

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

Conference call: 11/15/11 at 9:00 a.m.

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 on salmonids and green sturgeon.

DOSS will coordinate the work of other technical teams. DOSS notes and advice can be found at: <http://www.swr.noaa.gov/ocap/doss.htm>

DWR: Andy Chu, Angela Llaban, Dan Yamanaka, Mike Ford, Jim Gleim, Edmund Yu, Reza Shahcheraghi

FWS: Leigh Bartoo, Roger Guinee

NMFS: Barbara Rocco, Jeff Stuart, Bruce Oppenheim

Reclamation: Josh Israel, Russ Yaworsky

DFG: Bob Fujimura;

EPA, SWRCB: not present

Agenda

1. Fish Monitoring
2. Current operations
3. Annual review update

Fish Monitoring: The following table presents fish monitoring data from 10/31 through 11/14/11. Because there was no conference call last week, fish data for the previous week is included here. See: <http://www.water.ca.gov/swp/operationscontrol/calfed/calfedmonitoring.cfm>

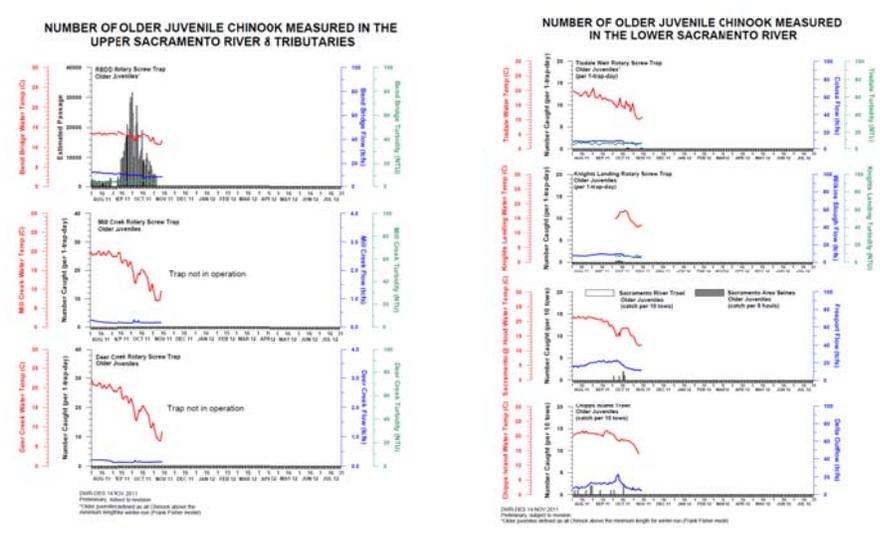
Location	Chippis Is. Midwater Trawl	Sacramento Kodiak Trawl	Mossdale Kodiak Trawl	Beach Seines	Knights Landing RST	Tisdale Weir RST
Sample Date	10/31–11/14	10/31–11/14	10/31–11/14	10/31–11/14	10/31–11/14	10/31–11/14
Total Catch	7	0	0	0	0	1
FR						
WR						1 @ 50 mm
SR						
Ad-Clipped Chinook						
DS	7 (caught on 11/9)					
SH (ad-clip)						
SH (wild)						
W. Temp. (avg. °F)	56.7	51.8	53.63	54.0	54.8	51.8
Flows (avg. cfs)					5,539	6,013
Turbidity					6.5	5.44

(avg. NTU)						
WR/LFR Avg. CPUE						0.043

Key: FR = Fall run; LFR = Late-fall run; SR = Spring run; WR = Winter run; SH = Steelhead; DS = Delta smelt; LFS = Longfin smelt; SPTL = Splittail, CPUE = catch per unit of effort, ACT = acoustical tag

Chippis Island Trawl: Because of the self-imposed daily catch limit of 10 delta smelt, only one trawl was conducted. Monitoring was stopped after 7 delta smelt were caught on 11/9/11.

Juvenile Chinook monitoring: Below are graphs from DWR for older juveniles in the upper and lower Sacramento River.



Mokelumne River: No updates in fall-run spawning escapement since last DOSS meeting/notes.

American R: Fall-run carcass surveys are underway. Early reports indicate the majority are jacks or 2 year olds. There are substantially more jacks reported at all CV hatcheries this year compared to last year, indicating that next year’s run should be good. This could be attributed to more favorable ocean conditions, rather than to the DCC gate closure. Those spawned in 2009 entered the ocean in 2010, which was the first year that both the NMFS and USFWS RPAs were in effect. It would be interesting to know whether fish released downstream of the Delta (trucked) had a greater survival rate than those released at the hatcheries and that went through the Delta. Pacific States Marine Fishery Commission and DFG are evaluating this in their hatchery review. A few adult Chinook were observed migrating last week up to New Hogan Dam on the Calaveras River, which is an unusual event.

DFG hatchery and carcass surveys:

Merced River: Fall-run - from October 3 to November 7 (Week 6), the cumulative totals for the carcass survey showed 848 live fish, 396 redds, and 33 ad-clipped fish.

Tuolumne River: Fall run - from October 3 to November 7 (Week 6), cumulative totals 406 live, 183 redds, and 44 ad-clipped.

Stanislaus River: Fall-run - from October 3 to November 7 (Week 6), cumulative totals are 1,169 live, 575 redds, and 36 ad-clipped (flows dropped from 2,000 to 500 cfs). Most fish came in at lower flows.

Feather River Hatchery: Cumulative totals since September: Spring run -1,831 adults and 138 grilse compared to last year at 655 adults and 6 grilse. Fall run - 15,441 adults and 15,628 grilse compared to last year at 16,476 adults and 2,668 grilse.

