

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

5/11/2010 Conference 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 & Andy Chu (DWR); Nick Hindman, Pat Brandes, Roger Guinee (FWS); Bruce Oppenheim, Jeff Stuart, Barbara Byrne (NMFS); Thuy Washburn, John Hannon (USBR); Dan Kratville (DFG), Kari Kyler (SWRCB)

Agenda: fish monitoring, Delta water operations, SWP outage, & DCC operations

Fish Monitoring Data:

Mill and Deer Creek (5/3-5/10):

The Mill Creek trap fished daily during this reporting period. The catch included: 110 YOY Chinook: 40-102 mmfl, two spring-run Chinook yearlings: 131 and 139 mmfl and seven steelhead: 34-223 mmfl. Flows ranged between 410 and 556 cfs.

The Deer trap also fished daily. The catch included: 39 YOY Chinook, one spring-run Chinook yearling: 102 mmfl and four steelhead: 26-219 mmfl. Flows ranged between 518 and 707 cfs.

The length frequencies between the yearling and YOY year classes are becoming less apparent. In Mill Creek, a size break between the two year classes appears between 102 and 119 mmfl and in Deer Creek there appears to be a break between 90 and 99 mmfl (see CHISAL growth chart attached). Although, the lower length frequencies in Deer Creek could be a function of fewer fish handled.

Knights Landing (5/4-5/10): With two traps fishing for approximately 7 days, a total of 14 Chinook salmon were caught: 12 fall-run (2 of which were ad-clipped), 2 spring-run, 0 winter-run, and 0 steelhead. The average CPUE (fish/trap-day) for the week was 1.06 for fall/spring-run, 0 for winter-run/late fall, and 0.0 for non-clipped steelhead.

Nimbus releases (with 25% mark fraction) happened yesterday and are happening again today at Discovery Park.

FWS Sampling Data (5/3-5/7):

Beach Seines: 24 fall-run Chinook, 5 late-fall Chinook, 4 ad-clipped Chinook, & 427 splittail

Sacramento Trawls: 23 fall-run Chinook, 3 spring-run Chinook, 11 ad-clipped Chinook

Chippis Island Trawls: 324 fall-run Chinook, 60 spring-run Chinook, 117 ad-clipped Chinook, 1 steelhead, 1 splittail, & 2 delta smelt

Mossdale Kodiak trawl (5/2-5/9) Steve Tsao, DFG:

31 non-clipped juvenile Chinook salmon were caught in 6 days of sampling. No steelhead were caught. The number of non-clipped juvenile Chinook salmon captured at Mossdale to date (i.e. as of 5/9) is 190, compared to 446 last year and 663 in 2008. While sampling was more frequent in previous years, it was suggested that the current low numbers may reflect lower abundance and not just be an artifact of reduced sampling frequency. It was also noted that the relatively high flows observed this year may be affecting trap efficiency.

CVP and SWP Fish Salvage Facilities (5/3-5/9):

4 non-clipped winter-run Chinook were salvaged on 5/3 at the CVP for a total loss of 4 for the week. Total non-clipped winter-run YTD is 1,661.

8 non-clipped steelhead were salvaged at the SWP and 6 non-clipped steelhead were salvaged at the CVP for a weekly total of 14. 4 clipped steelhead were salvaged at the CVP. The YTD non-clipped cumulative total for steelhead is 862; the take limit is 3000.

No green sturgeon, delta smelt, or longfin smelt were salvaged this week.

Daily loss densities for Chinook salmon (5/3-5/9): Older juvenile loss density was 1.31 fish/taf on 5/3, and 0 fish/taf for the rest of the week.

Summary: The current loss rates and loss densities are below the triggers identified in the NMFS Opinion.

Smelt Working Group (SWG): There was no SWG call this week. 2 longfin smelt were salvaged at the CVP last week – a 43 mm fish on 5/6 and a 45mm fish on 5/7. Another longfin smelt was salvaged on 5/10.

DOSS subgroup update (reconstruct 2nd OMR trigger): The subgroup met on May 5th and are pursuing further analysis of the trigger. The subgroup is not yet ready to make a presentation to WOMT.

Operations:

CVP

Current releases at Keswick are approximately 7,500 cfs. Current releases on the American are approximately 5000 cfs. Jones pumping plant is operating one unit at 800 cfs.

Approximate OMRs as of Monday, 5/10:

Daily OMR = 2800 cfs

The 5-day OMR = 1400 cfs.

The 14-day OMR = 1300 cfs.

Update on SWP Shutdown: Inflow to Clifton Court Forebay will be at 700cfs through Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, the CVP will run a second pumping unit for a partial day of pumping. Operations next week will depend upon water levels in Clifton Court Forebay.

Discussion on exports vs. pumping

The group discussed the distinction between “exports” and “pumping”. It was reiterated that the “exports” on the fish salvage sheet on the CVO reports website quantify combined pumping, while “exports” under Action IV.2.1 in the NMFS BO and under D-1641 and for VAMP are measured by inflow to Clifton Court (minus the diversion by Byron-Bethany Irrigation District) + Jones pumping. Was suggested that the header on the CVO reports be changed to say “pumping through salvage facilities” or something similar to distinguish those numbers from “exports.”

FWS asked DWR for the schedule for Clifton Court gate operations.

Upcoming operations:

NMFS RPA Action IV.2.1 (Vernalis flow and I:E ratio) is in effect through the end of May. NMFS RPA Action IV.2.3 (OMR) is in effect through June 15 (though likely not controlling until June).

VAMP update:

Of 74 fish released at Durham Ferry, over 60 were observed at the non-physical barrier (NPB). The fifth release starts today, and two more releases are schedule beyond today’s release. The barrier sound was increased in an attempt to improve deterrence.

The VAMP study called for flows at Vernalis of 4,450 cfs. Actual flows have often exceeded 5,000cfs; today’s flow is over 5,900 cfs. What’s going on in the SJR basin this year? Merced and Tuolumne are doing a lot of fill management – Tuolumne is releasing about 1,000 cfs over the VAMP requirement. Friant flows are also higher than anticipated. With a dry forecast for the next 10 days, Vernalis flows may drop somewhat.

Stanislaus Operations Group (SOG): Reclamation may hold Goodwin releases steady between 600cfs and 800cfs for three days to allow multiple days of surveying under consistent flow.

DCC Operations: Reclamation has received requests for gate operations to accommodate VAMP and a predation study on the Mokelumne. The fish agencies agree to adopt the DCC schedule proposed by Reclamation (see schedule inserted below, provided by Thuy Washburn, Reclamation, following the DOSS call):

- Open on Friday, May 28th at 10:00 am and close on Tuesday June 1st at 10:00 am
- Open on Friday, June 4th at 10:00 am and close on Monday June 7th at 10:00 am
- Open on Friday, June 11th and remain open.

This schedule represents 14 days of closure during the May 21-June 15 period as per D-1641.

DOSS Advice for NMFS and WOMT:

There is no new DOSS advice this week. The DOSS group does wish to clarify that it intends for the advice of last week, 5/4/2010, to supersede the DOSS advice of the prior two weeks, 4/20/2010 and 4/27/2010.

Next Meeting: May 18 at 9:00 am