

# State Water Project Incidental Take Permit Risk Assessment for Delta Smelt and Longfin Smelt

## Section 1: Overview

**Date: 08 June 2021**

### **Life Stages Present:**

Delta Smelt: Adult, Juvenile, Larvae

Longfin Smelt: Juvenile, Larvae

### **Advice to Water Operations Management Team (WOMT):**

The Smelt Monitoring Team (SMT) does not recommend any OMR Index (OMRI) limits for the protection of Longfin Smelt (LFS) or Delta Smelt (DS). The SMT determined that a recommendation would not change the salvage trajectory of LFS in the south Delta. No diversion restrictions are in place for Barker Slough Pumping Plant (BSPP) operations under Condition of Approval 8.12. The SMT also agreed that larval sampling could be discontinued at both facilities.

### **Risk Assessment:**

*Delta Smelt:* Based on distribution patterns over the past decade and rare detections in this water year, DS are unlikely to be prevalent in the South Delta. Limited detection data supports DS being present in the lower Sacramento River and in the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel (SDWSC). The likelihood of DS adult entrainment is low due to seasonal timing. The likelihood of larval entrainment is decreasing compared to the previous seven days due to warming water temperature and seasonal timing. The most recent detections of Delta Smelt were in the SDWSC (8) and the Lower Sacramento River (1). The less negative OMR Index (OMRI) values decrease the potential for entrainment of Delta Smelt into the South Delta.

Condition of Approval 8.12 is not controlling BSPP operations. No DS have been detected at station 716 in 20 mm Survey 5, which was in the field 5/17 – 5/20. Processing for station 716 from 20 mm Survey 6 is in progress. The period in which DS protection could control BSPP operations extends through June 30<sup>th</sup>. The period in which LFS detections could control BSPP operations ended on 3/31/2021.

*Longfin Smelt:* Persistent dry conditions continue, and exports are projected to remain at or near minimum levels. 20mm Survey 6 was in the field from 6/1/2021 through 6/4/2021. Sample processing is underway and data for eight of the 12 south and central Delta stations listed in Condition of Approval 8.4.2 were available. No LFS were reported at stations 809, 812, 901, 910, 912, 914, 915 and 918. Data is pending for the remaining stations. EDSM completed sample processing for samples collected from 5/24/2021 through 5/28/2021 and reported that

25 LFS (FL = 17.8 – 35.7 mm) were collected in Suisun Marsh. Chipps Island Trawl did not collect any LFS in the last seven days.

Risk of entrainment into the export facilities is low for LFS outside of Old and Middle River. LFS that are still present outside of or within Clifton Court Forebay (CCF), or within the immediate vicinity of the federal export facility, are likely to be entrained, however a recommendation to restrict OMRI to levels more positive than projected operations is not likely to prevent further salvage. The SMT expects LFS salvage to end soon due to increased water temperature. Juvenile LFS detections are rare above 22° C (72° F) ([Jeffries 2016](#)). Water temperature at Clifton Court Forebay exceeded 23°C for five consecutive days.

No LFS were salvaged at either facility from 06/01/2021 through 06/07/2021. Salvage operations did not occur at the state Skinner Delta Fish Protective Facility while Banks Pumping Plant was offline 06/01 through 06/03. To date, 677 juvenile LFS have been salvaged at the state facility and 188 juvenile LFS have been salvaged at the federal facility. Salvage estimates are expanded based on sampling effort.

### **Section 1-A: Sacramento River and Confluence**

Risk of entrainment into the central Delta and export facilities for DS and LFS in Sacramento River (8.1.5.2 C ii, iii, iv)

- Exposure Risk (Hydrology):
  - Delta Smelt: Low
  - Longfin Smelt: Low
    - Young of year are present in the Sacramento River, but are at low risk of entrainment into the central Delta.
- Routing Risk (Behavior and life history):
  - Delta Smelt: Low
  - Longfin Smelt: Low risk of LFS adults moving from the confluence into the Central Delta of their own volition. Water temperature has exceeded that typically associated with LFS spawning and adult LFS are expected to move further downstream if they have not done so already. Adult LFS were not detected in recent Chipps Island Trawl Survey sampling.
- Overall Entrainment Risk
  - Delta Smelt: Low
  - Longfin Smelt: Low

### **Section 1-B: Central Delta**

Risk of entrainment into the export facilities for DS and LFS in the central Delta

- Exposure Risk:
  - Delta Smelt: Low
  - Longfin Smelt: Low
- Change in exposure from previous week:

- Delta Smelt: Decreasing compared to the previous seven days due to warming water temperature and seasonal timing
- Longfin Smelt: Decreasing compared to the previous seven days due to increasing water temperature.
- Reporting OMRI (*Number and range of OMRI bins will vary based on anticipated hydrology and operations*)
  - OMRI is projected to range from -1,000 cfs to -1,800 cfs.
  - A recommendation to limit OMRI to -1,250 cfs is not expected to change the salvage trend when compared to the most negative OMRI based on projected operations.

