

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

12/15/09 Tues conf. call 9:00 am

Objective: Provide advice to the Water Operations Management Team (WOMT) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on measures to reduce adverse effects from Delta operations of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project to salmonids and green sturgeon. DOSS will coordinate the work of other technical teams.

Attendees: Mike Ford, Andy Chu, Mitch Goode, & Carol Stroble (DWR), John Hannon (USBR), Nick Hindman & Roger Guinee (FWS), Bruce Oppenheim, Jeff Stuart & Barbara Byrne (NMFS), Greg Wilson (SWRCB)

Agenda items:

Fish monitoring

DCC gate closure

Christmas and New Years scheduling

Fish Monitoring: Knights Landing (KL) summary:

Date	Flow cfs	Water T (F)	Secchi (ft)	Turbidity NTU	Species	Catch	Min FL	Max FL	CPUE
12/06/09	N/A*	49	2.7	7.2		0	0	0	0
12/08/09	N/A*	45	3.1	6.1		0	0	0	0
12/10/09	3623	44	3.6	6.1	late-fall	2	124	134	0.49
12/12/09	3870	45	3.7	5.6		0	0	0	0
12/14/09		47	1.5	15.4	late-fall	1	149	149	0.24

Water temperatures and turbidity at KL have increased due to the rain on Saturday. 2 late-fall Chinook were observed, 1 on Thursday, and 1 on Monday. Sacramento River flows have started to increase (Freeport went from 9,000 cfs to 12,800 cfs on Sunday). More rain is expected this week and a significant increase in flows is predicted by this weekend. In addition Coleman National Fish Hatchery will begin releasing 900,000 late-fall Chinook on Weds 12/16 into the upper Sacramento River at Battle Creek. The DOSS expects that juvenile salmonids will move down with the increase in flows.

FWS data (12/6 – 12/12):

2 winter-run Chinook were caught on the Sacramento Seine Run (Sand Cove and Sherwood Harbor). 1 splittail was caught on the Lower Sacramento Seine Run

40 longfin smelt were caught on Chipps Island Trawl as well as: 2 splittail and 2 delta smelt (63, 69 mm) no gamete expression. Delta smelt do not typically begin to ripen until at least February so this lack of evidence for reproductive readiness is normal. No salmonids were caught in trawls at Chipps Island, Mossdale, and Sacramento River (Sherwood Harbor) on 12/9 and 12/11.

Deer and Mill Creek (Mitch Goode): The Mill Creek trap captured 33 spring-run Chinook yearlings this past week, ranging in size from 82-115 mm. Five steelhead were also captured, ranging from 117-261 mm. Flows from this last storm peaked at 426 cfs.

The Mill Creek trap fished thru the storm. The Deer trap did not capture any Chinook. One 87 mm steelhead was captured. Flows peaked at 481 cfs. The trap was grounded during the high flows. It has been reset. Flows are predicted to reach 900 cfs on Wednesday.

Fish Facilities: The first winter-run Chinook was salvaged at the Federal Facility on 12/9 (expanded salvage = 4, loss = 3). No delta smelt were salvaged at either facility.

For other monitoring sites, see:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/swp/operationscontrol/calfed/calfedmonitoring.cfm>

1) Fish monitoring data: Did not trigger or warrant Delta Cross Channel (DCC) gate closures. DFG data at KL up to Monday 12/14, showed catch per unit effort (CPUE) has been less than one, trawls have been zero, and seines < 3 fish per day. Anticipate fish will move down into the delta with this week's increase in flows.

2) DCC gate ops: The DCC gates are scheduled for closure today at 10:00 am, due to a request from FWS for the Delta Action 8 study. Acoustically tagged study fish are scheduled for release at midnight tonight to test the gates closed position, requiring an earlier closure. The gates had previously been scheduled to close on 12/16 to meet the 7-day average Rio Vista flow standard (State Water Resource Control Board Decision 1641). The gates typically default to the closed position on December 15, pursuant to the 45 days of closure from November through January contained in D-1641. The 7-day flow standard is being met and will probably not be a problem given the closure of the DCC gates and flow increase at Freeport due to the recent storms.

3) Weather and Water Quality outlook: Moderate precipitation is expected today and tomorrow which should increase flows in the Sacramento River. Flow at Verona is predicted to rise to 17,000 cfs by Friday. Turbidity is increasing in the Sacramento River, however, the Delta remains clear. At this time, monitoring will shift from DCC gate operations to Old and Middle River flow restrictions. Turbidity in the Delta is monitored at 3 locations as specified in the FWS BO (i.e., Prisoner Point, Holland Cut, and Victoria Canal). The trigger for the first action in the FWS opinion is a 3 day average > 12 NTU at all 3 stations. Currently, turbidity is ranging from 1-3 NTU at these stations. DWR is reporting daily averages for turbidity on their Operations Control Office website:

<http://www.water.ca.gov/swp/operationscontrol/docs/delta/DeltaMisc1.pdf>

The Smelt Working Group (SWG) rescheduled Monday's call to Wednesday. Jeff Stuart reported that a large number of longfin smelt caught in the Chipps Island Trawl may be of concern. There was some discussion on the take limit for longfin smelt at the State Fish Facility. The take permit was signed in February 2009 by DWR after restrictions for delta smelt had already taken place. (**Action:** Mike Ford will check with DFG on longfin smelt take limit for 2010).

Other items: The spring-run surrogate release is scheduled for Dec. 28-30 at Battle Creek. DOSS discussed the (yet to be defined) incidental take estimate for the Delta Fish Facilities this year. Bruce O. said the take estimate for winter-run is based on the number of juveniles predicted to enter the delta. This estimate is usually calculated in January after DFG provides the official estimate of adults the NMFS (expected sometime at the end of this month). (**Action:** Bruce O will contact DFG for status of adult estimate).

No advice to NMFS or WOMT for the week of 12/14 – 12/18

Next Mtg: 12/22/09 at 9:00 am (Jeff Stuart leader).