



— BUREAU OF —  
RECLAMATION

## Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

Teams call: 12/5/23 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

- A discussion topic was added to Agenda Item 6.

#### 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.
- Trinity river flows are at 300 cfs.
- Sacramento River flows at Freeport are currently 9,500 cfs to 9,600 cfs and are anticipated to range between 8,000 cfs and 10,000 cfs through the week.

- Delta Outflow is currently at 6,000 cfs, although the weekly range is expected to be between 4,000 cfs and 5,500 cfs.
- QWEST is currently ranging between -800 cfs and -3,000 cfs.
- 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) 12/6/23.
- SaMT discussed Fish Monitoring Gear Efficiency/Disruptions as addressed within the Operations Outlook and updated accordingly.
- American River Carcass Surveys are currently being conducted. Carcass surveys are continuing to see fall-run Chinook salmon. Redd surveys observed 231 redds for the week of 11/30/23 – 12/2/23. Total Carcass Survey counts for the 2023/2024 season are at 6,500 carcasses, but surveys are still seeing a lot of live fish so that numbers is expected to increase. The average water temperature for the American River is approximately 57°F. During the week of 11/30/23-12/2/23, 219 females spawned. Prespawn mortalities for that same week was 64 females.
- Stanislaus Carcass Survey observed 459 redds this week. The Merced Carcass Survey had to cut their survey short this week due to the high volume of fish.

#### ***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: 96-99% Last week: 96-99%	Current: 1-4% Last week: 1-4%	Current: 0% Last week: 0%
YOY spring-run Chinook salmon	Current: 99-100% Last week: 100%	Current: 0-1% 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 11/27/23 – 12/3/23*

- The first Chinook salmon of WY 2024 was collected at the CVP fish salvage facility on 12/2/23 and was classified as late fall-run-sized.
- No osmerids were collected during the reporting period.
- The SWP facility experienced a power outage on 11/28/23 resulting in no fish salvaged during a 25-minute period.

#### 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 12/6/23. 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 12/5/23 with comments due COB Thursday (12/7/23). Past ITP Risk Assessments can be found at [CDFW’s Water Project Operations](#) webpage.

#### Agenda Item 6. Additional Considerations/Other Topics

- SaMT discussed an email from Kevin Niemela, USFWS, requesting input from SaMT. Niemela’s proposed release timing included:
  - Production release: targeting early December, in concert with a significant precipitation event
  - 1<sup>st</sup> surrogate release: ~3 days after the production release, regardless of precipitation events.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> surrogate release: Late December, ideally preceding (by ~3-7 days) a precipitation event and at least a week after the previous surrogate release.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> surrogate release: Mid-January, ideally preceding (by ~3-7 days) a precipitation event and at least a week after the previous surrogate release.
- SaMT noted that there are no anticipated precipitation events forecasted for the next couple of weeks. SaMT agreed with Kevin Niemela's proposed plan for surrogate releases.

#### **Agenda Item 7. Next Meeting**

- The next SaMT meeting will be held on Tuesday, 12/12/23 on Microsoft Teams.