

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

10/21/09 Initial start-up conf. call

Objective of the DOSS group: Create a technical advisory team that will provide recommendations to WOMT and NMFS on measures to reduce adverse effects of Delta operations of the CVP and SWP to salmonids and green sturgeon and will coordinate the work of the other technical teams.

Meeting Objective: Review fish monitoring data and provide recommendation to the Water Operations Management Team (WOMT) as to triggers for Delta Cross Channel (DCC) gate closures in the NMFS 2009 OCAP biological opinion.

Attendees: Sheila Greene (DWR), Andy Chu (DWR), Mitch Goode (DWR), John Hannon (USBR), Paul Fujitani (USBR), Alice Low (DFG), Roger Guinee (FWS), Nick Hindman (FWS), Bruce Oppenheim (NMFS), Jeff Stuart (NMFS)

Discussed membership, scheduling weekly meetings, process (see pg. 581-583 NMFS BO), and ground rules. Reviewed description of DOSS in NMFS BiOp. Discussed relationship between DOSS Group and the Data Analysis Team (DAT) as requested by the 5-Agency Group. The following initial decisions were made:

- 1) Note taker assigned – Bruce Oppenheim (NMFS)
- 2) Notes to be sent out for review by Friday for comments by DOSS members
- 3) Monday DOSS determination, Tuesday NMFS determination goes to WOMT
- 4) Agency only membership - invitations to be sent to State Board, USGS, and EPA
- 5) Determinations by consensus, with any alternative operations described
- 6) Provide link to DAT site and other data sources on the web (CDFG, FWS, IEP, etc.) calfedda@water.ca.gov
- 7) Post recommendations and notes on NMFS website or CALFED OPS site TBA

Status of current monitoring stations in upper Sacramento River: Collection of Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD) monitoring data has been reduced to 5 days/week due to lack of funds. GCID trapping was terminated. Two new monitoring stations are being developed by DFG between RBDD and Knights Landing (KL). Final locations are being evaluated by DFG. DWR is working on a contract through the northern district office to fund the new trap sites for 2 years. KL is reporting data weekly, checking traps every other day. Mill and Deer Creek traps are not working continuously due to low flows.

Review of latest hydrological and fish monitoring data: Data provided to the DAT reflector on 10/20. Last weeks storm caused considerable precipitation in the upper Sacramento River. Turbidity and flow increases resulted in large numbers of juvenile winter-run moving past RBDD. Some of the winter-run observed at RBDD are expected to take about a week to move downstream to the Delta. Mill and Deer Creek stream flows increased by 50% with the recent storm event, meeting the first alert stage criteria. However, this first storm of the season was warm and river temperatures are still very high (above alert criteria). Either condition, when met or identified, can trigger the alert.

Status of Mill/Deer Creek Traps:

Mill trap was set on 10/13. It fished the storm (although flows only increased to 280 cfs on an hourly basis (the criteria are based on daily mean), turbidity measured at over 48 ntu's). Between then and this morning the trap captured 19 yearling spring Chinook (77 - 120 mm fl). Also, 12 steelhead, mostly parr have been captured. The trap will continue to fish, although not getting many revolutions due to the low flows. (Yearling spring Chinook will likely avoid trap if clear water and slow revolutions.)

Status of Knights Landing Traps:

3 winter-run length Chinook were caught at Knights Landing since the latest storm, however, the criteria of either the Knights Landing Catch Index (KLCI) or the Sacramento Catch Index (SCI) being greater than 3 fish per day was not exceeded.

Salvage Facilities, Chipps Island and Delta monitoring:

See DAT website for current updates. No salmonids or sturgeon have been reported salvaged at the fish facilities since October 1st.

Status of Sturgeon:

Adults were reported observed at GCID. These are post-spawners waiting for significant flow increase to migrate back downstream to ocean. Unknown if adults above RBDD.

Discussion of coordination between the delta Smelt Working Group (DSWG) and the DOSS group occurred. There is a need to have ongoing communications with the DSWG in the event that DOSS recommendations have impacts on Delta smelt. In this event, both groups should issue a joint recommendation..

Recommendation for the week of 10/18 – 10/24:

DOSS recommends that the DCC gates be left open. The biological rationale is based on the short spike in flows, warm water temperatures, and low fish numbers. Juvenile salmonids have begun to move, but it was determined that it was too early in the season to close the gates. The criteria for gate closures in the NMFS BiOp (i.e., KLCI or SCI > than 3 fish per day p. 636) had not been met.

DOSS also recommended to the 5-Agency Group that DAT calls be moved to Wednesday afternoon to facilitate stakeholder interests.

Special note:

One hour after the DOSS meeting DFG reported the KLCI had reached 3.02 that morning. This resulted in NMFS notifying the WOMT that the DCC needed to be closed. Operators determined that water quality was adequate at this time. DCC gates were closed for 3 days starting on 10/23, pursuant to the NMFS BiOp requirements.

Next Mtg: 10/28/09. Agenda items: FWS request, DCC gates open until 12/15 for CVPIA Delta Action 8 study. Review study plan.