

Delta Smelt Working Group Meeting/Conference Call Minutes

February 6, 2006

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

For Discussion:

1. update on last week's supplemental Kodiak trawling and other monitoring
2. follow-up to last week's VAMP Technical Group meeting
3. recommendations for Project operations

Recommendation for WOMT:

Based on expectations for Project operations for the next week, the Delta Smelt Working Group did not have any recommendations. The Working Group will continue to monitor Delta conditions, survey sampling results and any other relevant data.

1. Kevin Fleming presented the results of the supplemental Spring Kodiak Trawl (Survey 11) for the week of January 30; the final catch data have been posted to the Bay/Delta Branch web site (<http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/data/skt/>). A total of 168 delta smelt were collected, with the largest composite concentration collected at a single station in the ship channel. A discussion of the interpretation of monitoring data will be developed. Ted Sommer noted that some delta smelt have been collected during routine sampling in the Yolo Bypass. The next leg of Spring Kodiak Trawl sampling will be conducted during the week of February 13. Another delta smelt was taken at the CVP on February 3, bringing the cumulative expanded salvage to 48. Delta temperatures from the Spring Kodiak Trawl Survey are between 10 and 11⁰C.

2. On February 2 the VAMP Technical Group met at the Stockton Office and requested that some members of the Working Group attend, to facilitate discussion of the installation of the Head-of-Old-River temporary fish barrier (HORB). Members of the working Group who were present included Gonzalo Castillo, Kevin Fleming, Bruce Herbold, Tracy Hinojosa, Victoria Poage and Jim White. The results of the Particle Tracking Modeling (PTM) for VAMP operations were distributed and discussed (see the Working Group notes for January 30, 2006 for a summary), as was the Working Group's preliminary recommendation for San Joaquin River flows of 7000 cfs and combined Project exports of 1500 cfs (high priority) and no HORB (lower priority). The Technical Group requested that DWR staff run several additional PTM scenarios; of particular interest was forecasted VAMP hydrology with the HORB installed, but with all culverts open vs all culverts closed. The Working Group decided to focus on the questions that need to be answered. Kevin Sun has begun running the following additional scenarios:

- G & H, a modification of scenarios C & D, increasing the combined exports to 3000 cfs while keeping Vernalis flows at 7000, and

- I & J, with combined exports at 2250 and Vernalis flows at 5700, consistent with the VAMP protocol.

The Working Group also requested:

- a re-run of scenarios C and D with the HORB in place and with all six culverts open, and
- a re-run of scenarios C and D as above, but with combined exports at 3000 cfs.

The Working Group also discussed PTM for a newer, drier forecast to mirror expected La Nina conditions, as well as the timing and duration of VAMP. VAMP is timed to provide as much protection to as many emigrating SJR Chinook as possible, so no additional protection would be gained by moving the VAMP forward in time or shortening its duration. Delay of the VAMP (as last year, to May 1) would not be as critical in terms of the effects of hydrology on salmon survival. Final recommendations for or against the installation of the HORB must be made prior to the last week of March, to allow DWR to contract for the appropriate work dates.

3. At the time of the call, projected operations were for the SWP to export at a rate of about 4000 cfs for most of the week, and the CVP to export at about 42-4300 cfs for the week. This rate of exports was expected to result in an export-to-inflow ratio ranging from about 9.5 to 10.8. Given these expected operations, the Working Group did not have any recommendations. The Working Group will continue to keep abreast of Delta conditions, survey sampling results and any other relevant data and be prepared to meet if needed before the next scheduled conference call on February 27.

Action Items:

None

Next Scheduled Conference Call: Monday, February 27 at 3:00 pm.

Submitted,
VLP