## **Section 2: Basis for Advice**

The 2020 [Incidental Take Permit for Long-Term Operation of the State Water Project in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta 2081-2019-066-00](#) (ITP) states that advice to WOMT shall be based the following Conditions of Approval:

*List relevant Condition of Approval number and title based on species/life stage, time of year, etc.*

### **8.1.5.2 Smelt Monitoring Team Risk Assessment**

#### **8.4.2 Larval and Juvenile Longfin Smelt Entrainment Protection.**

From January 1 through June 30, when a single Smelt Larval Survey (SLS) or 20 mm Survey (20 mm) sampling period exceeds one of the following thresholds:

- LFS larvae or juveniles found in four or more of the 12 SLS or 20 mm stations in the central Delta and south Delta (Stations 809, 812, 815, 901, 902, 906, 910, 912, 914, 915, 918, 919), or
- LFS catch per tow exceeds five LFS larvae or juveniles in two or more of the 12 stations in the central Delta and south Delta (Stations 809, 812, 815, 901, 902, 906, 910, 912, 914, 915, 918, 919).

Permittee shall restrict south Delta exports for seven consecutive days to maintain a seven-day average OMRI no more negative than -5,000 cfs. Permittee shall also immediately convene the SMT to conduct a risk assessment (see Condition of Approval 8.5.1.2) to assess the risk of larval and juvenile LFS entrainment into the South Delta Export Facilities, determine if an OMRI flow restriction is warranted, and recommend an OMRI flow limit between -1,250 cfs and -5,000 cfs. The SMT risk assessment and operational advice shall be reviewed by the WOMT (Condition of Approval 8.1.3) via the Collaborative Real-time Decision-making process (Condition of Approval 8.1.4). Permittee shall operate to the export restriction and OMRI flow target approved through Conditions of Approval 8.1.3 and 8.1.4. Each week the SMT shall convene to conduct a new risk assessment and determine whether to maintain, or off ramp from, export restrictions based on the risk to LFS, or until the DS and LFS off-ramp has been met as described in Condition of Approval 8.8 (End of OMR Management).

From January 1 through June 30, DWR and CDFW SMT staff shall conduct weekly, or more often as needed, risk assessments (see Condition of Approval 8.5.1.2) to assess the risk of larval and juvenile LFS entrainment into the South Delta Export Facilities. As a part of the risk assessment, the SMT shall provide advice on the appropriate OMRI flow targets to minimize LFS entrainment or entrainment risk, or both. The SMT shall provide its advice to WOMT (Condition of Approval 8.1.3) and use the Collaborative Approach to Real-time Risk Assessment process described in Condition of Approval 8.1.4 to determine if an OMRI flow restriction is warranted and determine an OMRI flow limit between -1,250 cfs and -5,000 cfs. The OMRI flow limit shall be in place until the next risk assessment conducted by the SMT determines that it is no longer necessary to minimize take or related impacts to LFS, or until the DS and LFS off-ramp has been met as described in Condition of Approval 8.8 (End of OMR Management).

### **8.5.2 Larval and Juvenile Delta Smelt Protection.**

If the five-day cumulative salvage of juvenile DS at the CVP and SWP facilities is greater than or equal to one plus the average prior three years' FMWT index (rounded down), Permittee shall restrict south Delta exports for seven consecutive days to maintain a seven-day average OMRI no more negative than -5,000 cfs. Additionally, if the five-day cumulative salvage threshold is met or exceeded, Permittee shall immediately convene the SMT to conduct a risk assessment (Condition of Approval 8.1.5.2) and determine the future risk of entrainment and take of larval and juvenile DS. The SMT may provide advice to further restrict south Delta exports to maintain a more positive OMRI than -5,000 cfs. The SMT may provide advice for further restrictions within three risk categories:

