

Delta Smelt Working Group Meeting/Conference Call Minutes

April 17, 2006

Participating: Mike Chotkowski (USBR), Kevin Fleming (CDFG), Bruce Herbold (USEPA), Tracy Hinojosa (CDWR), Ann Lubas-Williams (USBR), Ryan Olah (UFWS), Ted Sommer (CDWR), Jim White (CDFG) and Victoria Poage (USFWS, convener and scribe)

For Discussion:

1. Proposed roll-back of VAMP start date to May 1
2. Delta smelt monitoring

Recommendation for WOMT:

The Working Group did not have a recommendation for WOMT for this week. The Working Group will continue to monitor in-Delta conditions and delta smelt distribution.

1. Biologists with CDFG have formally requested of the VAMP Technical Committee that the start date of the VAMP be delayed until May, to allow the VAMP study fish being held at the Merced Hatchery more time to attain an average size closer what they have averaged in previous years. According to the most recent VAMP hydrology forecasts, San Joaquin River flows are not expected to decrease substantially between now and the end of May. Last week's Spring Kodiak Trawl (survey #4) collected only two fish in the Delta; most of the smelt collected were from the ship channel. The 20-mm Survey has not thus far collected any delta smelt. While it is known from observations of gonadal maturity and the collection of a single larva in the south Delta by the Delta Smelt Larval Survey (and can be inferred from Delta water temperatures) that spawning has begun, it is unlikely that there are significant numbers near enough to the export pumps to cause concern. From what is currently known it appears that a delayed VAMP start date of May 1 would still cover the bulk of the spawning period. Thus the Working Group is neutral on the question of a delayed start date.

2. Survey 4 of the Spring Kodiak Trawl was conducted last week. Results are not yet posted to the web site, but are not dissimilar to those of survey 3. Survey 3 of the 20-mm survey is being conducted this week; results will be posted as soon as possible, given present staffing issues. No concerns with delta smelt distribution are currently evident.

Action Items:

None.

Next Scheduled Conference Call: As needed; the regular Monday call time remains reserved.

Submitted,
VLP