

Delta Operations for Salmonids and Sturgeon (DOSS) Group

12/01/09 Tues conf. call 9:00 am

Objective of the DOSS group: 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: Andy Chu, & Mitch Goode (DWR), Thuy Washburn & John Hannon (USBR), Pat Brandes, Nick Hindman & Roger Guinee (FWS), Bruce Oppenheim, Garwin Yip, Barbara Byrne & Jeff Stuart (NMFS), Greg Wilson (SWRCB)

Agenda items:

- 1) Review current DCC ops
- 2) Delta Action 8 recommendation
- 3) Consider moving DOSS to Monday

Notes:

Fish Monitoring:

Knights Landing (KL) summary:

Date	Flow (cfs)	Temp. water (F)	Secchi (ft)	Turb.	Species	Catch	Min (FL)	Max(FL)	CPUE
11/23/09	4411	52	2.6	8.6		0	0	0	0
11/25/09	4019	52	2.8	6.7		0	0	0	0
11/28/09	3988	53	2.6	8.6	Winter	1	68	68	0.166
11/30/09		52	2.8	8.7		0	0	0	0

FWS data (11/22 – 11/28):

None of the data has yet been entered into the database for last week, but there were 12 Delta smelt caught at Chipps Island ranging between 60 and 65 mm with no expression. Pat Brandes reported no salmonids were observed in trawls or seines on 11/23, 11/25, and 11/27.

Mitch Goode reported for 1 Chinook (85 mm) on Deer Creek and 1 Chinook (83 mm) on Mill Creek were caught on 11/27. Flows are still low, running approximately 94-109 cfs on Deer Creek and 102 cfs on Mill Creek.

Adult green sturgeon (post spawners) could get by DCC gates whether open or closed at this time. No adverse impacts were perceived from DCC gate operations. Based on other river (i.e., Klamath and Rogue), juvenile green sturgeon hold over through the winter until the following spring before out migrating.

No salmonids or sturgeon have been reported salvaged at the fish salvage facilities since October 1st.

For other monitoring sites, see:

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

Fish monitoring data did not trigger or warrant DCC gate closures. DFG data at KL up to Sunday 11/30, showed catch per unit effort (CPUE) has been below 1 since 11/23 (last DOSS call), trawls have been zero, and seines < 3 fish per day. Juvenile salmonids do not appear to be moving downstream due to low flow conditions. Water temperatures are in range where we expect to see fish moving (under 56 degrees) if flows increase. A wet weather pattern starting next week should increase fish numbers.

1) DCC gate ops:

The gates were closed on 11/30 for 3 days to boost the Rio Vista 7 day average flow standard (3500 cfs). The gates were scheduled to open this morning at 10:00 am for 3-5 days for the first part of the Delta Action 8 study. Operators expect to have to close the gates between 12/6 and 12/8 in order to meet the Rio Vista Standard (7 day average flow). Last weeks rain helped to meet the November monthly flow standard. Predicted rain this Sunday and Monday will not be soon enough to help with the 7 day standard (will know more by Thursday weather briefing). Without any rain and DCC gate closure, the 7-day average Rio Vista flows are projected to be in the range of 3300 cfs during the second week of December.

Discussed what gauge is used to calculate the 7-day average (calculated by DWR) and a rough rule of thumb is that Freeport flows < 9,000 cfs = Rio Vista flows < 3500 cfs (7 day average). Freeport currently at 8,907 cfs, Verona < 9,000 cfs, and Wilkins < 4,000 cfs, all very low flow conditions.

Water quality appears to be worsening as far as salinity in the central delta.

2) Delta Action 8 Study:

Tagged fish were being released at Elkhorn boat ramp (under I-5 Bridge) today. Expect these fish will take longer to move down because of greater distance and low flows and will need 2nd week to pass the DCC. Trying to be flexible to accommodate the 2 week gates open period for the study, but may have to close for a few days to meet the flow standard.

3) Move DOSS to Monday at 2pm: Recognition of the difficulty in getting real-time fish monitoring data by Monday morning. Data usually takes a day to be checked and entered into the database from the previous weekend. Considered moving the WOMT mtg date to later, but WOMT thought Tuesday afternoon is best for scheduling operational changes. WOMT needs 3 days notice for some actions like DCC gate closures due to public notices (for safety and recreational boating). Also, NMFS needs to make it's determination of the WOMT action by Thurs fro consistency with the OCAP BiOp.

Concluded DOSS meeting Tuesday morning is the best time, unless it becomes a problem for NMFS. Discussed the use of the word “recommendation” vs. “determination”, and referred to page 582 – 583 of the NMFS BiOp. Will use “recommendation” for DOSS advice and biological rationale to WOMT, and “determination” for NMFS review of WOMT action as noted in BiOp.

Other Items: New staff at FWS Bay-Delta Branch Office located downtown in 650 Capitol Mall, 5th Fl.

Delta Smelt Working Group (DSWG): first meeting was Monday 11/31. Jeff Stuart attended for DOSS and reported no recommendations. DSWG is considering 24 hour notice of operational changes to stakeholders (outcome of litigation), real-time data reporting problems similar to DOSS, and workshop in December to look at modeling tools (e.g., RMA smelt model, Entrainment Index). Also, DSWG is reviewing proposed FWS “transitional periods” between Old and Middle River (OMR) flow restrictions.

Recommendation for the week of 11/31 – 12/5:

No recommendation. DOSS will update the Delta Action 8 study with brief conference call on Thursday 12/3 to discuss real-time weather and flow conditions.

Next Mtg: 12/08/09 at 9:00 am.