- Low risk: Limit OMRI between -4,000 cfs to -5,000 cfs
- Medium risk: Limit OMRI between -2,500 cfs to -4,000 cfs
- High risk: Limit OMRI between -1,250 cfs to -2,500 cfs

The duration and magnitude of operational advice shall be provided to the WOMT (Condition of Approval 8.1.3) and decisions shall be made following the process described in Condition of Approval 8.1.4 (Collaborative Real Time Risk Assessment). When conducting risk assessments to evaluate the risk of entrainment and take of juvenile DS, the SMT shall evaluate the following information sources, in addition to any other models or surveys they deem appropriate and those listed in Condition of Approval 8.1.5.2:

- Results from a CDFW approved DS life cycle model.
- DS recruitment levels identified by the SMT using the CDFW- approved life cycle model that links environmental conditions to recruitment, including factors related to loss as a result of entrainment such as OMRI flows. In this context, recruitment is defined as the estimated number of post-larval DS in June per number of spawning adults in the prior February-March period.
- Hydrodynamic models and forecasts of entrainment informed by the EDSM or other relevant survey data to estimate the percentage of larval and juvenile DS that could be entrained.

If expanded salvage at the CVP and SWP facilities of juvenile DS exceeds 11 within a three-day period under this condition, Permittee shall restrict south Delta exports for seven consecutive days to maintain a seven-day average OMRI no more negative than -3,500 cfs. If juvenile DS continue to be salvaged at the CVP and SWP facilities during the seven days of OMRI restrictions, then Permittee shall continue restrictions and request a risk assessment by the SMT to determine if additional advice and subsequent restrictions are warranted and provide advice to WOMET (see Condition of Approval 8.1.3) and follow the decision-making process described in Condition of Approval 8.1.4.

### **8.8 End of OMR Management.**

Permittee shall operate the Project to meet the requirements included in Conditions of Approval 8.3.1, 8.3.3, 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.5.1, 8.5.2, 8.6.1, 8.6.2, 8.6.3, and 8.6.4 to ensure that entrainment and take of Covered Species is minimized during the OMR Management season through June 30, or until the following species-specific off-ramps occur:

- LFS and DS: Daily mean water temperature at CCF is greater than 25°C (77° F) for three consecutive days.
- CHNWR and CHNSR:
  - More than 95% of CHNWR and CHNSR have migrated past Chipps Island as determined by the Salmon Monitoring Team, AND
  - Daily average water temperature at Mossdale exceeds 22.2°C (72° F) for 7 non-consecutive days in June, AND
  - Daily average water temperature at Prisoner's Point exceeds 22.2°C (72° F) for 7 non-consecutive days in June.

### **8.12 Barker Slough Pumping Plant Longfin and Delta Smelt Protection.**

Permittee shall operate the BSPP to protect larval LFS from January 15 through March 31 of dry and critical water years. Permittee shall operate to protect larval DS from March 1 through June 30 of dry and critical years. If the water year type changes after January 1 to below normal, above normal or wet, this action will be suspended. If the water year type changes after January to dry or critical, Permittee shall operate according to this Condition of Approval.

From January 15 through March 31 of dry and critical water years, Permittee shall reduce the maximum seven-day average diversion rate at BSPP to less than 60 cfs when larval LFS are detected at station 716. In addition, in its weekly meetings from January 15 through March 31, the Smelt Monitoring Team shall review LFS abundance and distribution survey data and other pertinent abiotic and biotic factors that influence the entrainment risk of larval LFS at the BSPP. When recommended by the SMT, and as approved through the decision-making processes described in Conditions of Approval 8.1.3 and 8.1.4, Permittee shall reduce the maximum seven-day average diversion rate at BSPP according to the advice provided by the SMT.

From March 1 through June 30 of dry and critical water years, Permittee shall reduce the maximum seven-day average diversion rate at BSPP to less than 60 cfs when larval DS are detected at station 716. In addition, in its weekly meetings from March 1 through June 30, the

SMT shall review DS abundance and distribution survey data and other pertinent abiotic and biotic factors that influence the entrainment risk of larval DS at the BSPP (including temperature and turbidity). When recommended by the SMT, and as approved through the decision-making processes described in Conditions of Approval 8.1.3 and 8.1.4, Permittee shall reduce the maximum seven-day average diversion rate at BSPP to less than 60 cfs. The DS requirements described in this condition may be adjusted to align with USFWS requirements to minimize take of DS through an amendment to this ITP.

