

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

12/29/09 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, Mitch Goode, Carol Stroble and Andy Chu (DWR), Roger Guinee (FWS), Jeff Stuart & Bruce Oppenheim (NMFS), Greg Wilson (SWRCB), Matt Nobriga (DFG) and Bruce Herbold (EPA), Thuy Washburn (USBR).

Agenda items: fish monitoring, water quality, and action items from 12/15 call (*i.e.* longfin smelt incidental take for 2010, and winter-run Chinook estimate)

Fish Monitoring: Knights Landing (KL) weekly summary:

Date	Flow cfs	Water T(F)	Secchi (ft)	Turbidity NTU	Species	Catch	Min FI	Max FI	Ad- clips	CPUE
12/20/09	6330	52	1.7	15.6		0	0	0	0	0
12/21/09	5948	53	1.6	14.5		0	0	0	1	0
12/22/09	5799	51	1.5	17.5	1 FR, 3 LF	4	27	141	8	1.5
12/23/09	6356	50	1.7	15.2	2 FR, 2 LF	4	35	125	27	1
12/24/09	6570	49	1.2	12.0	2 FR, 1 SR, 2 WR	5	37	74	13	1.04
12/26/09	5283	48	1.7	11.6	1 FR, 1 LF	2	38	149	13	0.24
12/28/09		47	1.5	9.6		0	0	0	12	0

Knights Landing

River flows, water temperatures, and turbidity at KL increased early in the week, leveled off mid-week, and started to decline over the weekend. Five Chinook salmon were captured during the past week in the KL rotary screw traps (RSTs). Three winter-run sized fish were recovered last week, 2 on 12/17/09 and 1 on 12/19/09. Two late-fall sized fish were recovered during this same period, one on 12/14/09 and the other on 12/17/09. Sacramento River flows remained relatively steady through the early part of last week at 13,000 cfs before increasing to a peak on Saturday of approximately 14,000 cfs. Flows began to decline on Sunday (12/20/09) to approximately 13,000 cfs. Rain will be moderate and most of the week will be dry according to the National Weather Service forecast. There is a slight chance of rain next weekend and continuing into the first part of next week.

FWS data (for 12/20 – 12/26):

Beach Seines: 6 Fall-run (5 at American River and 1 at Elkhorn), 7 late-fall run (2 at Clarksburg, 3 at Georgiana Slough, 2 at Reels Beach), 1 winter-run (Reels Beach), and 9 ad-clipped Chinook (Reels Beach). DOSS concluded that the ad-clipped Chinook are most likely late-falls from Coleman Hatchery due to the timing. This indicates some juvenile salmonids are moving into the Delta. 13 delta smelt (55-69 mm) were caught at Sandy Beach, none of which exhibited mature gamete expression.

Sacramento & Mossdale trawl: No Chinook

Chippys Island: No Chinook, 56 longfin smelt, and 5 delta smelt (60-65 mm) none of which exhibited mature gamete expression.

Mill and Deer Creeks (Mitch Goode) No data to report, next report will be 1/4

CVP and SWP Fish Salvage Facilities (12/21-12/27): 1 late-fall Chinook was observed at the Federal Facility on 12/26. No steelhead, delta smelt, longfin smelt, or green sturgeon were observed. For other monitoring sites, see:

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

Fish monitoring data did not trigger or warrant any operational changes. DFG data at KL up to Monday 12/28, showed catch per unit effort (CPUE) has been below the 1.0 index criteria since 12/20 (data reported on last DOSS call), trawls have been zero, and seines < 3 winter-run or spring-run per day. No species of concern were reported at the salvage facilities. DOSS concluded that some hatchery (ad-clipped) juvenile salmonids appear to be moving into the delta (see KL and seine data); however, wild fish numbers remain low. Water temperatures increased to 53 degrees (F) and then dropped to 47 degrees (F) on Monday. Flows into the delta remain low, but are expected to increase starting this weekend (1/1-1/2).

The first spring-run surrogates (75,000, average FL = 135 mm) were released on Monday 12/28 from Coleman National Fish Hatchery. These are uniquely marked (ad-clipped) late-fall Chinook salmon released upstream on the Sacramento River at Battle Creek. The concept is that these hatchery fish will move downstream at the same time and same size as the wild yearling spring-run emigrating from Mill and Deer Creek (note: Mill Creek RST observed 33 yearling spring-run last week). Another surrogate hatchery release is planned for January.

Delta Smelt Working Group: No meeting on Monday.

1) Other Compliance Standards: Water quality is holding steady but is expected to deteriorate with the spring tide this week. Operators are taking a conservative approach by cutting exports to keep the salinity from moving into the delta.

2) Turbidity: Turbidity remains low in the delta. Current levels of turbidity (expressed as a 3-day average) range from 3 -8 NTUs and not expected to increase this week. The triggering level is 12 NTU at all three stations.

3) Water operations: Current reservoir releases are at, or near minimum release levels: Keswick 3250 cfs, Oroville 1350 cfs, and Nimbus 1800 cfs. Storage at Shasta is 1,766 thousand acre feet (taf), storage at Oroville is 1,030 taf, storage at Folsom is 270 af and at San Luis total is 853 taf, SWP share is 327 taf. OMR flow is approximately – 5,000 cfs (14 day average). Current exports are 3,500 cfs at the SWP and 2,000 cfs at the CVP, but the CVP is cutting from

two units to one unit (1,000 cfs) due to reduced outflow. Flows are 1,278 cfs at Vernalis (San Joaquin River) and 9,875 cfs at Freeport (Sacramento River).

4) Action items from 12/15 DOSS call: Bruce O. reported contacting DFG (Alice Low) to find out the status of the winter-run adult escapement estimate. A special winter-run team from DFG is reviewing the data and should have an estimate of adult abundance by the first week in January. NMFS will then calculate the juvenile production estimate in order to quantify incidental take at the delta pumps, hopefully by the end of January.

Matt Nobriga reported that the incidental take for longfin smelt in 2010 is not available yet. Longfin incidental take at the pumps is based on the fall mid-water trawl (5 * FMWT) data, which should be out next week. It is expected to be very low this year.

5) Other items: Greg Wilson (SWRCB) asked about the timing of the Stanislaus River flow pulse in January and February. The NMFS BO calls for a small increase (from 200 cfs to 400 cfs) for 3 days starting Jan.3rd. The increase in flows is to create some variability in the releases at this time of year and attract adult steelhead spawners. The timing and duration of the flow pulse is to be decided during the first meeting of the Stanislaus Operations Group. A meeting time has not been set yet.

No advice to WOMT or NMFS for the week of 12/28 to 1/2.

Next Mtg: 01/05/09 at 9:00 am