



Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 11/14/23 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.
- Freeport flows decreased to 8,100 cfs on 11/13/23 and are expected to vary depending on any precipitation received this week.
- San Joaquin River flows are at 1,500 cfs and are expected to remain stable through the week.

- Clifton Court Forebay (CCF) exports are approximately 1,400 cfs and expected to range between 1,000 cfs to 2,000 cfs through the week.
- Delta Outflow is expected to stay within a range of 4,000 cfs to 5,000 cfs in order to meet the monthly average of 4,500 cfs required by D-1641.
- QWEST is at approximately +1,000 cfs. When the DCC gates are closed, this figure is expected to be negative; with the gates open, flow levels are expected to be in the positive range.
- Rio Vista flows are approximately 6,000 cfs with the DCC gates closed, and at 3,000 cfs when the gates are open.
- 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 on 2/28/2023 and will determine operations for the remainder of calendar year 2023. 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 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) that have not been determined.
 - 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 N/A). If 50% of the threshold is exceeded (loss \geq N/A), 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 N/A), 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 N/A). If 50% of the threshold is exceeded (loss \geq N/A), 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 N/A), 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 Early-season Natural Winter-run Chinook Salmon Discrete Daily Loss Threshold (COA 8.6.2):** From 11/1/23 – 12/31/23, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plan consistent with COA 8.6.2 of the ITP. The ITP Daily Loss Threshold for November is loss of older juvenile Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP equal to or greater than 6 per day. The ITP Daily Loss Threshold for December is loss of older juvenile Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP equal to or greater than 26 per day. If the threshold is exceeded (loss \geq 6, loss \geq 26), the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to the COA, that would reach an OMR no more negative than -5,000 cfs for five consecutive days.

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) 11/15/23.
- SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions as addressed within the Operations Outlook and updated accordingly.
- American River Carcass Surveys are currently being conducted. The carcass surveys observed a decrease in pre-spawn mortalities, down to 21% for the week of 11/6/23 – 11/10/23. Spawning has increased, with 57 females, or 61%, spawning during the week. Eighty-seven redds were observed in the same week. Water temperatures have decreased due to the power bypass to an average of 59°F.

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: 97-99% Last week: 97-99% | Current: 1-3% Last week: 1-3% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% |
| YOY spring-run Chinook salmon | Current: 100% Last week: 100% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% |
| YOY hatchery winter-run Chinook salmon | Current: NA Last week: NA | Current: NA Last week: NA | Current: NA Last week: NA |
| Natural-origin steelhead | Current: 100% Last week: 100% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% | Current: 0% Last week: 0% |

Agenda Item 4. Open Discussion on Species Status

Salvage Update for 11/6/23 – 11/12/23

- No operational interruptions or deviations were reported.
- An unclipped fish identified as either a Steelhead or Rainbow Trout (measuring 365 mm FL) was salvaged at the Tracy Fish Collection Facility on 11/8/23 during the monthly predator removal procedure.
- Three white sturgeon (measuring from 218 to 316 mm FL) were salvaged at the CVP (federal) facility, and one white sturgeon was collected at the Skinner Fish Facility (state). The CVP facility has seen high numbers of white sturgeon in salvage this year.

Question

- How confident are we that the nearly 1,000 sturgeon observed this year are all white sturgeon? What methodology is used to identify them?

Response

- Any sturgeon under 300 mm FL is retained for a secondary verification, performed by either Brandon Wu or Rene Reyes at the federal facility, or by Javier Miranda and his staff at the state facility.

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 11/15/23. The final assessment will be posted to [Reclamation's Delta Monitoring Workgroup](#) webpage.

ITP Risk Assessment

- The ITP Risk Assessment will be distributed on 11/14/23 with comments due COB Thursday (11/16/23). 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, 11/21/23 on Microsoft Teams.