Mokelumne River Hatchery: Cumulative totals since September: Fall-run - 1,065 adults and 5,965 grilse compared to last year at 715 adults and 754 grilse. Steelhead -143 adults and 41 grilse; last year was 70 adults and 21 grilse.

Nimbus Hatchery: Cumulative totals since September: Fall-run - 904 adults and 1,200 grilse compared to last year at 660 and 90 grilse. One steelhead compare to 6 last year.

Merced River Hatchery: Cumulative totals since September: Fall-run spawned- 4 adults and 5 grilse.

Mill and Deer Creek juvenile salmon monitoring:

The rotary screw traps (RST) were not put in this year because one staff biologist retired and there were some funding issues. Continuation of monitoring this year is doubtful, even though it is specified in the NMFS BiOp. Many of the triggers in the BiOp were carried forward from years of older studies (Spring-run Protection Plan). The analysis in the BiOp looked at three factors that would contribute to emigration: turbidity, flows, and water temperature. NMFS was looking for a specific time when we could make a decision on DCC gate operations. This issue was discussed by the Interagency Management Team but not resolved. The 10–20 years of data from the Mill and Deer Creek monitoring efforts could be synthesized to decide whether they can be used for surrogacy release programs, although they were used mainly to get information on the timing of fish passage and as a first alert for when fish were coming from the tributaries to the mainstem of the Sacramento River and, specifically, for DCC gate operations. Reclamation (Israel) would like to evaluate them to compare them with data from Knights Landing. The goal is to foresee the first flush event when we would see a lot of fish either at the Knights Landing trap or upstream of it. Because the Mill and Deer Creeks traps are not yet in, the Tisdale rotary screw trap is currently being used for early warning and Coleman NFH decides on surrogate release timing. There is a variable time delay for fish to get from Deer and Mills Creeks to Knights Landing. It was noted that before DOSS gives advice about monitoring at Deer and Mills Creek, the data should be evaluated to determine whether the “alert” can be used from other locations.

Action Item: Evaluate the data from Mill and Deer Creek RST and compare to Tisdale RST, to see if the timing of the first alert is the same. (Josh/Bruce will check with DFG)

Salvage

No listed species were salvaged at either facility from 11/7 to 11/13/11. It was also noted that the Federal facility returned to 30-minute fish counts after being reduced to 10 minute counts on 10/18/11 due to large amounts of debris in the holding tanks.

White sturgeon: No white sturgeon were salvaged at either facility last week; the seasonal (10/1/11 to present) salvage total of white sturgeon at the Federal facility is 56.

Operations (11/15/11)

SWP		CVP	
Exports (cfs)			
Clifton Court Forebay	4,000 (cutting to 3,000 tomorrow and 2,000 by Thursday)	Jones Pumping Plant	4,200 (cut by Thursday for X2)
Reservoir releases (cfs)			
Feather - Oroville	2,300	American - Nimbus	2,500 (would like to cut)
		Sacramento - Keswick	7,000
		Stanislaus - Goodwin	500 (holding)
Reservoir Storage (TAF)			
San Luis (SWP)	965	San Luis (CVP)	801
Oroville	2,839	Shasta	3,186
		Folsom	527
		New Melones	
Delta Operations			
DCC	Open	Sacramento River at Freeport (cfs)	11,970
Outflow Index (cfs)	~5,500	San Joaquin River (cfs)	2,182
Total Delta Inflow (cfs)	15,296	OMR (daily)	
Water Temperature (°F)		OMR 5 day	
X2 (km)	>81	OMR 14 day	
E/I	51.4%		

It was noted that X2 is now >81 km, but the target identified for the FWS BiOp is a monthly average of 79 km for delta smelt. The operators are reducing exports to meet the November X2 monthly average because of drier than forecasted conditions. The operators must look at alternative operations to comply with the requirements of the FWS BiOp. The X2 condition ends December 1st and will delay San Luis Reservoir projected filling in December. Operators are limited in what they can do upstream to increase Delta inflows (e.g. DFG agreement on Feather R. for salmon spawning requires minimum flows) and can only adjust Delta outflows by cutting exports.

There was a question about where the demand for San Luis water is coming from right now. There are terminal reservoirs in Southern California that the state water contractors want to fill to a level that is comfortable for both flood control and water supply. There is also carryover water in SLR from last year that some contractors are taking now. The operators also noted some outages along their canals, so they would like to fill the reservoirs, which might explain a bit of a higher than normal demand for this time of year.

Weather forecast: There are some small systems coming this week that will bring colder weather, but not a lot of precipitation. Another system is coming next week that will bring more precipitation, but the projects agreed to operate to the current conditions.

Annual Review

The annual review was held on November 8 and 9, 2011, at 650 Capitol Mall, Stanford Room, Sacramento, CA. The first day was presentations by each technical team, and updates on several ongoing studies, and the reviewers summarized their first impressions on the second day. The Independent Review Panel provided their initial impressions regarding operations in Clear Creek and the Sacramento River, but did not have time to put their thoughts together regarding DOSS. DOSS will need to wait until the written report comes out in 30 days (~December 9).

Overarching issues, in summary, included linking the implementation of RPA actions to physical properties and determining what these actions were doing biologically to the fish species as far as survival, routing through the Delta, growth, juvenile production, etc. There were some specific recommendations for the Sacramento River temperature control and Clear Creek adjustments to the RPA that will be examined and addressed. The link to the presentations and initial findings is: <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/category/tags/ocap>. The first item listed is a pdf file of the panel's initial findings.

DOSS advice to WOMT and NMFS: None

Next Meeting: November 22, 2011, at 9:00 a.m.