### **8.13 Water Year Type Definition.**

All references to water year type in this ITP shall be defined based on the Sacramento Valley Index unless otherwise noted.

### **Discussion of Conditions of Approval**

*Provide sentence or two addressing criteria for each Condition of Approval listed in “Basis for Advice” section. Refer to data below where appropriate.*

SMT will conduct weekly risk assessments as described in Condition of Approval 8.1.5.2.

8.3.1 Environmental conditions did not exceed the thresholds identified in this condition during Water Year 2021. This Condition of Approval ended on 1/31/2021.

8.3.3 This Condition of Approval ended on 2/28/2021.

8.4.1 This Condition of Approval ended on 12/28/2021 when SLS detected a larval LFS in the lower San Joaquin River.

8.4.2 This Condition of Approval was not triggered by the most recently available data and the SMT determined that a recommendation was not warranted. 20 mm survey 5 detected one LFS at station 809. 20-mm Survey 6 did not report any LFS at the 8 stations for which data was available. Water temperature is approaching the upper limit at which LFS have historically been detected by 20 mm Survey. LFS within or immediately outside of Clifton Court Forebay, or within the vicinity of the Tracy pumping plant are likely to be entrained as they seek areas with lower water temperatures. The SMT expects LFS salvage to end soon due to increased water temperature. Juvenile LFS detections are rare above 22°C (71.6° F) ([Jeffries 2016](#)). However, salvage may increase temporarily before ending for the season as juveniles seek cooler water. Water temperature in CCF exceeded 23°C for five consecutive days (6/2/2021 through 6/6/2021).

8.5.1 This Condition of Approval ended on 4/1/2021.

8.5.2 This Condition of Approval has not been triggered. The three-year average FMWT Index for DS is zero, resulting in a salvage threshold of one for juvenile DS. No DS have been salvaged this water year.

8.12 This Condition of Approval has not been triggered. No DS were detected at station 716 during 20mm Survey 5 and data from 20-mm Survey 6 is not yet available.

### Section 3: Hydrology and Operations

Assessment of hydrologic, operational, and meteorological information. 8.1.5.2 A.

#### Section 3-A: Water operations conditions. 8.1.5.2.A. i

- Antecedent Actions: *(e.g. DCC gate closure and actions such as integrated early winter pulse protection, etc.)*
  - OMR management for salmonids ended on 6/8/2021
  - DCC gates are currently closed.
  - Construction of the South Delta agricultural barriers is complete as of May 27<sup>th</sup>. Barrier culverts will be tidally operated as of June 1<sup>st</sup>. The OMRI equation was adjusted accordingly.
  - A TUCP was submitted to the Water Board requesting that the NDOI outflow requirement be changed from 4,000 cfs to 3,000 cfs for June and July, and that the compliance point location for western Delta agricultural salinity be changed from Emmaton to Three Mile Slough from June 1<sup>st</sup> through August 15<sup>th</sup>. The TUCP was conditionally approved subject to conditions.
- Controlling Factors: Delta Outflow and X2 location.
- Water Temperature:
  - CCF Daily Average Water Temperature = 22.89°C
  - 3 Station Average = 21.94°C
- Tidal Cycle: Entering a spring tide associated with the new moon (6/10/2021) which may cause salinity to increase. Anticipating a stronger spring tide at the end of the month.
- Turbidity:
  - 8.3.1 Freeport 3-day average = Not reported. 8.3.1 terminated without being triggered.
  - 8.5.1 OBI Turbidity = 3.01 FNU
- Salinity: X2 > 81 km. Estimated to be 96 km on the Sacramento River and 95.6 km on the San Joaquin River.
- Hydrologic Footprint: The SMT did not request any new PTM runs.

#### Section 3-B: Water operations outlook. 8.1.5.2.A. ii

- Outages
  - SWP: Banks pumping plant was offline for maintenance from 6/1/2021 through 6/3/2021. No fish counts were conducted while Banks was offline.
  - CVP: Jones pumping plant will go offline later this week.
- Exports: Operations will transition to a single facility operation this week to further reduce combined exports.
  - CCF: 300 cfs and will increase to 850 cfs as Jones pumping plant goes offline

- Jones: 800 cfs decreasing to zero later this week.
- Meteorological Forecast: No precipitation is in the forecast for the floor of the Central Valley.
- Storm Event Projection: No major storm events are expected.

