 cfs on 1/23/24 and could potentially increase to 36,000 – 38,000 cfs through 1/25/24. Flows are expected to recede again after anticipated storms pass through the region.
- Clifton Court Forebay (CCF) exports are approximately 300 cfs, will increase to 500 cfs on 1/24/24, and will pump around 1,000 cfs for the rest of the week.
- Net Delta Outflow Index is approximately 28,000 cfs with potential to increase to 50,000 cfs through 1/25/24 due to anticipated precipitation.
- QWEST was approximately +4,580 cfs on 1/22/24 with a 3-day average of 3,500 cfs. Levels could potentially increase to above +10,000 cfs with anticipated precipitation. After levels peak, they are expected to drop to approximately +5,000 cfs.
- Rio Vista flows are approximately 30,000 cfs with potential to increase to 35,000 cfs with anticipated precipitation.
- Goodwin Dam is scheduled to increase releases from 1,000 cfs to 1,500 cfs on 1/26/24 in order to allow for storage management of flood control conservation space.

Discussion Questions

- Is there potential for flood control releases on the American River? [CDFW]
 - There would be if the storage volume reaches the encroachment level point, but levels are not quite that high for the current week. This will be reevaluated with anticipated precipitation. [USBR]
- When will Jones Pumping Plant (JPP) begin operating to the -2,000 OMRI? [CDFW]
 - Starting on 1/23/24, both projects will be operating to the IEWPP with an OMRI of -2,000 cfs on a 14-day average. Exports will be decreased at JPP on 1/24/24. [USBR]
- Will the change in pumping rates at JPP affect the maintenance work planned at Tracy Fish Collection Facility? [CDFW]
 - Generally, reductions in exports do not cause issues for maintenance activities, but we don't have detailed information at this time. Recommend contacting René Reyes, USBR, for more information. [USBR]
- 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
 - 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 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 below thresholds 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 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

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 but including WY 2023 SWP ITP amendment that was signed on 1/20/23, in to maintain operations under the 2023 IOP Extension.

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 a winter-run, 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.

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) 1/24/24.
- 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: 35-50% Last week: 55-65%	Current: 50-60% Last week: 35-45%	Current: 0-5% Last week: 0%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 65-80% Last week: 70-85%	Current: 20-35% Last week: 15-30%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
*YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon	Current: 100% Last week: 80-95%	Current: 0% Last week: 5-20%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
Natural-origin steelhead	Current: 80-89% Last week: 90-95%	Current: 10-15% Last week: 5-10%	Current: 1-5% Last week: 0%

*SaMT made an estimate in the week of 1/16/24 not knowing an acoustically-tagged release was yet to occur. SaMT will estimate distribution of hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon once the acoustically-tagged release occurs in March.

Agenda Item 4. Open Discussion on Species Status

Salvage Update for 1/15/24 – 1/21/24

- Salvage and loss totals are detailed in the Salvage update shared via email. Please refer to the email for specific figures. Numbers will now include those from the genetic updates.
- Wild steelhead were observed on multiple days during the reporting period.
- One genetic winter-run Chinook salmon was salvaged.
- Additional fish from the Coleman experimental releases on 12/18/23 were observed.
- 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 1/24/24. 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 1/23/24 with comments due COB Thursday (1/25/24). Past ITP Risk Assessments can be found at [CDFW's Water Project Operations](#) webpage.

Agenda Item 6. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

- CDFW ran the Winter-run Prediction Entrainment Tool and shared some of the preliminary data with SaMT. This tool was presented to SaMT during the WY 2023 season and assists with predicting upcoming salvage numbers. CDFW explained two of plots from the prediction tool that showed a rapid decline in probability of absence around January 14. From January 14 – January 20 the model had some uncertainty of whether or not winter-run Chinook salmon would be observed in salvage. From January 21 – present, the model has a high probability and certainty of observing low presence of winter-run Chinook salmon in salvage. CDFW pointed out that it very interesting that the salvage facilities observed 1 genetic winter-run in salvage on January 16, which is similar to the rapid decline in absence, coupled with the rapid incline in presence, of winter-run in salvage predicted by the model.

Agenda Item 7. Next Meeting

- The next SaMT meeting will be held on Tuesday, 1/30/24 on Microsoft Teams.