

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

03/16/10 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. DOSS notes and advice can be found at: <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocap/actions.htm>

Attendees: Andy Chu, Mike Ford, Carol Stroble (DWR); Pat Brandes, Roger Guinee, Nick Hindman (FWS); Barbara Byrne, Garwin Yip, Bruce Oppenheim, Jeff Stuart (NMFS); Liz Kiteck, Thuy Washburn, John Hannon (USBR); Greg Wilson (SWRCB); Bruce Herbold (EPA), and Matt Nobriga (DFG)

Agenda:

- 1) VAMP & interim Export to San Joaquin Inflow Ratio (see pages 641-643 NMFS BiOp)
- 2) NMFS request to reconstruct the second fish salvage trigger (see NMFS determination)
- 3) fish monitoring and Delta water operations

Fish Monitoring:

Knights Landing (3/8 – 3/15): Reviewed trap data from last week. The number of juvenile salmonids entering the Delta has dropped significantly from the week before. Total catch was 65 salmon, yesterday's catch was 0. Most of these were fall-run Chinook, however, there were 3 spring-run caught. No winter-run or steelhead were reported. Catch per unit of effort was 0 for winter-run and steelhead.

FWS Delta sampling (3/7 – 3/14)

Sacramento KDTR; 7 fall-run Chinook, 1 tagged Chinook, & 1 splittail

Mossdale KDTR; 1 winter-run Chinook, & no other species of concern

Chippis MWTR; 9 winter-run Chinook, 18 tagged Chinook, 7 clipped steelhead, 52 longfin smelt, & 7 Delta smelt

Beach Seines; 119 fall-run Chinook, 6 spring-run Chinook, & 2 tagged Chinook

CVP and SWP Fish Salvage Facilities (3/8 Monday – 3/14 Sunday):

Winter-run: This week DFG reported 212 non-clipped winter-run Chinook lost, (21) at CVP and (191) at the SWP, compared to 447 from the week before. The cumulative loss to date is 1,235 non-clipped winter-run Chinook.

Steelhead: 30 non-clipped steelhead were salvaged this week, (4) at CVP, and (26) at SWP, compared to 74 last week. The combined cumulative salvage to date is 654 non-clipped steelhead (incidental take limit is 3,000). The cumulative salvage of clipped (hatchery) steelhead is 3,345 to date. There is no incidental take limit for hatchery steelhead.

Sturgeon and Smelt: No green sturgeon have been observed since October 1st. At the CVP, 8 delta smelt were salvaged over the week, and 4 were salvaged at the SWP. Cumulative loss for delta smelt to date is now 92 adults. No larval delta smelt or longfin smelt were observed at either facility.

Daily loss and loss density for Chinook salmon: Loss densities of older juvenile Chinook salmon (*i.e.*, winter-run, spring-run, and late-fall Chinook) have declined this week from 8.75 fish per TAF to less than 1.57 fish per TAF (see table 1). The daily salvage on Monday (3/15) was 0 at both facilities, and 3 salmon were observed at the CVP on Tuesday (3/16).

Table 1.

SWP & CVP Daily Older Juvenile Chinook Loss & Loss Density & Loss Density 1/1/2010 through 3/14/2010		
Date	Older Juvenile Loss (# fish)	Older Juvenile Loss Density (fish/taf)
3/8/2010	145.02	8.75
3/9/2010	12.89	0.79
3/10/2010	24.87	1.57
3/11/2010	17.94	1.20
3/12/2010	5.04	0.41
3/13/2010	6.07	0.64
3/14/2010	0	0
DWR-DES 3/15/2010 Preliminary, subject to revision		

Loss of the spring-run surrogate (Coleman late-fall Chinook) release groups has slowed (see DWR spring-run surrogate loss table dated 3/15). The release group from 1/14 is projected to reach 0.582 percent, or a loss of 1,014 fish. The winter-run hatchery release group loss is 0.023 percent (25 fish). The projected rate based on proportion of tagged fish observed is 0.171 percent (186 fish). There are 24 unread tags.

DOSS concluded from the fish monitoring data that winter-run Chinook salmon, spring-run Chinook salmon, and steelhead salvage and loss is declining at the Fish Facilities. Current loss rates and loss densities are below the triggers identified in the NMFS opinion (see notes from DOSS call on 3/11 for discussion on last Monday's loss density). It appears that the number of older juveniles entering the Delta has tapered off and we may be approaching the end of the emigration period.

DOSS considered the request from NMFS to reconstruct the 2nd fish salvage trigger and decided to have a smaller group of biologists review the data from the Salmon Decision Process (described in the OCAP biological assessment), determine the original trigger calculation/formula, and clarify the intent of this trigger. This group will work with Sheila

Greene and Erin Chappell to update the criteria with more recent data and determine which species and which life-stage were meant to be protected. The 4th fish salvage trigger is the same as the 2nd fish salvage trigger.

For fish data at other monitoring sites see:

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

Smelt Working Group (SWG) Matt Nobriga reported: The SWG met on Monday and recommended to FWS to reduce the OMR flow to no more negative than -3,000 cfs, because of the concern that the projects would exceed the adult incidental take limit. Salvage of adults has reached the concern level (92 adults) over this last weekend. The FWS has not yet issued a determination.

1) Other Compliance Standards: Old and Middle River (OMR) flow update from USGS CDEC data reported 3/15 from DWR delta operations.

	Current	NMFS Limit	FWS/DFG limit
14-Day Running Average	= -4680 cfs	-5000 cfs	-5000 cfs
5-Day Running Average	= -4279 cfs	-5000 cfs ± 25%	

2) Water operations: Exports are at 5,000 cfs combined (2,500 at CVP and 2,500 at SWP). The OMR flow rate of -5,000 cfs is controlling export pumping.

Weather outlook: Dry, no storms for the next 10 days

3) Other items: VAMP & interim Export to San Joaquin Inflow Ratio

VAMP is scheduled to run from April 25 through May 25 this year. The delay is due to the size of Merced Hatchery fish which are not large enough for the acoustical tags. The non-physical HORB is scheduled to go in April 22 (Mark Bowen's experiment). The VAMP target flows are 3,200 cfs based on the March 50 percent and 90 percent forecasts. However, during the period of overlap of the Stanislaus pulse flow and the VAMP flow, Vernalis flows are likely to be above 3,200 cfs. The VAMP contribution from the Stanislaus River is based on the New Melones Interim Plan of Operations, not the NMFS flow schedule requirements.

The Export to San Joaquin Inflow Ratio requirement in the NMFS opinion is 3,000 cfs at Vernalis, which is consistent with the VAMP flow target. The NMFS opinion requires exports to be reduced to 1,500 cfs combined for 61 days from April 1 to May 31. The last fish release for VAMP will occur on May 19-20, so fish will have 10 days to make it past the export facilities before pumping increases.

DOSS advice for NMFS and WOMET (3/8-3/15). The DOSS technical team advice to NMFS is to maintain an OMR flow of no more negative than - 5,000 cfs. A smaller group of DOSS biologists will reconstruct the salvage trigger #2 in the NMFS opinion and send out clarification on when and how it was intended to be used.

Next Mtg: Tuesday 3/23 at 9:00 am