### **Section 3-C: Projected conditions. 8.1.5.2.A. iii**

- DCC Gates position: DCC gates are currently closed after being opened from 10:00 AM Friday 6/4/2021 through 10:00 AM Monday 6/7/2021. DCC gates are expected to remain closed to minimize salinity intrusion.
- Sacramento River flow at Freeport: 6,000 cfs and will vary with upstream releases.
- San Joaquin River flow at Vernalis: 750 cfs
- Qwest: +1,400 cfs and is expected to fluctuate around zero.
- Old River at Bacon Island Turbidity: 3.01 FNU.
- Expected changes in South Delta Exports: Exports will transition to a single facility operation to further reduce combined exports.
- NDOI: 2,600 cfs.
- Upstream releases have increased to improve Delta outflow
  - Keswick = 7,100 cfs
  - Nimbus = 2,000 cfs
  - Goodwin = 1,500 cfs
  - Oroville = 2,550 cfs

Table 1: Comparison of OMR and OMR Index (5-day and 14-day averages for OMR Index and USGS gauge were reported on [SacPAS website](#), accessed 6/08/2021.

Date	Averaging Period	USGS gauges (cfs)	Index (cfs)
6/06/2021	Daily	Not Reported	-1,600 cfs
6/5/2021	5-day	-2,270 cfs	-1,450 cfs
6/5/2021	14-day	-2,240 cfs	-1,370 cfs

### **Section 4: Distribution and Biology.**

#### **8.1.5.2.B. Assessment of biological information for Delta Smelt and Longfin Smelt**

#### **Section 4-A: Delta Smelt population status 8.1.5.2.B. i**

- EDSM sampling was reduced due to boat issues. They sampled eight sites in two strata on 6/1 and 6/2. No DS were collected.
- The 2020 Annual FMWT Index for DS is zero for the third consecutive year.



- Delta Smelt LCM discussion. Not Discussed.
- Biological Conditions: Not Discussed.
- % of population in Delta zones: SMT did not discuss distribution in terms of percentage in Delta zones.
- 20 mm Survey 6 sample processing underway. No DS have been detected eight south and central Delta stations for which data was available. Data for station 716 was not available for 20-mm Survey 6. No DS were detected at station 716 during 20-mm Survey 5.
- 20 mm Survey 4 collected 1 DS (FL = 25 mm) at station 719 in the SDWSC on 5/6/2021.
- Salvage: No DS have been detected at either salvage facility this season. No DS have been detected in larval sampling at the Tracy Fish Collection Facility (CVP) or Skinner Fish Facility (SWP). Larval sampling began at the Tracy Fish Collection Facility on 2/15/2021 and at the Skinner Fish Facility on 2/22/2021.

#### **Section 4-B: Longfin Smelt population status 8.1.5.2.B. ii.**

- FMWT Index: The FMWT Annual Index for LFS is 28. Monthly indices for September and October are zero, the index for November is 22 and index for December is 6.
- 20 mm Survey 6 sampled from 6/1/2021 through 6/4/2021. Sample processing is ongoing and data from eight of the 12 south and central Delta stations listed in Condition of Approval 8.4.2. No LFS were collected at stations 809, 812, 901, 910, 912, 914, 915 or 918. Data for the remaining stations is pending sample processing.
- Other Surveys:
  - Chipps Island Trawl did not collect any LFS over the last seven days.
  - EDSM sampling was reduced due to boat issues. They sampled eight sites in two strata on 6/1 and 6/2. No LFS were collected.
  - Salvage: No LFS were salvaged at either facility from 6/1/2021 through 6/7/2021. To date, 677 juvenile LFS have been salvaged at the state facility and 188 juvenile LFS have been salvaged at the federal facility. Salvage estimates are expanded based on sampling effort.

#### **Section 4-C: Additional data sources to assess sensitivity to entrainment Delta.8.1.5.2.C & D. i**

- SMT estimated X2 using a tool developed by DWR staff that applies the same methodology used to calculate X2 reported on CDEC.

Notes:

Survey Updates:

The SMT continued discussion of the purpose and possible topics for post-season workshop(s), this discussion will be ongoing. A framework for the discussion has been circulated to SMT

members who are requested to make red-line edits or additions to items listed under weeks one and two.

Representatives from USGS and 34North presented an updated mapping application that will go public on Bay Delta Live in the future.

**Attachments:** None