

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

03/30/10 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: Mike Ford, Carol Stroble (DWR); Nick Hindman, Roger Guinee ((FWS); Bruce Oppenheim (NMFS); Thuy Washburn, Josh Israel (USBR); Greg Wilson, Kari Kyler (SWRCB)

Agenda: fish monitoring and Delta water operations

Fish Monitoring:

Knights Landing (3/21 – 3/28): The number of juvenile salmonids entering the Delta remains low. Total catch for the week was 13 salmon and has dropped to 1 fish/day. There were 7 fall-run and 6 spring-run caught last week. No other species of concern. Catch per unit of effort was 0 for winter-run and steelhead.

Mill and Deer Creek (after the call): This report covers the last 2 weeks data. The Mill Creek trap fish continuously and captured 289 YOY Chinook (32-70 mm fl), 4 spring-Chinook yearlings (95-121 mm fl), and 2 steelhead (92 and 245 mm fl). Flows ranged from 337 to 276 cfs. The Deer Creek trap also fished continuously and captured 165 YOY Chinook (30-55 mm fl), no yearling spring Chinook, or steelhead. Flows ranged from 400 to 323 cfs.

FWS Delta Region (3/21 – 3/27): Declining catch compared to last week.

Sacramento trawl; 2 spring-run Chinook, no other species of concern

Mossdale trawl; no species of concern

Chippis trawl; 4 winter-run Chinook, 3 tagged Chinook, 1 clipped steelhead, 2 splittail, 3 longfin smelt, and 2 Delta smelt

Beach seines; 57 fall-run Chinook, 14 spring-run Chinook, and 1 delta smelt (Lost Isle, South Delta)

CVP and SWP Fish Salvage Facilities (3/22 Monday – 3/28 Sunday):

Winter-run: This week 153 non-clipped winter-run Chinook lost; (74) at CVP and (79) at the SWP, compared to 195 winter-run lost last week. The cumulative loss to date is 1,581 non-clipped winter-run Chinook.

Steelhead: 47 non-clipped steelhead were salvaged this week; (20) at CVP, and (27) at SWP, compared to 54 salvaged last week. The combined cumulative salvage to date is 755 non-clipped steelhead (the incidental take limit is 3,000 non-clipped steelhead). The cumulative salvage of clipped, or hatchery steelhead is 3,470 to date. There is no incidental take limit for hatchery steelhead.

Sturgeon and Smelt: No green sturgeon have been observed this season (starts October 1st). At the CVP, 0 delta smelt were salvaged over the week, and 0 were salvaged at the SWP. Cumulative YTD loss for delta smelt is still 92 adults. No larval delta smelt or longfin smelt were observed at either facility.

Daily loss densities for Chinook salmon (3/21-3/28): Loss densities of older juvenile Chinook salmon (*i.e.*, winter-run, spring-run, and late-fall Chinook) ranged from a high of 4.95 fish/taf on 3/22 to a low of 0 fish/taf on 3/27. The average loss density for the week was 1.53 fish/taf and the daily loss on Monday 3/29 was 0 older juveniles (CVO website).

SWP & CVP
Daily Older Juvenile Chinook Loss & Loss Density
1/1/2010 through 3/29/2010

Date	Older Juvenile Loss (# fish)	Older Juvenile Loss Density (fish/taf)
3/21/2010	14.28	1.03
3/22/2010	68.76	4.95
3/23/2010	17.58	1.39
3/24/2010	12.76	0.95
3/25/2010	23.45	1.77
3/26/2010	21.03	1.54
3/27/2010	0.00	0.00
3/28/2010	8.54	0.62
DWR-DES 3/29/2010	average	1.53
Preliminary, subject to revision		

CWT data (DWR table 3/28): The spring-run surrogate release on 1/14/2010 confirmed loss rate is 0.551 percent and has stopped increasing (because these fish have likely already passed through the Delta, no OMR action is advised). The winter-run hatchery release on 2/10/2010 increased slightly from 0.117 percent to 0.123 percent confirmed loss. Projected winter-run hatchery loss is 0.169 percent with 8 tags left unread. Given the low number of unread tags and declining salvage it is unlikely that the 0.5 percent trigger for winter-run hatchery fish will be met. Hatchery winter-run loss YTD is 134 and the incidental take limit for winter-run hatchery fish is 1,087.

The data indicate that emigration of juvenile salmon and steelhead has declined both into and out of the Delta. Salvage and loss at the fish facilities is sporadic with few salmon being observed. This is a transitional time period when typically the loss of older juveniles drops off and the loss of smaller fall-run Chinook begins. Current loss rates and loss densities are below the triggers identified in the NMFS opinion.

DOSS subgroup update: Earliest possible date this group can meet is the week of 4/5-4/9 (court schedule hampers an earlier date) to review the second trigger in the NMFS OMR action.

For fish data at other monitoring sites see:

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

1) Other Compliance Standards: Old and Middle River (OMR) flow update from USGS CDEC data reported 3/23 from DWR delta operations.

	Current	NMFS Limit	FWS/DFG limit
14-Day Running Average	= -4,578 cfs	-5000 cfs	-5000 cfs
5-Day Running Average	= -4,426 cfs	-5000 cfs ± 25%	

2) Water operations (3/30):

Clifton Court Inflow (SWP) = 3,500 cfs

Jones Pumping Plant (CVP) = 2,800 cfs

The CVP will be cutting from 3 units to 1 unit (800 cfs) starting tomorrow in order to meet the April 1 interim requirement in the NMFS BiOp (RPA action IV.2.1 San Joaquin River Inflow to Export Ratio). The SWP will cut back to 700 cfs for a combined export level of 1,500 cfs. There was some discussion of what to operate to if the FWS incidental take limit of 2 larval Delta smelt is reached after April 1. Export pumping will be as low as it can go (left up to FWS to decide).

Reservoir releases are at minimums, Oroville is reducing its release from 1,350 cfs to 800 cfs by April 1st to meet DFG agreement minimum flow requirements (100 cfs /day). Delta inflows are dropping at Vernalis and Freeport. The E/I ratio is currently at 34.7 percent (standard is 35 percent). Stanislaus River is at 200 cfs, but will be increasing to 500 cfs tomorrow to meet the Vernalis flow requirement (RPA IV.2.1). VAMP flow requirements will start April 25 through May 25. For the period April 1 through April 24 the SWRCB D-1641 requirement is based on the number of days X2 is west of Chipps Island. There was discussion of how many days are required, and the tentative conclusion was 20-25 days using the 8-River Index (2 MAF).

Weather outlook: rain on and off this week

3) Smelt Working Group (SWG): The SWG met on Monday and recommended an OMR flow rate of no more negative than - 5,000 cfs. FWS is reviewing the incidental take levels for larval Delta smelt. For April the concern level is 5 delta smelt, and re-initiation level is 7 delta smelt.

DOSS advice for NMFS and WOMT (3/29 -4/5). DOSS advice is operate using the NMFS determination sent to WOMT 3/26 (*i.e.*, 2:1 San Joaquin River Ratio, 3,000 cfs at Vernalis and 1500 cfs exports starting April1). The default is to use the SWRCB D-1641 requirements and 35 percent E/I ratio until VAMP starts April 25. It is likely that operating to the E/I ratio would result in a more positive OMR than -5,000 cfs, which should benefit emigration of juvenile salmonids from the San Joaquin River.

Next Mtg: Tuesday 4/6 at 9:00 am.

Agenda items: Stanislaus Operations Group update and VAMP update (Pat Brandes)