

Date: December 27, 2010
To: Water Operations Management Team (WOMT)
From: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Re: Old and Middle River (OMR) flow management for 2011

Background

The Delta Operations for Salmon and Steelhead (DOSS) team met earlier today and advised NMFS and the WOMT to begin managing exports to achieve an OMR flow of no more negative than -5,000 cfs by January 1st pursuant to action IV.2.3 in the NMFS biological opinion.

NMFS Determination

NMFS accepts the DOSS advice and determines that operating to an OMR flow of no more negative than -5000 cfs beginning on January 1, 2011, is consistent with Action IV.2.3 in the NMFS biological opinion (page 648) and will provide the intended protection for salmon and steelhead.

From NMFS' June 4, 2009, OCAP biological opinion Action 1V.2.3. page 648:

Action: From January 1 through June 15, reduce exports, as necessary, to limit negative flows to -2,500 to -5,000 cfs in Old and Middle Rivers, depending on the presence of salmonids. The reverse flow will be managed within this range to reduce flows toward the pumps during periods of increased salmonid presence. The negative flow objective within the range shall be determined based on the following decision tree:

Date	Action Triggers	Action Responses
January 1 – June 15	January 1 – June 15	Exports are managed to a level that produces a 14-day running average of the tidally filtered flow of (minus) -5,000 cfs in Old and Middle River

Supporting Rationale

The objectives of this action are to:

1. Reduce the vulnerability of emigrating juvenile winter-run, yearling spring-run, and CV steelhead within the lower Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers to entrainment into the channels of the South Delta and at the pumps due to the diversion of water by the export facilities in the South Delta; and
2. Enhance the likelihood of salmonids successfully exiting the Delta at Chipps Island by creating more suitable hydraulic conditions in the mainstem of the San Joaquin River for emigrating fish, including greater net downstream flows.
3. Real-time monitoring showed an increase in salmon entering the Delta in the last week (*i.e.*, 295 at Knights Landing, 203 at Sacramento, 3 at Mossdale, and 59 at Chipps Island). Loss of juvenile winter-run Chinook at the Delta pumps increased from 12 to 106 for the week (12/20-12/26).